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Chapter V - Military Operations (Page V1 - V262).

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UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
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HEADQUARTERS
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PREFACE

Those of us facing the assignment to write the official history of the war in Vietnam see ahead jungle, inundated rice paddies, and punji stakes, but equipped with a liberal portion of chastened optimism, we will find a path.

CHARLES B. MACDONALD

The CINCPAC Instruction 5000, 5B of 15 October 1969 requires the Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV) to submit an annual historical report that furnishes a comprehensive understanding of the operations and problems faced by the command during 1969. Additionally, the required report preserves the history of MACV and provides insightful information regarding the activities, major decisions and directives, and other significant accomplishments occurring during the year.

As in previous years this report describes COMUSMACV's actions in discharging his responsibilities. An effort has been made to avoid treatment of material that is properly the function and responsibility of component commanders. In some instances such material has been included to establish the ecology in which COMUSMACV operated.

To provide continuity, this history follows the same general organization of preceding years. Two additional chapters are included to provide more effective presentation of relations with the press and matters pertaining to prisoners of war, the latter subject becoming increasingly important during the year. Also several annexes are included which treat subjects that were of major significance during the year. Included among these annexes are: the redeployment of the 9th Inf Div (-) from RVN, the role of the Lao Dong Party, the defense of Fire Support Base CROOK, the Pentilateral Agreement, and a short history of the advisory effort from its beginning.

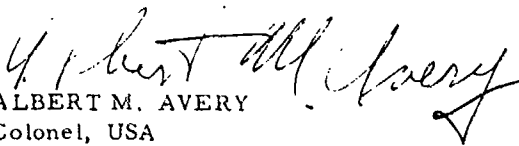
The history was prepared under the supervision of COL Robert J. Parr (USA) and his successor as Command Historian, COL Albert M. Avery (USA). Members of the Military History Branch who made significant contributions included the following historians: COLs Wendell J. Ryan (USA) and Poste L. Starkey (USA); LTCs Harold A. Bivins (USMC), Philip M. Flammer (USAF), George J. Hamilton, Jr. (USMC), and Clarence L. Moore, Jr. (USAF); CDR Leo P. Brown (USN); MAJ Martha N. Stanton (USAF); LCDR Michael L. McMillen (USN); CI Ts Joel R. Blatt (USA), Yves J. Melanson (USAF), and Robert M. Thompson (USA); and SF 5 Robert J. Cena (USA). This team of historians was provided invaluable assistance from a truly professional group of administrative personnel that included: SFC Billy R. Coleman (USA); TSGTs Lenwood Green (USAF), James T. Fowler (USAF), and Harold J. Jimerson (USAF); SP5s Kent L. Holbrook (USA) and Fred A. Mazur (USA); YN2 James J. Gordon (USN); and SGT Ermelinda Salazar (USMC).

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Finally, this history could not have been prepared without the enthusiastic cooperation and assistance from all members of the MACV staff and the component staffs. We are deeply grateful for this support.

We hope that the 1969 MACV Command History is a meaningful contribution in charting the path through the "jungle, inundated rice paddies, and punji stakes."


ALBERT M. AVERY
Colonel, USA
Command Historian

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COMUSMACV Command 1969 Chronology

Glossary

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

"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."

1968 MACV Command History

(U) No unforeseen crisis occurred in 1969 and the year indeed was marked by successes both military and in national development. This is not to say there were not setbacks or that some programs failed to meet their goals for 1969. Nevertheless even the most skeptical critic was forced however begrudgingly to admit there was clear evidence of significant progress in the attainment of US objectives for the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

(U) The year 1969 marked the fourth year of major US Combat participation in RVN, though it was a year of transition and changing focus of US activity. In spite of the changes the one single static aspect of the war was its fundamental issue: The VC/NVA attempt forcibly to extend Communist domination over the territory and people of RVN, on the one hand; and the resolve of the people and Government of RVN (GVN) to determine their own future, on the other.

(S) In the three years prior to 1969, the US had been preoccupied with successful military operations. Pacification had been, to a degree, left to GVN, and modernization and improvement to RVN combat power had not received equal emphasis and effort. The advisory effort of the 1950s and early 1960s had become in reality US prosecution of the war. The transition, then, was to turn the course toward "Vietnamization of the peace" and away from "Americanization of the war." Early in the year, COMUSMACV announced a three-faceted goal for 1969; combat operations to defeat the enemy and promote security, increased effort to improve and modernize the RVN's Armed Forces (RVNAF), and a further emphasis on pacification and building the inchoate republic into a viable state. Each facet of this "one war" goal was to, and in fact did, receive equal attention.

(U) The optimism that was prevalent at the end of 1968 for progress in the Paris talks was to prove ill-founded as no headway whatever was made during 1969. While it could not be stated unequivocally that the anti-war movement in the US was responsible for the reluctance of the NVN to negotiate, there was ample evidence that the disproportionate attention gained by the vocal minority gave great comfort and certainly lent propapanda support to the enemy. As COSVN Resolution 9 and debriefing of the released US prisoners revealed, North Vietnamese leaders labored under the dubious assumption that the American will would soon be broken as the French had faltered in 1954. The enemy expected a precipitous withdrawal of US troops in response to domestic pressures and a concomitant collapse of the GVN. In November, President Nixon skillfully reversed the momentum of the "get-out-of-Vietnam-at-any-cost" philosophy as he spoke to the nation and the world, explaining his policy of Vietnamization which had

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been underway since March. He called for the support of the "great silent majority" of Americans. This support was forthcoming and while the minority remained inordinately vocal, it spoke with much less authority. It was now evident that the US would disengage from combat in RVN but it would not be at the call of cacophonous dissidents nor would it be directed by North Vietnam or the Lao Dong Party. It would be governed by prudent action on a carefully conceived timetable and in consonance with the military situation and the developing strength of the RVNAF. While it was noted that 1969 did not end on the same note of optimism for fruitful negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference as had the preceding year, it did not seem so necessary any longer. There was an alternative.

(S) Although the three major goals of the "one war" concept were to be given equal attention and priority, "the most important objective, the one with the highest payoff, was the pacification program." The success of pacification would dictate the degree of improvement necessary in the RVNAF to transfer to them functions and responsibility. It would indirectly determine the speed with which US forces would be withdrawn.

(C) The Pacification Program could only be described as highly successful. Key territorial security made perhaps the greatest contribution in 1969. An example of the above was Operation SEA FLOAT which rebuilt the resettled old Nam Can City in An Xuyen Province and opened waterways that had been virtually left to the enemy in the past. So spectacular was the success that two more hamlets, Tran Hung Dao I and II, sprung up in the immediate vicinity. Other similar projects resulted in settling or returning to former villages one million refugees during the year. The increase in the RF/PF forces of 72,000 men and their being equipped with the M16 rifle resulted in marked improvement of those forces. Growth of the People's Self-Defense Force (PSDF) and the assumption of patrol duties by the Vietnamese Navy greatly increased the GVN presence in the countryside. That presence stimulated local participation in the cause and was a source of positive psychological impact for the GVN while having a negative effect on the morale of the enemy forces. Village and hamlet elections were held throughout the year and at year's end over 90 percent of the local governments had been duly elected. The Chieu Hoi program exceeded planned goals with more than 47,000 ralliers.

(S) With the imposition of the 1 Nov 68 bombing halt it had been necessary to shift interdiction of enemy troops and materiel from NVN to Laos and within the RVN Border. The interdiction emphasis continued during 1969. In conjunction with the accelerated turn-over to VNN program and the redeployment of US forces, the operation of the "brown water" Navy became basically an interdiction force. The SEA LORDS force absorbed the men and craft which remained after disestablishment of the Mobile Riverine Force (CTF 117), and purely offensive operations of US ended in IV CTZ. Ground combat operations were no longer the large multi-battalion sweeps of the preceding years, as they were replaced by smaller unit actions in support of pacification. Enemy high points were both less frequent and less severe, primarily due to the success of interdiction operations and constant pressure applied against the enemy and his lines of communication. Nowhere was he allowed sanctuary within the borders of RVN. While enemy activity varied in intensity and there were highpoints in February, May, and July; there was no offensive similar to the Tet attacks of 1968. In 1969 the enemy had been pre-empted. As a senior MACV Commander stated, "The Battle of Hue was fought this year (1969) in the A Shau (Valley)."

(C) On 8 June the Midway Conference was held and upon completion of talks the RVN and US heads of state announced the initial withdrawal of US troops. The option for further withdrawals was to be geared to the improvement and modernization of the RVNAF, developments in

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Paris, and the status of enemy capabilities and activities. The first phase reduced US strength by 25,000, to include redeployment of the 9th Div (-) and the 9th USMC Regimental Landing Team. After completion of the first phase redeployment, the President announced, on 15 Sep, the second phase reduction of 40,500 authorized spaces. Included in Phase II was the 3d Mar Div (-) which was engaged in northern I CTZ along the DMZ. That phase was to be completed no later than 15 Dec. On that date, Phase I redeployment having been completed successfully, the President directed a third phase reduction of 50,000 spaces prior to 15 Apr 70.

(U) The President regarded "Vietnamization" as both a goal and a program to achieve that goal at the earliest practical time. It contained the same three elements as the "one war" concept: Improvement and Modernization of the RVNAF, Pacification, and Combat Operations. The program's genesis can be traced to March, when following a SECDEF visit to RVN, the President ordered a substantial increase in the training and equipment of RVNAF. In cooperation with the GVN a redeployment of combat troops was begun. The timetable was not to be announced and was dependent upon RVNAF strength, the level of enemy activity, and progress which might be made in the talks at Paris.

(U) The three increments or phases of redeployment were significant measures of progress of the Vietnamization program during the year. The RVNAF carried the battle to the enemy with little deterioration in the Allied position, while simultaneously improving their own potential.

(U) For the enemy, too, 1969 was a year of transition. Having failed to achieve success in the large scale attacks of 1968, he reverted to Phase II of guerrilla warfare concentrating on economy of force operations. A resolution issued by the 9th Conference of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), dated July 1969, was captured in October. It was probably the most important single document captured in the war, as it outlined the general course along which the enemy would pursue the war. It reviewed "all aspects of the situation in our war theater in the recent past," and set forth the mission, direction, and major operations to be conducted by the VC/NVA. The enemy's immediate mission was to win a decisive victory. A "three-pronged" attack was directed against three target areas. The war was to be prosecuted militarily, politically, and through foreign policy against the fronts of: the cities and urban areas, the jungle-and-mountain area, and the Mekong Delta.

(U) In alluding to their positive achievement, COSVN promised that the US had been defeated at the conference table and that the President was under attack by the people of the US who demanded an end to the war in Vietnam. It was alleged that being "defeated and weakened, the Americans have been forced to de-escalate in a passive position." The greatest Allied weakness was said to be the impasse in US strategy which was caught between internal conflict if troops were not withdrawn and collapse of the GVN if they were redeployed. And while the VC/NVA alluded to great victories of the "General Offensive and Uprising," the COSVN concluded that they had not produced any "leaping development of decisive significance." Their shortcomings they believed to be a failure to promote a strong political base, weakness in military proselyting and the slow development of guerrilla warfare. Leadership was found to be faulty and lacking resolution. The COSVN resolution did not mention the great losses of men and material which had occurred over the preceding years, the difficulties of replacement and resupply, nor did it mention the effects of pacification and Vietnamization which were doing real damage to the enemy.

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(C) The year also had its difficulties. A small hamlet in Quang Ngai Province became as well known as any world capital when stories broke of an alleged massacre at My Lai during March 1968. Sufficient evidence of irregularity in the operations in the My Lai area brought initiation of courts martial proceedings against several US personnel in on-scene command positions. A high level investigation panel --the "Peers Group"-- was directed by DA to determine the adequacy of the investigations and reports which immediately followed the My Lai incident and to determine if there had been any suppression of the reports concerning the My Lai incident. In addition, a careful re-examination of command guidance and training procedures was conducted to discover what, if any, short-falls might have contributed to a breakdown of moral leadership.

(C) The "Green Beret" case was another incident in which there was no satisfactory conclusion. Eight men were charged with conspiracy and premeditated murder of an alleged double agent. The Secretary of the Army ordered the charges dismissed to the complete satisfaction of almost no one; the accused believed they had been convicted by innuendo and irresponsible reporting while those pressing for trial felt due process of law had not been obtained.

(U) There were many overtures made by the US in continuing efforts to effect some detente in the stalemate between the adversaries. The bombing halt of 1 Nov 68 had been the first major step and was only successful in that substantive talks followed. But any hope for success slowly faded as the only concrete agreements reached in Paris were the shape of the conference table and the date upon which next to meet. In April, B-52 raids in-country were curtailed as a further demonstration of US willingness to de-escalate the conflict. No reciprocal action by the other side was forthcoming. On 3 Sep, the NVN leader, Ho Chi Minh, died and another proposal to diminish hostilities was extended by the US in a total cessation of B-52 bombing raids for 36 hours. Once again the enemy declined to reciprocate in any manner. Two unilateral redeployments of US troops did little if anything to change the enemy position. If any shift was evident it was the apparent return to Phase II guerrilla warfare while awaiting the complete unilateral withdrawal of US and Allied Forces. This suggestion is supported by the fact that while Free World losses diminished substantially, the infiltration of men and materials went on as extensive efforts were made by the enemy to repair interdicted supply routes from the north and to construct new ones.

(C) In conclusion, the year brought optimism, however guarded, that Vietnamization was a possible and positive method to accomplish US and Allied objectives. Pacification made significant strides, security country-wide improved, and on the combat fronts, while not marked by massive victories, there were certainly no defeats of significance. In practically every phase of the "one war" concept, the successes were on the Allied side. The enemy was forced to admit a degree of defeat, if only by his acknowledgement that he was required to revert to Phase II guerrilla warfare.

(U) The President restated US purpose and resolve in his 3 Nov address to the nation and the world:

"I am sure that you can recognize from what I have said that we have only two choices open to us if we want to end the war.

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-- I can order an immediate, precipitate withdrawal of all Americans from Vietnam without regard to the effects of that action.

-- Or, we can persist in our search for a just peace through a negotiated settlement if possible, or through continued implementation of our plan for Vietnamization if necessary, a plan in which we will withdraw all of our forces from Vietnam on a schedule in accordance with our program, as the South Vietnamese become strong enough to defend their own freedom.

I have chosen the second course.
It is not the easy way.
It is the right way."

(U) At year's end the course was charted, and US forces were vigorously pursuing the "right way."

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CHAPTER II

THE STRATEGY AND THE GOALS

US POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

(C) The US global objective could be stated as: "A free, independent community of nations, living at peace with each other." Implicit in this objective has been a US belief that only by preventing the further spread of Communism would it be possible to prevent the formation of a large power bloc which could break the global peace through additional "world wars." This belief led to the policy of containment of any Communist expansion by aggression or externally supported subversion beyond the existing borders of countries having Communist governments, in areas considered vital to our national interests.

(C) This containment policy has been pursued through a strategy which included the component concepts of credible deterrence, flexible response, massive retaliation, and collective security--that is, the development of a series of alliances and commitments. These strategic components have been reinforced by declarations of the US intention both to resist the expansion of Communism and to develop the necessary free world capability to deter any attempt at Communist expansion.

(C) The Republic of Vietnam (RVN) has become one of the primary military battlegrounds for the Free World's conflict with overt and covert Communist aggression. The commitment in RVN was one of the most crucial and complex elements in the US current effort to sustain its present national strategy of containing Communist aggression.

(C) Present US interests and objectives in RVN reflect post World War II US political and security interests and objectives in Eastern Asia and the Pacific Region as a whole. These interests and objectives were related to the balance of power in the region, and were reflected by US membership in SEATO and ANZUS, and by unilateral treaties with Japan, South Korea, Nationalist China, the Philippines, and Thailand. These treaties were consistent with those interests which led the US into the Korean conflict, and have been the basis for continued US presence in Asia.

(C) Since the late 1950s, externally supported Communist subversion and aggression have capitalized on factors contributing to internal instability in RVN. Consequently, the independence of the RVN has been jeopardized and its developing social system has been disrupted, thus threatening the distribution of power in Southeast Asia (SEASIA), and ultimately all of Asia. The fate of RVN was one of several major variables which impacted upon the maintenance of a balance of power favorable to US interests in Eastern Asia and the Pacific.

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US STRATEGY FOR RVN

(S) The US strategy for the RVN was focused on assisting the government of Vietnam (GVN) and its armed forces to defeat Communist subversion and aggression. This strategy embodied military operations, and financial and advisory assistance to aid in creating the secure environment necessary for the success of political, economic, and socio-psychological national development programs. Further, efforts had been made to encourage and assist the GVN progressively to assume greater responsibility for all aspects of building a free, independent, and viable nation.

(S) This strategy was established at the Department of Defense - State Department level in 1966. Varied operational concepts to support this strategy were developed by the JCS and CINCPAC, with the primary emphasis on maintaining simultaneous pressure against the enemy's disruptive and war-making capabilities, through three interrelated undertakings:

1. Destroy Viet Cong (VC) main forces and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces in RVN or, force the NVA to withdraw and separate the VC main force units from the population by providing a protective shield of containment through ground, air, and naval offensive operations against the VC and NVA main forces, LOCs, and into and within major base areas. (Until 1 Nov 68, NVN's war-making and war-supporting capability had been subjected to varying degrees of air and naval attacks in NVN and air attacks in parts of Laos. This portion of the operational concept was restricted to Laos after 1 Nov 68.)

2. Establish a militarily secure climate within which GVN control can be extended, consolidated, and sustained. This thrust involved accelerating offensive operations against VC provincial forces and guerrillas, with priority to eliminating or neutralizing the enemy political and military infrastructures, and simultaneously developing and maintaining suitably balanced RVNAF and other security forces that progressively were better trained, balanced, equipped, and motivated.

3. Improve the national development effort through integrated security, political, economic, social, and psychological programs.

(S) Although all three of these strategic thrusts had been conducted simultaneously well into 1968, priority was given to the first operational goal. The other two operational goals had received a relatively low priority of efforts and resources.

(S) The first operational goal, particularly the air and naval attack on NVN, was believed by some analysts to have influenced the North Vietnamese to agree to negotiate, and to shift emphasis to political activity. However, the enemy's freedom to operate across the borders of RVN from sanctuaries in Cambodia, Laos, and NVN precluded a greater success in providing the desired shield of containment. Sufficient success had been achieved, however, to permit greater emphasis on the second operational goal after mid-1968. This was exemplified by the increased tempo inherent in the Accelerated Pacification Campaign which continued through 1969. Emphasis on RVNAF improvement increased during 1969 as increases in RVNAF force structures and turnover of equipment were accelerated.

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(C) The "one war" concept promulgated by COMUSMACV in early 1969 recognized no such thing as a separate war of big battalions, pacification, or war of territorial security. Under this newer strategic concept, friendly forces were to carry the battle to the enemy simultaneously, in all areas of conflict, by strengthening cooperation between US commanders and advisors to the RVNAF on the one hand and US advisors to GVN province and district officials on the other. The major aspects of the "one war" concept were pacification (including VC infrastructure (VCI) elimination), RVNAF modernization and improvement, and combat operations, each to receive the highest priority, and each to be kept abreast of the others and moving forward at all times. In the employment of forces, all elements were to be brought together into a single effort. Ground forces, tactical air, B-52s, Regional Force/Popular Force (RF/PF), Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU), National Police Field Force (NPF), Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG), and Rural Development (RD) Cadre attacked the VC/NVA units, main and local forces, guerrillas, and the VCI across the broad spectrum of the conflict, to neutralize the enemy's capabilities and offensive options.

(C) As a corollary to the "one war" concept, significant emphasis was given to the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC), November 1968 through January 1969. Recognizing that insurgency would fail if cut off from popular support, the campaign sought to upgrade 1,000 additional contested hamlets, bringing them into a relatively secure category. Denying the enemy access to the population would deprive him of his mobility and make him divert combat troops to logistical duties for which he would otherwise impress local laborers. Pacification efforts continued throughout 1969 as the 1969 Pacification and Development Campaign began in February where the 1968 APC left off. The first objective of the 1969 phase of pacification was security of the RVN population. The Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) responses to enemy attempts at terrorizing of villages and to his attempts at disruption of the Pacification Program were to be prompt and decisive and the punishment of the enemy so severe that he would realize that any time he assaulted a hamlet, village, resettlement project, or other community, or an RF/PF element, he would receive a massive counteraction from friendly forces.

(TS) In August 1969, Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird promulgated an "Updated Statement of Mission of U. S. Forces in SEA". The text was as follows:

The objective is to allow the people of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) to determine their future without outside interference. To that end, and as directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, CINCPAC and COMUSMACV should assist the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) to take over an increasing share of combat operations. The tactical goal of the combat operations is to defeat the subversion and aggression which is intended to deny self-determination to the RVN people. This overall mission encompasses the following undertakings:

(a) Provide maximum assistance in developing, training, and equipping the RVNAF as rapidly as possible.

(b) Continue military support for accelerated pacification, civic action and security programs.

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(c) Conduct military operations designed to accelerate improvement in the RVNAF and to continue to provide security for US Forces.

(d) Conduct military operations to reduce the flow of materiel and manpower support for enemy forces in SVN.

(e) Maintain plans for a comprehensive air and naval campaign in Vietnam.

GUIDANCE FOR PLANNING

(S) The strategy for the conduct of the war was set forth annually by the GVN plans that were prepared in coordination with MACV. Two documents, the 1969 Pacification and Development Plan and the Combined Campaign Plan (CCP) 1969, AB 144, prescribed the 1969 strategy. Coordination with GVN of the total effort in 1969 was effected by the newly formed Central Pacification and Development Council (CPDC), a cabinet committee with a full time staff of senior military and civilian officials.

Pacification and Development Plan

(S) The 1969 Pacification and Development Plan was the first attempt by the GVN to present in a single document the strategy, concepts, priorities, and objectives to guide the total GVN pacification effort. Although a unilateral GVN plan, it was considered directive in nature for US advisors. Issued on 15 Dec 68 over the signature of the Prime Minister and other ministers or CPDC members, the plan provided guidance to all ministries, services, and echelons on all elements of the 1969 campaign. It expressed as its basic theme the need for a collegial spirit among all government forces and the people in the achievement of maximum results. It defined the eight primary objectives for 1969 as follows:

1. Under a general mantle of area security provided by the regular forces, use local security forces, reaction forces, and police forces at the hamlet and village level to control and secure 90 percent of the population; extend the national sovereignty throughout the country.
2. Eliminate 33,000 VCI under the PHOENIX Program and other joint operations conducted by police and army units.
3. Establish local governments in all villages throughout the country; elect Village Administrative Committees and Hamlet Managing Boards at all secured hamlets and villages; and organize a large training program for village and hamlet officials.

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4. Involve additional people in the People's Self-Defense organization to bring it up to 2 million members and arm 400,000 members for guard, surveillance, and patrol duties.

5. Rally 25,000 returnees.

6. Decrease the number of refugees to less than one million and resettle at least 300,000 persons.

7. Increase the information and propaganda effort by the training and proper use of Village Information Members and Hamlet Information Deputies.

8. Encourage the rural economy and increase rice production from 5 million to 6 million tons.

(S) The role of RVNAF in support of pacification was set forth in Annex I of the Plan in language compatible to Annex B of AB 144. Other annexes performed a similar function for the remaining seven objectives and prescribed Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) and province planning and reporting procedures.

(S) The 1969 Pacification Plan went into effect on 1 Feb, immediately after the completion of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. Corps commanders were given primary action responsibility for its execution on the basis of province plans prepared under Corps supervision and reviewed at the Saigon level. To focus and energize the effort, a set of intermediate goals was established for accomplishment by 30 June. These goals deliberately were set high to exact maximum effort.

The Combined Campaign Plan

(S) The Combined Campaign Plan (CCP) 1969, AB 144, issued on 30 Sep 68 was the single, bilingual document that provided basic guidance to the RVNAF and US/FWMAF's for the conduct of military operations in RVN. The 1969 plan inaugurated several technical changes in annual campaign planning which enhanced the status of RVNAF Joint General Staff (JGS). First, they prepared the plan with MACV assistance, as compared with the predecessor annual campaign plans which were prepared by MACV in cooperation with RVNAF, JGS. Second, US forces were included in the definition of FWMAF. Third, and most significant, the plan was signed by each of the national commanders of Allied armed forces in RVN.

(S) The assumptions for the plan were basically unchanged from 1968 except for acknowledging the peace negotiations and assuming that there would be no major increase in FWMAF levels beyond existing programs. There were two objectives stated:

1. To defeat VC/NVA forces. The related tasks were to conduct sustained, coordinated, and combined ground, sea, and air offensive operations against enemy forces, base areas, and logistics system; and to conduct surveillance and counterinfiltration, psychological, intelligence, and counter-intelligence operations.

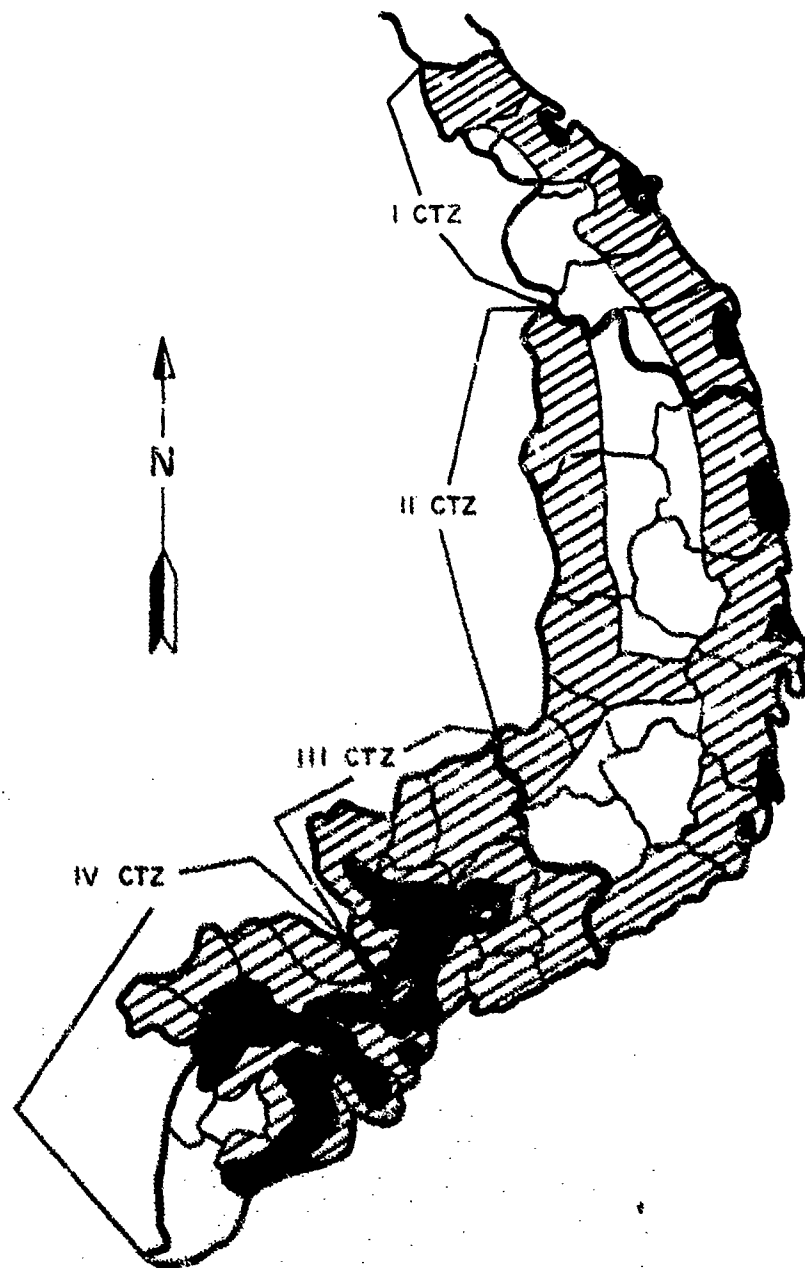
2. To extend GVN control in RVN. Related tasks were to secure towns, cities, political, economic and population centers, military bases and installations, and LOC; clear and



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CRITICAL PRIORITY AREAS



-  AREA FOR PRIORITY OF MILITARY OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS
-  PRIORITY AREAS FOR ALLOCATION OF PACIFICATION RESOURCES



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FIGURE II-1

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secure areas undergoing pacification; identify and eliminate VCI; develop self-defense forces; participate in population and resources control; and conduct civic action.

(S) The first objective and related tasks remained unchanged from the previous campaign plan, except for added mention of naval air and coastal surveillance activities. The second objective and related tasks added the task of VCI identification and elimination, and emphasized by separate statement that operations would be conducted to prevent enemy infiltration into the fringes of towns, cities, and areas adjacent to population centers. This latter task statement appeared to be an attempt to influence those units providing security for towns, cities, population centers, and similar areas to employ a more dynamic approach to security.

(S) A list of major goals was stated in the plan for use in establishing measures of progress for achieving the objectives. As compared with the 1968 CCP, the 1969 plan was noteworthy for a greatly reduced and simplified list of goals which appeared more meaningful and were more reasonably attainable than were some of the improbable "all" or percentile goals of the 1968 plan.

(S) The concept of operations for the basic plan was the application of resources to critical priority areas (See Figure II-1), while practicing economy of force in other areas. The forces were employed in four interdependent roles:

1. Offensive forces to conduct sustained operations aimed at the destruction of VC/NVA forces and base areas in RVN.
2. Border surveillance and reaction forces to operate along the DMZ and the Laotian and Cambodian borders and in coastal waters, to detect and destroy enemy incursions into RVN.
3. City protection forces to conduct operations on the fringes of cities to prevent enemy infiltrators from launching attacks and harassing towns, provincial capitals, and cities.
4. Territorial security forces to support the GVN pacification program in the provinces.

(S) The military effort was to maintain and extend the area within which the level of security was adequate to permit destruction of the VCI, and uninterrupted political, economic, sociological, and psychological programs of the GVN.

(S) This concept of operations in AB 144 was a significant change from that of the preceding AB 143. By inversion of the first two roles, the earlier "protective shield of containment" concept was abandoned. The emphasis on city protection forces was new, and the statement on the territorial security forces was added to the earlier concept of operations. Such a changing concept naturally was accompanied by changes in the application of force. The most important change in instructions related to the application of force by ARVN. The AB 144, in contrast to AB 143, directed a gradual phase down of ARVN battalions in support of pacification and on security missions. These two functions were to be performed by RF/PF as their raison d'être. The other RVNAF roles were affected. This trend was in complete accord with the area security concept and was to continue to receive emphasis and implementation.

(S) As for the FWMAFs, there was no functional separation of responsibilities between them and the RVNAF. In preparation for a time when the RVNAF would assume the entire

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responsibility, the Vietnamese regular forces were to participate within their capabilities in all types of operations. This, too, was compatible with the area security concept and had to be implemented. A technical change occurring in the instructions was the deletion of primary responsibilities for the US/FWMAFs and the substitution of FWMAF, who in coordination with RVNAF were to be responsible for:

1. Destroying the VC/NVA main forces, base areas, and resources.
2. Operating along the DMZ and border areas to detect and destroy invading enemy forces.
3. Assisting and reinforcing RVNAF as necessary in opening and securing LOCs, providing security for designated areas to include cities and selected pacification areas, and protecting national resources.

CINCPAC STRATEGY

(S) Six goals had been established at the Honolulu Conference in February 1966 as objectives for operations in RVN. These objectives formed the basis for the measurement of progress during 1966.

(S) In November 1966, the CINCPAC military strategy had been developed for Southeast Asia (SEASIA) included an integrated concept for the conduct of military operations against NVN and in RVN and Laos. Based upon this strategy, 10 goals, four of which were out-of-country goals, had been developed for the Measurement of Progress during 1967.

(S) The 10 goals for 1967 had been modified to reflect changing programs and to establish progressively higher goal objectives to be achieved during 1968. In addition, because of increasing emphasis directed toward reducing the VCI and improving RVNAF effectiveness, two new in-country goals for 1968 were re-evaluated in formulating the goals for 1969 and one new goal addressing enemy ground attacks or attacks-by-fire against population centers, economic areas, and bases was added. The 1968 goal to reduce imports into NVN was deleted from the four out-of-country goals.

COMBINED US/RVN STRATEGY

(S) The Combined Campaign Plan (CCP) for 1969 had been promulgated on 30 Sep 68; it provided initial guidance for conduct of operations by US/FWMAFs and RVNAF in RVN during 1969. The CCP described the mission of RVNAF and FWMAF's as to defeat the VC/NVA forces and assist the GVN to extend control throughout the RVN. To accomplish this mission, the basic objectives and goals were:

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1. To defeat the VC/NVA forces.
 2. To extend GVN control in RVN.
 3. Organize, equip, modernize and employ the RVNAF to achieve a maximum state of combat effectiveness.
 4. Inflict more losses on the enemy than he can replace.
 5. Increase the percent of the population and territory under GVN control through an expanded pacification effort.
 6. Reduce the ability of the enemy to conduct ground attacks or attacks-by-fire against population centers, economic areas, and bases.
 7. Deny the maximum number of base area sanctuaries in RVN to the enemy by their destruction or continuous neutralization.
 8. Enhance the territorial security capability of the RF and PF by proper employment and deployment, and by completing the planned force structure increase and modernization of equipment.
 9. Restore and secure, to the greatest extent possible, the road, rail, and water lines of communication.
 10. Increase the efforts to neutralize the enemy infrastructure.
 11. Increase the number of Hoi Chanh in CY69 in each CTZ.
 12. Maximize coordinated intelligence collection and counter-intelligence activities.

(S) The concept of operations was that:

1. The resources of the RVNAF and FWMAF would be applied to critical priority areas, with economy of force being practiced in less essential areas. Forces could be employed in four interdependent roles:

First, offensive forces would conduct sustained operations aimed at the destruction of VC/NVA forces and base areas in RVN.

Second, border surveillance and reaction forces would operate along the DMZ and the Laotian and Cambodian borders and in coastal waters, to detect and destroy enemy incursions into RVN.

Third, city protection forces would conduct operations on the fringes of cities to prevent enemy infiltrators from launching attacks and harassing towns, provincial capitals, and cities.

Fourth, territorial security forces would provide support for the GVN pacification program in the provinces.

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2. The military effort would seek to maintain and extend the area within which the level of security was adequate to permit the destruction of the VCI and the uninterrupted progress of political, economic, sociological, and psychological programs of the GVN. Once these programs were operative, the area was not to be abandoned.

(S) The following specific guidance was provided:

1. The sector is the prime level to prepare appropriate military support plans for province pacification programs. These plans are designed to coordinate military and civilian activities of all military forces, cadres, and administrative authorities, including FWMAF, if available, in order to achieve the following objectives:

a. Destroy enemy forces and infrastructure, deter terrorist and subversive actions to preserve permanent security in localities so that the pacification program can progress in an impressive manner and without interruption.

b. Support the administration in establishing effective local political agencies which can meet the people's wishes and motivate them to participate in their own government.

c. Support the administration in developing the local economy.

2. Support activities for pacification must be continuous, once started, with emphasis being given to the geographic areas of precedence and good pacification resources. For these activities, the RVNAF, with support from FWMAF, when required, have the primary mission of destroying enemy main and local forces and guerrilla forces. In those hamlets that have been pacified, the National Police, supported by the Popular Forces, are responsible for maintaining internal order and security, destroying enemy infrastructure and eliminating criminal elements. In villages where pacification is underway, this responsibility is assumed also by RD cadre groups. The people will participate in the maintenance of order and security depending on their own capabilities. Although the National Police are responsible for maintaining order and security within hamlets, destroying enemy infrastructure and eliminating criminal elements in pacified areas, the RVNAF may be used for this mission where the National Police are not yet capable or security conditions are not favorable.

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3. Coordinated military/civilian efforts to identify elements and members of infrastructure will be intensified and followed up by rapid and incisive reaction to exploit intelligence. Military forces will participate in the attacks on the political VCI through intelligence collection and will assist the police in the exploitation phases.

4. The people are the greatest asset to the GVN and gaining the active commitment of the people is the GVN goal. During this campaign every effort will be made to liberate people under enemy control and to restore public security throughout RVN. Similarly, the people are the greatest asset to the enemy and control of the people is the enemy's goal. With them, the enemy has most of the ingredients for success: food, supplies, money, manpower, concealment, and intelligence. During this campaign, selective efforts will be made to deny these essential assets to the enemy.

5. The majority of the population and major food-producing centers and other resources is within an area designated by this plan as the area for priority of military offensive operations. (Ed note: see Figure II-1). The enemy will be destroyed or driven from this area into sparsely populated food-scarce areas to permit the GVN to protect the population, control resources, and provide unrestricted use of the major lines of communications.

6. Special emphasis will be placed on the protection of provincial capitals and cities by:

a. Conducting military operations to destroy enemy units and bases discovered in surrounding areas.

b. Conducting regular day and night patrols and ambushes, including long range patrols and air reconnaissance activities in surrounding areas to discover enemy movements and troop concentrations. Well-timed operations will be conducted to destroy the enemy at a distance before they can infiltrate into provincial capitals and cities.

c. Coordinating with the local authorities to launch frequent surprise police operations to destroy underground enemy organizations, especially sapper organizations, and to uncover enemy weapon caches.

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d. Re-examining the locations of military post systems to insure that posts are located at vital points in surrounding areas where forces operating from them can control the enemy's avenues of approach.

e. Increasing intelligence activities and, in particular, developing the people's intelligence net to discover enemy rocket and mortar emplacements or weapon and ammunition caches.

f. Preparing counterbattery plans and using heliborne reaction forces to destroy or pursue the enemy immediately.

7. Continual emphasis will be placed on combined operations based on the principles of cooperation, coordination, and close partnership at all echelons. Combined planning and reciprocal support, either direct or general, will be effected wherever possible. Special emphasis will be given to coordinated artillery and air support plans and to combined intelligence and dissemination.

8. Systematic neutralization of the enemy's base areas and capture or destruction of his installations, supplies, and caches will be pursued aggressively. Priority of effort will be directed towards the neutralization of those base areas directly affecting areas of high population density, vital lines of communication, strategic government centers, and areas of economic importance.


9. Border and coastal defense activities will be increased to discover and destroy any enemy personnel and equipment infiltration into the territory of the RVN. Border and coastal defensive bases will be reexamined and located where control can be exercised on enemy infiltration corridors, both overland and by sea.

10. Long range reconnaissance patrols will be conducted to find the enemy. Night operations will be emphasized to discover and destroy the enemy.

11. The RVNAF, especially the Regional and Popular Forces, will be improved through force structure revisions, personnel management improvements, logistic improvements, and special training. Objectives are for the Popular Forces to become effective in pacification tasks and for the Regional Forces gradually to replace the Regular Forces in support of pacification

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and when capable to assume full responsibility for local and territorial security.

12. Combined RVNAF-FWMAF training will be conducted and use will be made of the training centers of RVNAF and FWMAF units, including mobile and local training teams to increase the combat potential of RVNAF and FWMAF.

(S) The CCP prescribed execution by the following scheme of maneuver: ³

I CTZ. Military forces were to be committed primarily in offensive operations to destroy enemy forces in the area and those which might invade across the DMZ and Laotian border. Operations were also to be conducted to destroy enemy bases, and to protect the areas of Hue and Danang and the main LOCs, especially Routes 1 and 9. GVN pacification activities were to concentrate on the populated coastal areas around Hue, Danang, and Quang Ngai, and extend to other populated areas along QL-1 as security conditions permitted.

II CTZ. Military forces were to operate to destroy enemy forces in the area and those infiltrating across the Laotian and Cambodian borders. Emphasis was to be placed on protecting the populated coastal lowlands, plus the cities of Kontum, Pleiku, and Ban Me Thuot, keeping open the main LOC, and destroying enemy bases. The GVN pacification program was to place initial emphasis on the populated coastal areas, and, as resources permit, be extended to other populated areas in the CTZ.

III CTZ. Primary efforts were to be to destroy enemy forces in the area and those infiltrating across the Cambodian border, to protect the vital Saigon/Gia Dinh areas, to keep land and water LOCs open, and secure and to expand the area under GVN control, especially surrounding the Saigon/Gia Dinh area. Emphasis of GVN pacification activities was to be on providing permanent GVN control in the highly populated areas and in the areas contiguous to LOCs emanating from Saigon.

IV CTZ. Combat operations were to be conducted to destroy the enemy and his bases. Land and water LOCs were to be cleared and defended, especially QL-4. Pacification efforts were to be concentrated on areas of high population density and economic importance and areas containing the vital land and water LOCs.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

(S) The principal operational guidance for RVNAF/US/FWMAF commanders was provided by the annual CCP (during 1969, AB 144). The CCP, AB 144, was complemented by the GVN 1969 Pacification and Development Plan which, by virtue of COMUSMACV instructions, had been made directive in nature to US advisory personnel. The guidance contained in the CCP was amplified or modified by messages, when necessary.

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(S) Operational guidance at the start of 1969 was established by a January MACV message published after the Commanders' Conference, at MACV Hq, 11 Jan. Early 1969 operational guidance was also based on MACV messages which had been sent in September and October 1968. As 1969 began, commanders could take their guidance from the September message which follows: 4

The manner in which all commanders have captured and demonstrated the spirit of the offensive is extremely pleasing. You have kept after the enemy relentlessly, never letting him relax, and accommodating him any time he wants to fight. The development of tactical concepts like 'Pile On' and others has demonstrated the ability of US Fighting Forces to devise methods and means for meeting any type enemy or situation.

While tactical operations are punishing the enemy, there are some reports (covered in reference meeting) to the effect that he is attempting to compensate for his tactical losses by another approach through which he hopes to gain a political victory despite his lack of success on the battlefield. Reports indicate that the enemy plans to capitalize on the old Ho Chi Minh adage that 'You may kill my soldiers, but as long as I have my cadre, I'll win in the end.'

Indications are that the enemy is currently devoting effort to expanding the VC cadre and infrastructure, and may be forming new VC local battalions so that he will be in position to take advantage of a situation that he may try to bring about himself by asking for a cease fire. We can't afford to let the enemy succeed in carrying out such a plan. We must not, repeat, not, get ourselves into a position where we can lose the war strategically after having defeated the enemy on the battlefield.

Accordingly, each commander is requested to expand his spoiling and preemptive operations, i. e., attacks against enemy main and local forces, base areas, infiltration routes, LOC to include an intensive drive against the VC infrastructure and political apparatus aimed at eliminating it just as rapidly as possible; not suppress, but eliminate. This drive will support and complement an intensified PHUONG HOANG (PHOENIX) program and will call for close coordination with all elements of the GVN and US Government in-country. These instructions are in consonance with the overall campaign plan for 1969. They do not change any missions or goals. It is an expansion of intensity across the board so that all

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available forces, i.e., military, paramilitary, and civilian, can be brought to bear simultaneously against the entire enemy spectrum. From the discussion at the commander's conference, you know what needs to be done.

The CG III MAF, CGs I and II FFORCEV, and SA IV CTZ will spearhead this activity. They have access to all chains of command through their dual-hatted positions as commanders/senior advisors: i.e., to the ARVN chain of command, and to the province, district, RF/PF, local police, national police, CIDG, and all others through their province, district, or other advisors. 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 all the VC infrastructure has been removed. Tactical elements are to assist primarily by a continuation of tactical operations, providing area security. In the process tactical units may be used as necessary to seal off areas for search, but not held on static missions. Existing assets may be redeployed as necessary in order to maximize the offensive role. The actual screening of the population is to be done by those who will be living among them, i.e., the RF/PF, police forces, and any other appropriate RVN agencies, all fully coordinated between the local US commander, ARVN commander or advisor, province and/or district chief and their US advisors. In the III and IV Corps Tactical Zones around Saigon, for example, friendly units are so deployed that they support action to eliminate the VC infrastructure. By elimination of the infrastructure from the cities, villages, and hamlets comprising the major population areas of RVN, the enemy can be defeated on all fronts. (You will be furnished information by this headquarters as to areas to target in the attack on the political anti-infrastructure, as well as objectives for the pacification campaign.) With this intensive attack on the infrastructure and the concurrent territorial security that will be entailed, you should be able to expand rapidly the other elements of pacification into these areas in the manner and with the objectives discussed at the referenced meeting. Once his infrastructure is eliminated, and the other elements of pacification have taken hold, it should be difficult for the VC to revive itself within the climate of confidence that this accomplishment should generate. Local police and Popular and Regional Forces should then be able to keep the weeds cut out of the garden.

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The situation is urgent. It is essential that we get moving on this phase of operations. Bring it up to and maintain it at, the tempo of our tactical operations. This concept has been discussed with the chief of the RVNAF Joint General Staff who wholeheartedly concurs. I'm looking forward to seeing the variety of means your ingenuity and expertise will devise in achieving the tempos and results desired in this area. We should move out on this program with such rapidity that by Tet 1969 the enemy will have nothing to celebrate.

Please forward a general outline of your plan to me so as to arrive not later than 15 Oct 68, but do not let this requirement delay your getting operations under way.

(S) This guidance was extended by the October 1968 message, as follows: ⁵


This guidance is an extension of that issued in reference. There's more freedom of movement throughout Vietnam today than there's been since the start of the US buildup. Friendly units are operating in areas in which they've never been before, e. g., the southern DMZ and western Quang Tri Province. Large caches have been confiscated in these areas. The enemy logistics machinery is being exposed, his caches seized, and his supply system disrupted. This situation presents an opportunity for further offensive operations which can destroy this machinery and have a significant effect on the outcome of the war.

The enemy is compelled to act in certain ways because he's critically dependent upon guerrillas and the VC infrastructure for his existence and operations. The enemy has no rear push supply system. He gets his supplies stored along his axes of advance well ahead of time. These axes have to be in and through VC controlled areas. Once supplies are in forward locations controlled by the VC, the enemy then advances on his supplies. So far, he has not attempted to advance his forces without these supplies being in place. For example, if he plans to attempt some action to counter the Allied offensives, he will begin by locating his caches, moving in equipment, hospital supplies, and food. He will also make provision for evacuation of his wounded and burial of his dead. These are things that he's got to do in advance, because his dependence on the VC makes his logistics system function within the constraints of that requirement. Moreover, even a dedicated Communist soldier has to be given assurance,

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however illusory, that some provision is made for taking care of the wounded.

Another point evident in the enemy's operational pattern is his understanding that this is just one, repeat one, war. He knows there's no such thing as a war of big battalions, a war of pacification, or a war of territorial security. Friendly forces have got to recognize and understand the one war concept and carry the battle to the enemy, simultaneously, in all the areas of conflict. In the employment of forces, all elements are to be brought together in a single plan--all assets brought to bear against the enemy in every area, in accordance with the way the enemy does his business. In the employment of ground forces, TACAIR, B-52s, RF/PF, RD Cadres, and CIDG, all are to be part of the plan aimed at the VC/NVA and the VC infrastructure. All types of operations are to proceed simultaneously, aggressively, persistently, and intelligently--plan solidly and execute vigorously, never letting the momentum subside.

Assuming that the enemy is now planning a winter-spring counter-offensive, it can be combatted successfully, if one determines the way the enemy will go about it. First, he will set his objectives. Second, he will establish his axes of advance, all based on areas in which guerrillas and VC infrastructure are strong. Third, he will work with the VC infrastructure and guerrillas to establish his supplies in depots or caches. Fourth, he will maneuver his main force units to take advantage of the supplies, security, reconnaissance, and guides provided by the guerrillas and VC infrastructure. He will thereby make maximum use of the only manner in which he can move, i.e., with the help of guerrillas and the VC infrastructure. This can be detected early, using relatively small numbers of personnel. Simultaneously, the attack against enemy base areas, supply points, main and local forces, and the VC infrastructure can continue unabated. Accordingly, all commanders at all echelons are requested to place more emphasis and attention on how the enemy conducts his business...how he operates, requesting their ARVN counterparts to do the same. Then, utilizing the knowledge thus gained, go after the enemy's machinery; crack his engine block, drain his oil, strip his gears, break his fuel lines, remove his spark plugs, and otherwise put his engine beyond repair or rebuild. We must destroy his local forces, guerrillas, and infrastructure. By doing this he can be rendered incapable of undertaking any further major actions.

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(S) On 11 Jan, at the COMUSMACV Commander's Conference, friendly courses of action to counter enemy options were discussed and additional operational guidance was developed. The enemy capabilities and options were identified as:

1. Option #1 - Multi-division attack from NVN through DMZ in an attempt to drive south toward Quang Tri City and Hue.
2. Option #2 - Reinforce MR TTH forces with one division through Laos for an attack on Hue.
3. Option #3 - Multi-division drive from Cambodian sanctuaries against Saigon.
4. Option #4 - Exercise Options #1, #2 and #3 simultaneously.
5. Option #5 - Exercise Options #1, #2 and threaten #3.
6. Option #6 - Exercise Options #1, #3 and threaten #2.
7. Option #7 - Exercise Options #2, #3 and threaten #1.
8. Option #8 - Threaten any or all of the above.

(S) The friendly courses of action were considered against the previously established area priorities of: first priority to the western portion of III CTZ and the northeast portion of IV CTZ protecting Saigon; second priority to I CTZ from the DMZ southeast to northern Quang Ngai Province; and third priority to the highland area of II CTZ. The result of the conference was development of the additional 1st Quarter 1969 operational guidance for Operation STEEL CABLE.

(S) Operational Guidance #1 was published in January. It referenced the three sets of operational guidance presented above and stated: ⁶

The formal thrust of our operations and the azimuth on which we are traveling are correct. The most important objective, the one with the highest payoff, is the 1969 Pacification and Development Campaign. The momentum generated by the current Accelerated Pacification Campaign has got to be maintained thru 1969 along with any other actions that take place. The resources currently available to allied forces are sufficient to meet any and all threats simultaneously, provided our cards are played at the right time and place. Every effort is to be made to insure the accuracy of intelligence that will permit this.

We can expect that the enemy will generate some type of strong reaction aimed at discrediting the GVN because of the success of the Pacification Campaign. This could take the form of a main force ground attack, a pacification fight at the village and hamlet level, or

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a combination of the two. In any event, this is what we are to plan against.

All Commanders are to:

a. Maintain the momentum of the pacification program and continue to expand it to the maximum degree possible... let nothing interfere with this... continue to make this a combined effort of Free World Forces, RVNAF, Province and District Chiefs, RF, PF CIDG, National Police Field Forces, Intelligence Centers, and all other GVN agencies. Everybody working together at all times.

b. Integrate Psychological Operations into all activities... Guidance in Psy Ops will come from this headquarters.

c. Maintain constant pressure on the VC infrastructure, Liberation Committee, guerrillas, VC local forces, and VC/NVA main forces... Stay on top of them and smash every move they try to make... every option they attempt to exercise.

Let's make this a hard driving, hard working Tet, dedicated to peaceful Tets in the future.

(S) Operational Guidance #2 was issued in February: 7

A recent incident involving VC harassment of SVN citizens gives cause for considerable concern. A VC force twice, on successive days, invaded a resettlement hamlet and forced its adult inhabitants to go to adjoining areas and work for the VC. There was no friendly reaction to this aggression until the third or fourth day. Such a slow reaction to enemy initiatives is not to be tolerated!

Security must be provided to the SVN population. Security is vital to pacification and is the first objective of the 1969 Pacification and Development Campaign. It is the duty of every friendly armed formation to see that necessary security is provided. Operational guidance in this area is as follows.

a. Major force commanders are to ensure that a system is established whereby units can receive immediate FLASH notice of molestation of any villages, hamlets, settlements, or RF/PF elements within their AO.

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b. Units are to maintain a reaction capability to defeat enemy attempts at disruption of the Pacification Program. RVNAF will be encouraged to play a major role in this program.

c. Responses are to be so prompt and decisive and the punishment of the enemy so severe that he will realize that any time he assaults a hamlet, village, resettlement project, or other community, or an RF/PF element he will receive a massive response from friendly forces.

d. Commanders will insure that security of villages and hamlets within each AO is given the highest priority, and each village or hamlet is aware of the friendly unit to be contacted when reaction force assistance is required.

e. This operational guidance will be incorporated in all Standard Operating Procedures for support of the Pacification Program.

JGS has been requested to issue similar instructions through ARVN channels.

It is requested that this headquarters be informed of responsive operational procedures presently in being or planned that meet this objective.

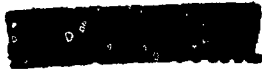
(S) In summary, beginning-1969 operational guidance emphasized the spirit of the offensive and relentless attacks against the enemy. It recognized both the enemy's political and military threats and advocated expanded spoiling and pre-emptive operations against all types of enemy organizations and facilities, with particular emphasis placed on elimination of the VC infrastructure. This guidance recognized that there was just one war and the battle was to be carried to the enemy, simultaneously, in all areas of conflict. Friendly forces were to be brought together in a single plan against the enemy in accordance with the way he operated. The 1968 guidance directed maintenance of the momentum gained during the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC) through continued combined effort of the Free World Forces and CVN. Psychological warfare operations were to be integrated with all activities. Further, it re-emphasized mandatory, prompt, and decisive responses by commanders to enemy harassment of RVN citizens and elicited punishment for the enemy so severe that he would realize that his assaults upon communities would result in a massive response from friendly forces. Security must be provided to the RVN population and it was the first objective of the 1969 Pacification and Development Campaign.

(C) During the early part of the year there were intelligence indicators that the enemy would attempt to reduce his casualties by emphasizing sapper attacks in lieu of conventional assaults. Although such attacks never achieved more than spotty and undependable results, the potential of this tactic was great, and COMUSMACV published the following guidance in July: 6

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1. Sapper attacks continue to result in unacceptable casualties and damage to friendly installations. These operations follow a clear pattern of careful and detailed preparation to detect and exploit weaknesses in installation defenses.

2. Review of successful sapper attacks against installations reveals inadequate preparation of defensive positions, adherence to fixed routines, failure to vary perimeter defenses or anti-intrusion devices, failure to vary perimeter wire on a daily basis, and improper conduct of the defense. Defeat of sapper attacks has resulted from well prepared defenses conducted by alert and well trained forces.

3. Prior operational guidance... continue(s) to apply. Additional operational guidance is as follows:

a. Standard position defense principles and techniques are valid against sapper operations. US forces will aggressively patrol outside the perimeter to deny the sapper the time for detailed reconnaissance, preparation and infiltration. Barriers will be correctly constructed, covered by observation and fire, and supplemented by anti-intrusion devices. Established routines will be avoided. Alertness of defending forces and willingness to deviate from established patterns are keys to the defeat of a sapper attack.

b. Regardless of a unit's primary mission, counter-sapper measures will be used. Logistic, aviation, and engineer units present lucrative targets to sappers. Commanders will insure that adequate resources and emphasis are given to defending against sapper attacks.

4. Commanders are requested to review their defenses against sappers, giving particular attention to:

- a. Preparing and improving bunkers and defensive positions.
- b. Constructing and inspecting barriers.
- c. Proper emplacement of weapons and mines.
- d. Conducting aggressive reconnaissance.
- e. Eliminating routines.



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- f. Exercising reaction plans.
- g. Planning and coordinating illumination and supporting fires.
- h. Clearing fields of fire.
- i. Installing anti-intrusion devices.
- j. Conducting counter-sapper training.

(TS) The concept of "Vietnamization", which had first been publicly pronounced by RVN President Thieu in his 31 Dec 68 speech, was given additional impetus by SECDEF Laird's August promulgation of an "Updated Statement of Mission of US Forces in SEA" (The text of the mission statement appears earlier in this chapter under "US Strategy for RVN".) In November COMUSMACV instructed his commanders that the main thrust was to be placed on maintaining and expanding the degree of security of the total population of the RVN. ⁹

MACJ5 ACTIVITIES

(S) In addition to the preparing and maintaining of contingency plans, MACJ5 conducted a large number of studies on a wide variety of subjects. A catalogue of these studies is not within the scope of this history. The other areas of major responsibility were post hostilities or T-Day planning, strategic or long range planning, and matters pertaining to strategy at the Paris Talks.

T-Day Planning

(S) As was the case in 1968, T-Day planning, the planning for the day that hostilities in RVN terminated, consumed a great amount of time and effort in MACJ5 in 1969.

(S) In January the CINCPAC Forces Data Base (STALA) was successfully updated to provide MACV with an improved emergency withdrawal capability under Manila Communique or T-Day withdrawal alternatives. Then, during February the transition from the STALA automatic data system to the Force and Materiel (FAMREP) automatic data system passed two major milestones as:

- a. Phasing information was included in the FAMREP for the first time.
- b. The initial machine runs of FAMREP data were received. Work on improving the completeness and accuracy of the FAMREP data continued through the year, and in September the CINCPAC's FAMREP was used to prepare movement tables for KEYSTONE CARDINAL (Phase II Redeployment). This action marked the first use of FAMREP as a redeployment tool. After the June presidential announcement of withdrawal of additional troops, MACV components

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were given 15 days to update personnel and materiel information in FAMREP. This updated information, which reflected only those personnel and that equipment which would move as a unit, was then used to prepare movement tables for the redeployment.

(S) A study was prepared in March to determine the desirability of moving the envisioned residual Command/MAAGV Headquarters from Tan Son Nhut to Long Binh, Bien Hoa Province, in the post hostilities period. The study concluded that the disadvantages of moving the headquarters to Long Binh outweighed the advantages. It recommended that no further consideration be given to moving the Command/MAAGV Headquarters to Long Binh and that appropriate plans be modified to reflect the location of the headquarters in Saigon. The study was approved by COMUSMACV.

Support of Paris Talks

(S) Throughout the year MACJ5 continued to support the US negotiators at the Paris Talks. The BAMBOO SERIES of messages which had begun in October 1968 continued. These joint Embassy/MACV messages were the result of meetings between senior MACV officers and high level Embassy personnel at which US proposals, counterproposals, and negotiating strategy pertaining to Vietnam negotiations in Paris were discussed.


(S) Over 140 fact sheets were prepared and/or updated for use by the US negotiating team. These fact sheets covered key data on subjects in COMUSMACV's area of responsibility which might be raised in the course of negotiations.

(S) In February a military working group composed of working level JGS/MACV military planners was organized to examine the key negotiation issues and to recommend broad negotiating parameters for approval at the Saigon consultation meetings between the RVN President and the US Ambassador. The group also exchanged views and provided detailed information to the respective military representatives in Paris, and responded to a need for providing practical details for implementing proposals generated by the Paris delegation.

(S) MACV continued to provide certain additions and changes to the planned opening statements at the plenary sessions in Paris. These recommendations were coordinated through the US Embassy Political Section and sent to Paris.

Contingency Plans

(C) Contingency planning during 1969 involved the development of operation plans (OPLANS) as directed by COMUSMACV or higher headquarters and the updating of those OPLANS already published. The status of MACV OPLANS as of 31 Dec 69 was:

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OPLANS

<u>Short Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Changes</u>
COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 1-69	28 Jan 69	C1/17 Jul 69
COMUSMACV/SEASIA OPLAN 22-66	25 Aug 66	C1/10 Feb 67
COMUSMACV OPLAN 27-69	5 Jul 69	C1/10 Oct 69
COMUSMACV OPLAN 32-64 (Phase II)	1 Jul 63	C3/15 May 64
COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 32-64 (Phases III & IV)	15 May 64	C7/10 Nov 67
COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 39-65	15 Jun 65	C2/23 Jan 67
COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 41-69	12 Jun 68	C1/14 Dec 68
COMUSMACV OPLAN 41-69	22 May 68	C1/25 Nov 68
COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 42-69	8 Jul 68	C3/8 Feb 69
COMUSMACV/COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 43-69	2 Jul 69	C1/26 Sep 69
COMUSMACV OPLAN 5J60	1 Sep 68	C3/16 Oct 69
COMUSMACV OPLAN 5J65	1 Jun 69	C1/27 Oct 69
COMUSMACV OPLAN 5J69	12 Mar 69	C2/5 Nov 69
Central Region SEATO Field Forces OPLAN 4/69	20 Jan 69	C1/13 Jun 69
SEATO Field Forces Draft OPLAN 5/68	5 Sep 68	Being Revised
COMUSMACV Contingency Plan - ROKFV	22 Jun 68	
COMUSMACV OPLAN 171-69	5 Jul 69	
COMUSMACV OPLAN 183-69	10 Aug 69	
COMUSMACV OPLAN 186-69	1 Nov 69	

(TS) COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 1-69 (General War Plan) provided for the conduct of unilateral defensive and offensive operations in SEASIA in support of CINCPAC OPLAN 1-67 (GWP). The plan called for defensive operations initially, a holding action as far forward as possible, the probability of early redeployment of US forces from SEASIA to other strategic PACOM locations and Europe, and retention of airfields, ports and key LOCs with 3 2/3 US Army divisions, and, at least initially, 2 1/3 US Marine divisions in Thailand, Laos, and RVN until the results of the initial nuclear exchange and/or the advisability of withdrawing or augmenting forces were determined.

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(TS) COMUSMACV/COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 22-66 (Support of Internal Uprising and Revolution) provided military assistance in the event of revolutionary outbreaks in NVN. The plan, which supported CINCPAC OPLAN 22-66, envisioned a 3-phase operation:

Phase I - Planning, training, intelligence, PSYWAR, covert, and overt activities.

Phase II - All measures short of direct US intervention.

Phase III - All measures including direct US intervention.

Military and paramilitary forces from RVN and active and passive groups from NVN would be employed.

(TS) COMUSMACV OPLAN 27-69 was a plan for the reinforcement of the ROK in the event North Korea should attack South Korea. It involved the redeployment of 3 1/3 Army divisions and six AF tactical squadrons together with combat support and support elements to Korea.

(TS) COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 32-64 was a 4-phase plan for the defense of SEASIA under conditions ranging from a state of heightened tension through direct CHICOM intervention and supported CINCPAC OPLAN 32-64. Phase I was a state of heightened tension which had long since been bypassed. Phase II envisioned subversive insurgency which had been more than implemented in RVN, but had not been implemented for Thailand. Phase III dealt with overt NVN intervention and Phase IV with overt CHICOM attack. The US had almost twice the forces in RVN in 1969 that this oplan called for in Phase IV. The plan had been overtaken by events.

(TS) COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 39-65 supported CINCPAC OPLAN 39-65 and was a unilateral US contingency plan for operations to deter, prevent, or cause cessation of CHICOM aggression. The plan called for assigned forces to conduct limited warfare (pre-emptive offensive and counteroffensive by use of air, naval, and ground forces) against Communist China and NVN in the defense of SEASIA.

(TS) COMUSMACV OPLAN 41-69 was a unilateral capabilities plan which provided for the defense of RVN and Laos against limited (four to six division) CHICOM intervention in current operations. This plan was based on the ground forces in RVN being reinforced with up to 17 divisions in 120 days and the availability of 29 tactical fighter squadrons, two Marine Air Wings, one Marine Air Group, and nine attack aircraft carriers (CVA).

(TS) COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 41-69 was a unilateral capabilities plan which provided for defense of mainland SEASIA against overt CHICOM intervention in current combat operations. Priority was given to the defense of RVN and Thailand. The plan was based on the ground forces in RVN being reinforced with up to 20 divisions in six months, and the availability of 37 AF tactical fighter squadrons, nine CVAs, two Marine Air Wings, and one Marine Air Group.

(TS) COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 42-69 was a unilateral plan to counter CHICOM intervention in current combat operations in SEASIA by conducting extensive air and naval offensive operations against mainland China and NVN to cause Communist China to cease its aggression. These operations would be conducted concurrently with holding actions by land and air forces to contain the invading forces and to protect the forward operating and logistic base complexes in SEASIA. This plan was based on retention of those ground forces in RVN and the availability of 63 AF tactical fighter squadrons, 12 CVAs, two Marine Air Wings, and 80 B-52s.

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(TS) COMUSMACV/COMUSSEASIA OPLAN 43-69 provided for the redeployment of major combat forces to Europe in the event of the outbreak of hostilities there. It involved the movement of 4 1/3 Army divisions, a Marine expeditionary brigade, 17 AF tactical fighter squadrons, and combat support and support elements.

(S) COMUSMACV OPLAN 5J60 (Non-combatant Emergency and Evacuation) delineated tasks and responsibilities of COMUSMACV and component and subordinate commanders for the care, protection, and evacuation of US non-combatant personnel and designated aliens from the RVN.

(S) COMUSMACV OPLAN 5J65 (Evacuation of Selected Personnel and Equipment) was in support of CINCPAC OPLAN 55-66. This plan provided for the security and evacuation of selected US military and civilian personnel who were concerned with the collection, production, and dissemination of SIGINT/ELINT/COMSEC information and who were under duty and travel restrictions.

(U) COMUSMACV OPLAN 5J69 was a plan for the redeployment phase of post hostilities planning in RVN.

(TS) Central Region SEATO Field Forces (CRSFF) OPLAN 4-69 provided for the defense of the Protocol States (Laos, Cambodia, RVN) and Thailand in case of attack by NVN or Communist China. In 1967, the plan was used in the conduct of Exercise AURORA and in 1968 for Exercise RAMASOON.

(TS) SEATO Field Forces (SFF) Draft OPLAN 6/68 was a requirements plan that provided for the defense of the Protocol States (Cambodia, Laos, and RVN) against major aggression by NVN armed forces with the aim of inflicting a quick and decisive defeat on those forces.

(TS) COMUSMACV Contingency Plan-ROKFV provided for the redeployment from RVN to Korea of all ROKFV in the event of an outbreak or the threat of an outbreak of hostilities in Korea.

(S) COMUSMACV OPLAN 171-69 was a contingency plan for the redeployment phase of post hostilities planning in the RVN. The plan provided for the establishment of a MACV/MAAGV or a US/FWMAF combat support force to remain in the RVN indefinitely. This plan superseded COMUSMACV OPLAN R-2, dated 21 Sep 68.

(S) COMUSMACV OPLAN 183-69 was a general plan for the reduction of US Forces in RVN prior to the cessation of hostilities. The plan provided for the phased redeployment of forces and materiel subsequent to the first 25,000 force redeployment.

(S) COMUSMACV OPLAN 186-69 was a requirements plan based on a best estimate of residual force requirements under a given set of assumptions. The plan provided for US support to RVNAF in operations against VC/NVA forces and for assisting the GVN in expanding control and influence in RVN. The actual residual force could be considerably different than stated in the basic plan based on enemy activity, the status of RVNAF, and the progress of pacification. This plan was to be used as a point of departure for future planning. In particular, it was to be used for coordinating the consolidation and disposition of bases and the planned phasedown to the T-Day posture in COMUSMACV OPLAN 171-69.

(S) There were also more localized contingency plans. In support of either III MAF or II FFORCEV, the CG, I FFORCEV was to be prepared to deploy one infantry brigade of three

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battalions with combat and combat service support to include direct support artillery and general support aviation on 36-hour notice. This was designated Operation STEEL CABLE ALPHA. Under Operation STEEL CABLE BRAVO the CG, I FFORCEV was to be prepared to deploy one airborne infantry brigade of three battalions, similarly supported, on 36-hour notice. In either case, movement was to be from airfields selected by the CG, I FFORCEV to locations designated by the receiving force commander. The receiving force commanders were to be prepared to assume OPCON of all, or any elements, of an infantry brigade and/or an airborne brigade from I FFORCEV. On order to execute, they were to designate the location of arrival airfields for the deployment of indicated units. The Commander, 7AF was tasked to provide the necessary airlift on order to execute. The CO, Transportation Management Agency was tasked to receive movement requirements and arrange air or surface transportation as required, and the CG, USARV was tasked to support the move as required. ¹⁰

(S) In support of II CTZ under Operation STEEL CABLE the following forces were available: ¹¹

1. CG, 1st Mar Div was to provide one reinforced infantry regiment.
2. CG, 23d Inf (Americal) Div was to provide two battalions from one brigade.
3. CG, I FFORCEV was to provide one infantry brigade and/or one airborne brigade.

Two ARG/SLFs were available only when authorized for re-insertions. Such authority would be requested, but employment of the SLFs was to be solely dependent upon the approval of the JCS, and a readiness posture of 120 hours for RVN was prescribed.

POLITICS - INTERNAL

(U) A republican form of government came to South Vietnam following an October 1955 referendum which offered the electorate a choice between the former Japanese puppet emperor, Bao Dai, and a republic with Ngo Dinh Diem as chief of state. In the brief interval since then, a workable, but still inchoate political process had evolved. During 1969 the precise relationships between, and the prerogatives of, the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches of the government continued ill-defined. Successful prosecution of the defense against the Communist aggression depended heavily on the capability of the leaders of the nation to find sufficient common ground on which to base the huge effort which was being undertaken. The leaders involved were not only the chief executive and the military, but also the working politicians, the religious leaders, labor leaders, and influential individuals in essentially private life. The arena in which COMUSMACV operated can only be appreciated within the context of political activity in RVN during 1969. The following treatment exposes some of the more salient political currents of the year.

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GVN - NFLSVN Relations

(S) Vice President Ky's 22 Dec 68 statement that the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN) was a reality with which the GVN had to and was willing to deal had caused considerable surprise and confusion in Saigon. A number of public figures and newspapers had called immediately for clarification of the GVN stand, but there was no direct official reference to Ky's remarks until 31 Dec when a Ministry of Information spokesman stated that Ky had been erroneously quoted. "In fact," the spokesman said, "VP Ky actually stated that 'we can talk with members of the NFLSVN as members of an opposition group, and we will talk with them only after all Communist troops have pulled out of the South. At that time, such a move would be regarded as talks between the constitutional and legal government of RVN and an opposition group'".

(S) In speeches in Dalat and in An Xuyen Province in early January, President Thieu vigorously restated the GVN position that there would be no cession of territory and no dealings with the NFLSVN as an equal. President Thieu also asserted in An Xuyen that the RVN would never agree to "sit down and speak on an equal level" with NFLSVN representatives. In Dalat, he reiterated this position.

(C) At a restricted question and answer session with foreign newsmen on 25 Mar, Thieu explained that within the framework of a peace settlement, the GVN could not accept an NFLSVN presence in the government, could not accept the formation of a Communist party "as such", and would not allow the propagation of Communist doctrine.

(C) At a press conference in Saigon, 28 May, Nguyen Khac Thieu, Chairman of the Hue City Council and a prominent leader in past militant Buddhist struggle movements against the GVN, strongly condemned the VC for mass murders of citizens of Hue during the 1968 Tet attack. He concluded his conference by stating that the majority of people in Hue and Thua Thien Province were convinced that it was impossible to live with the Communists. He added that the people of Hue were opposed to the GVN, but if forced to choose between the GVN and the Communists, they would choose the former.

(C) During a 22 Jul speech, President Thieu said that the NFLSVN realized that once they would agree to participate in elections it would take two years to organize them, by which time the GVN would be so strong the NVN forces would have to withdraw completely. At that time, the Communists would not dare cheat in elections, because they would be under the watchful eyes of foreign observers.

(U) At year's end, the official government stand remained the same. No cession of territory would be contemplated, and NVN - Peoples Revolutionary Government (PRG) (formerly NFLSVN) intercourse would be entertained only on the basis of a legal government dealing with an opposition party.

Political Mobilization

(C) In early March President Thieu instructed GVN ministries to develop a program designed to assist in achieving political unity and bring about "political mobilization". The purpose of this program was clarified on 7 Apr when President Thieu publicly announced to the

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National Assembly his intention to participate actively in the mobilization of a broadly based, pro-GVN political organization. Indications developed that such groups as the Revolutionary Dai Viet Party, the Nhan Xa Party, the Greater Solidarity Force, and the remnants of the Lien Minh would join the President's group, and that the Progressive Nationalist Movement (which included the Tan Dai Viet Party), the Unified VNQDD, the Movement for the Renaissance of the South and several other mostly sudiste-oriented groups would be in opposition. (See ORGANIZATIONS OF POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN RVN, this Chapter.) There were also some indications that pro-An Quang elements, including several Assembly members, would join with sudiste groups in the opposition. On 14 Apr the National Salvation Front, led by Senator Tran Van Don decided, to withdraw from the Lien Minh.

(C) In a meeting with President Thieu on 5 May, representatives of the larger parties who were prospective members of the pro-GVN front told the President that they wanted the Front to be composed only of the major parties, and questioned the principle that Thieu should automatically be the leader of the Front. Thieu agreed to include only the larger parties and disclaimed any intent to force his leadership on the Front. Thieu impressed on the politicians that there would be no talk of cabinet positions until they had formed a cohesive majority in the National Assembly and had demonstrated that they could work together in support of the government. The Front was tentatively named the National Social Democratic Front (NSDF). Several of the most important non-Communist opposition groups in RVN met together on 15 and 22 Jun to discuss the establishment of some sort of organization. Most of the groups represented had in the past shown considerable electoral strength, and the participants showed keen awareness of the need for nationalist parties to organize in order to face the imminent Communist political challenge.

(U) By the end of the year, the membership of the party was not yet stabilized. Factions were still joining and leaving, and although the party manifested some tenuous evidence of strength and cohesiveness, there remained much to be done in the way of consolidation.

Politics and the Budget

(S) In a 6 Jan vote, the Lower House failed to override Upper House (UH) cuts in the 1969 National Budget. Thus, the budget as passed by the UH on 26 Dec 68 went to the President for further action. The 1969 budget stood at over \$VN 128 billion expenditures, and \$VN 80 billion in revenues.

(C) The National Assembly (NA) met in joint session 14 Jan to debate whether or not the President had authority to propose amendments to the National Budget once it had been passed by the NA. The President had requested that the NA restore the \$VN 1.3 billion which had been cut from the budget by the Upper House. After almost four hours of heated debate, the NA requested a Supreme Court ruling on the question. The Supreme Court decided 31 Jan that the President might amend the executive portion of the budget bill (the overwhelming part), but not those portions affecting the NA, the Judiciary, nor, apparently, the Inspectorate.

(C) The lengthy confrontation between the Executive and the NA over the 1969 National Budget intensified sharply 28 Feb when President Thieu took the unexpected step of promulgating the executive version of the budget, including his amendments. A 13 Jun Supreme Court decision determined that the President had acted improperly in promulgating the budget in those

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circumstances, and that the NA had also acted wrongly in failing to vote on the substance of the matter. The Court said that presidential amendments to NA draft laws stood unless rejected by an absolute majority (98) of the total membership of both houses. However, since the decision was merely a constitutional interpretation and did not concern itself with the constitutionality of any particular law, the 1969 National Budget would stand as promulgated by the president unless further challenged.

(C) The Lower House in special session 23 Aug, completed action on executive amendments to the 1969 budget. The LH sharply slashed GVN requests from \$VN 21 billion to \$VN 12 billion. The Ministry of Defense suffered most. Its appropriations were cut by \$VN 5 billion. Funding for salary increases for civil servants and soldiers, on the other hand, was boosted by almost \$VN 2.5 billion.

Troop Reductions

(S) In a year-end speech on 31 Dec 68, President Thieu had stated that in 1969 RVNAF would be prepared to replace some Allied troops, and that RVN should gradually assume the responsibility for defending itself.

(S) Vice President Ky said on 6 Jan that he expected NVN would withdraw its troops infiltrated into RVN because the battlefield was becoming more and more unfavorable to them. Ky repeated his belief that if NVN should withdraw its troops the US would gradually do the same, and that as soon as the security of RVN was guaranteed by an international military force, the NFLSVN problem would become an internal issue which could easily be solved. Statements relative to replacement of US troops by RVNAF touched off waves of speculation that the figure might be as high as 200,000. There was some uneasiness at the prospect of US troop withdrawals, but most observers did not seem particularly alarmed.

(C) President Nixon's 14 May speech was initially greeted by most Vietnamese observers with satisfaction and relief at the president's strong reaffirmation that the US would not permit any solutions to the conflict which did not allow the RVN people the right to determine their own future.

(C) As the date for the departure of President Thieu for his 8 May meeting at Midway Island with President Nixon drew near, declarations were passed by both houses of the NA. These declarations, meant to serve as support for President Thieu in his meeting with President Nixon, rejected coalition and confirmed support of the RVN Constitution. The two presidents announced during their meeting that it had been decided to order the immediate redeployment from RVN of a division equivalent of approximately 25,000 men. The troop replacement was to begin within 30 days and to be completed by the end of August. At the request of 47 deputies, the LH met in plenary session on 18 Jun to discuss the Midway meeting. Several deputies criticized the president's actions, but in the end the most dramatic action that could successfully be carried was a decision to forward the minutes of the session to the president. Even this mild expression of NA displeasure required two rounds of voting to obtain the minimum 45 votes necessary.

(C) President Nixon's 30 Jul visit to Saigon was interpreted by the people of RVN as a demonstration of continued US commitment to the GVN and to President Thieu.

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(C) On 19 Sep as the first guest on a new TV interview program, President Thieu stressed that the GVN would make no new peace initiative, and he said, "We are under no pressure, from within or without, to make one -- especially from the US, as has been rumored."

(C) Newspaper reaction to the troop reduction was generally reserved and varied.

(U) The official attitude remained one of encouraging ARVN substitution for US and FWMAF troops in an orderly manner. The popular attitude appeared to be one of resignation and quiet optimism that "Vietnamization" could work.

Elections

(C) The first of four consecutive Sundays of village and hamlet elections was held 2 Mar. Though there were few reports of direct VC intimidation, fear of VC reprisal caused many candidates to be reluctant to run and reduced the enthusiasm of the villagers for voting. Observers reported that voters displayed a somewhat better understanding of voting procedures, and expressed more appreciation of their opportunity to elect local leaders than had been noted in previous local elections. I, II, and III Corps reported some political party activity in connection with the elections. Nearly 90 percent turned out on 2 Mar to elect 624 village and 196 hamlet officials. Eighteen elections were postponed for lack of candidates and two for unstated reasons. The following Sunday, 9 Mar, elections were held in 563 hamlets and 193 villages. Once again VC harassment was light and ineffective. On 16 Mar elections were held in 193 villages and 795 hamlets out of a total of 194 villages and 800 hamlets scheduled, with no report of VC interference. Similar results were obtained throughout the cycles of elections, and the end of the year saw a large increase in the number of hamlets and villages with popularly elected officials.

ORGANIZATIONS OF POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN RVN

(U) The RVN political scene was extremely complex. In general, I CTZ was the most politically active area. Saigon, and the provinces near it, plus coastal II CTZ, also had active political parties. The population of the Delta, traditionally, had shown little interest in politics; and the Central Highlands were in a special category because they were inhabited largely by Montagnard groups.

(U) The following discussion lists the organizations of political significance in RVN in 1969. Each group described is given a brief biographical sketch and a number to facilitate cross referencing. Both English and Vietnamese names are given each organization as English translations may vary considerably.

The National Social Democratic Front and its Member Parties

1. National Social Democratic Front (Mat-Tran Quoc-Gia Dan-Chu Xa-Hoi) was a grouping of political parties which was inaugurated 25 May 69. This front was organized by President Thieu following his 7 Apr speech in which he announced he would organize a front under his leadership, and called on the opposition to do the same. The parties in this front follow:

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2. Vietnamese Nationalist Party (Viet-Nam Quoc-Dan Dang), often called by its initials, the VNQDD was founded in the late 1920s on the model of the Chinese Kuomintang, to oppose French rule, and is the oldest nationalist party. It was broken up into many factions, three of which were included in this list. The faction led by Vu Hong Khanh and including Pham Thai is in the NSDF. Other VNQDD factions are described below (see Nos. 17 and 18).

3. Revolutionary Dai Viet Party (Dai-Viet Cach-Mang Dang, or RDV. Dai-Viet means "Greater Vietnam"). Led by Ha Thuc Ky, this party included Senators Nguyen Van Ngai and Pham Nam Sach. There formerly was a Dai Viet Party, originally founded in the 1930's to oppose French rule, which in 1964 split into the RDV and Tan Dai Viet (Tan means "new") Parties (TDV described in No. 11).

4. Greater Solidarity Force (Luc Luong Dai Doan Ket or GSF), a party largely based on Northern Catholic refugees who came south following the partitioning of Vietnam in 1954. It was led by Senator Nguyen Gia Hien.

5. Vietnam Humanist Social Revolutionary Party (Vietnam Nhan Xa Cach Mang Dang, usually called Nhan Xa for short). A predominantly Catholic party founded in 1968 and including moderate elements from the late President Diem's Can Lao Party. The chairman was Truong Cong Cuu and other leading members were Ngo Khac Tinh (Minister of Information), Le Trong Quat (Vice Minister of Information), and Lower House Deputy Nguyen Dinh Ly.

6. Vietnam Social Democratic Party (Viet-Nam Dan Chu Xa Hoi Dang). This predominately Hoa Hao party was led by Trinh Quoc Khanh. The party was one of several based on the Hoa Hao religious sect (see No. 19).

7. National Alliance for Social Revolution (Lien Minh Quoc Gia Xa Hoi Cach Mang, usually called Lien Minh in English). This front was organized in June 1968 by Nguyen Van Huong, then Secretary General of the Presidency, and at that time included as its principal constituent elements the Free Democratic Force (see No. 8), the Farmer-Worker Association (see No. 9) and the National Salvation Front (see No. 12). In 1969 it included only the first two of these plus a number of smaller organizations which are not described in this listing.

8. Free Democratic Force (Luc Luong Tu Do Dan Chu sometimes translated Democratic Freedom Force). Founded in the spring of 1968, this party was formed by Nguyen Van Huong, then Secretary General at the Presidency. The Chairman was Ngo Ung Tai and the Secretary General was Tran Thuong Nhon. However, on 23 May 69, the party chose a new Chairman, Nguyen Van Huong himself, who thereupon became the Chairman of the Lien Minh (No. 7).

9. Farmer-Worker Association (Hiep Hoi Cong Nong). This association was established in April 1968 and was composed of the CVT (No. 26), plus a Hoa Hao element led by Le Quang Liem (see No. 25), who became the Chairman of the FWA, and a Cambodian group under Son Thai Nguyen (see No. 35). The FWA was in the Lien Minh (No. 7).

Political Parties and Groups Not in the NSDF

10. Progressive Nationalist Movement (PNM) (Phong Trao Quoc Gia Cay Tien). This organization began to take shape in 1968 but did not make its public appearance until 20 Apr 69. Its Chairman was Professor Nguyen Van Bong, Rector of the National Institute of Administration.

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and its Secretary General was Professor Nguyen Ngoc Huy, a member of the GVN Paris delegation and also Secretary General of the Tan Dai Party (see No. 11). As of 5 Sep 69, the PNM had formally inaugurated chapters in Saigon, ten provinces and three districts of Saigon. The PNM published a daily newspaper (Cap Tien), and also a monthly with articles on political, economic, and cultural subjects.

11. Tan Dai Viet Party (Dang Tan Dai Viet, literally "New Greater Viet-Nam Party"), one of the two parties formed when the Dai Viet Party split in 1964 (see No. 3). The leading figure in this party when it was formed in 1964 was Nguyen Ton Hoan, who was a Deputy Prime Minister in the cabinet of General Nguyen Khanh. However, Hoan had been teaching Vietnamese in Monterey, California for several years and the best known active personality in the Party was its Secretary General Professor Nguyen Ngoc Huy, who was also Secretary General of the Progressive Nationalist Movement (see No. 10).

12. National Salvation Front (NSF) (Mat Tran Nhan Dan Cuu Nguy Dan Toc), often also called in English the Peoples Front for National Salvation. This front was established 10 Mar 68, and was headed by Senator (former Lt. General) Tran Van Don. The secretary was former Acting Prime Minister, Professor Nguyen Xuan Oanh. The NSF formerly was in the Lien Minh (No. 7) but withdrew.

13. Freedom Fighters Association (Hiep Hoi Chien Si Tu Do). This organization, based largely on veterans, was established by Senator Tran Van Don in 1967. Its platform was a general statement favoring independence, sovereignty, democracy, social reform, and unity of various social forces and labor and religious organizations. The FFA was in Senator Don's National Salvation Front (No. 12). The Saigon Chairman of the FFA was retired Maj. Gen. Pham Van Dong, who was serving in the Cabinet as Minister for Veterans Affairs but was not officially a representative in the Cabinet of the FFA or of the NSF.

14. New Peoples Movement (Phong Trao Tan Dan). This political party was organized in 1968 by former Chief of State Phan Khac Suu, who was also the head of one of the Cao Dai religious factions and who placed third in the 1968 Presidential elections. Mr. Suu's closest associate was Professor Nguyen Thanh Vinh, a former member of the Constituent Assembly and a VNQDD who was not associated with any of the VNQDD factions described elsewhere in this listing (See Nos. 2, 17, and 18).

15. Vietnam Peoples Force (Lac Luong Dan Toc Viet). This movement was presented to the public at a ceremony 30 Jun 68, and was headed by Hoa Hao politician Phan Ba Cam (See No. 19). It included labor leader Bui Luong (See No. 31) and several other politicians of various tendencies. The VNPF had applied for permission from the government to operate about June 1968, but this permission had not yet been granted.

16. Movement for the Renaissance of the South (Phong Trao Phuc Hung Mien Nam). The Chairman was Nguyen Khac Thanh and other well known members were former Minister of Youth Vo Long Tien and Lower House Deputy Ly Qui Chung. This party tended to group young southern politicians.

17. The Vietnamese Nationalist Party, Southern Faction, usually called the Southern VNQDD, (Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang Xu Dang Bo Mien Nam). Led by former anti-French (Viet Minh) resistance General Nguyen Hoa Hiep, this VNQDD faction grouped mainly persons in the southern part of RVN. This faction merged with the Khanh faction (No. 2) from April to July 1969, with Khanh as Chairman of the joint organization.

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18. Unified Vietnamese Nationalist Party, usually called the Unified VNQDD (Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang Thong Nhat). This faction was formed in February 1969 and grouped several smaller factions. Best known personalities in it were Secretary General Chu Tu Ky, Chairman Nguyen Dinh Luong, Vice-Chairman Le Hung, and Phan Ngo, a member of the Saigon City Council, plus a number of Lower House Deputies. The strength of this faction was mainly in Central Vietnam. (Two other VNQDD factions are described at Nos. 2, 17.)

19. Unified Social Democratic Party (Dan Chu Xa Hoi Dang Thong Nhat). The founder of the Hoa Hao sect of Buddhism, Huynh Phu So, established the Social Democratic Party in 1945 and was its first leader. When he was assassinated by the Viet Minh in 1947, the party split into several factions. In 1966 five Hoa Hao political leaders met and formed the Unified Social Democratic Party. These five were Phan Ba Cam (See No. 15), Trinh Quoc Khanh (See No. 6), Truong Kim Cuu and the leaders of two Hoa Hao veterans organizations: Tran Duy Don and Lam Thanh Nguyen (See No. 20). However, this unified organization broke up in 1967 when Khanh agreed to become Nguyen Van Thieu's Vice Presidential running-mate (Khanh was later replaced by Nguyen Cao Ky). Thus in 1969 the Hoa Hao were represented in the political arena on the one hand by the Social Democratic Party of Khanh, which was in the NSDF, and on the other hand by the other four political leaders mentioned above. It must be made clear that these various Hoa Hao factions in the Social Democratic Party, unified or otherwise, were political groups distinct from the two factions contending for the leadership of the Hoa Hao religious organization (No. 25).

20. Citizens Front of All Religions (Mat Tran Cong Dan Cac Ton Giao, also translated as the All-Religions Citizens Front). This organization formed in 1966, grouped certain personalities from the main religions of Vietnam. When first formed it called on both the GVN and Buddhists to make concessions to resolve the GVN-Buddhist conflict, and proposed that a new government be set up in consultation with religious, political, and labor groups. The best known members during 1969 were Northern Catholic Father Hoang Quynh, Thich Phap Tri of the An Quang Buddhists (See No. 22), General Le Van Tat of the Cao Dai, and Lam Thanh Nguyen (See No. 19) representing the Hoa Hao.

21. Action Committee to Form a National Progressive Force (Luc Luong Quoc Gia Tien Bo) was announced on 4 Jun 69. Its Chairman was Tran Ngoc Lieng, a lawyer who was the vice presidential running mate of General Duong Van Minh in 1967 before their ticket was disallowed, and who defended Truong Dinh Dau in 1967 when the latter was on trial for advocating talks with the NFLSVN and coalition government. The program of the NPF issued on 4 Jun, called for an immediate cease fire, the establishment of a reconciliatory government in RVN to prepare and hold elections to determine the future of Vietnam, a foreign policy of friendly relations with all peace-loving nations, and the withdrawal of all non-RVN forces from RVN according to an agreed timetable. During the course of 1969, Lieng and a number of other members of the NPF were questioned by police. News accounts often linked the NPF with the An Quang Buddhists (No. 22) but An Quang Rector Thich Thien Hoa publicly denied any connection.

Non-Political Groups of Political Significance

Religious

22. Buddhist. There were two principal factions among the Buddhists, the Quoc Tu and the An Quang (these names referred to the pagodas in Saigon which were the respective headquarters of the two factions). The moderate Quoc Tu Buddhists, headed by Thich Tam

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Chau, were mainly Northern Buddhist refugees plus the Cambodian, or Theravada, sect of Buddhists. The An Quang Buddhists, often called the "militant" Buddhists, were strongest in central RVN but in general were respected by most of the Buddhists in RVN in religious matters. The best known An Quang leader was Thich Tri Quang, although in 1969 he held no official position in the An Quang hierarchy. Other leading militant Buddhists were Thich Thien Hoa, Rector of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Vien Hoa Dao), and Thich Thien Minh, Youth Commissioner of the Vien Hoa Dao and, in September 1969, in prison for three years for having sheltered VC agents and draft dodgers at the Buddhist Youth Center on Cong Ly Street. Minh was released by presidential amnesty late in the year. Both factions in the past were joined in the Unified Buddhist Association (Giao Hoi Phat Giao Thong Nhat), and since this term was used by both factions it was of no assistance in identifying who was who in Buddhist circles.

23. Catholic. The political aspect of Catholicism in RVN has been sufficiently described under Nos. 4 and 5, above, dealing with the Greater Solidarity Force and the Nhan Xa.

24. Cao Dai. This religion, founded in 1919, was a combination of several of the leading religions of the world. It claimed about 2 million followers in RVN, divided into several factions. The largest by far was the Tay Ninh branch, of which the highest ranking leader was Cao Hoai Sang, with its impressive Holy See near Tay Ninh City. Others of importance are the Unified Cao Dai of Phan Khac Suu (see No. 14), the Ben Tre Cao Dai centered in Kien Hoa Province, and another group in Danang. The Tay Ninh Cao Dai a few years ago established a committee called the Secular Life Commission which had potential as a significant political force. There were various Cao Dai personalities and small parties on the political scene.

25. Hoa Hao. The Hoa Hao religion was founded by Huynh Phu So, who was illuminated in 1939, gained many followers to his version of Buddhism, and was assassinated by the Viet Minh in 1947. The Hoa Hao political parties have been described above (Nos. 6 and 7). For the past few years there had also been competition for leadership of the national Hoa Hao religious organization. One Central Executive Committee was elected 10 Dec 57, with Luong Trong Tuong as Chairman and Le Quang Liem as Saigon Representative. Liem was Chairman of the Farmer-Worker Association (see No. 9) so this committee had a link with political parties. Another Central Executive Committee had been elected 6 Oct 68. This Committee was headed by Nguyen Duy Hinh, the First Deputy Chairman since the position of Chairman was reserved for the late founder, Huynh Phu So, who the Hoa Hao believe will return some day. Huynh Van Nhiem, a long time Hoa Hao leader living in Saigon, was the Saigon Representative of this faction. Both Committees had administrative buildings in Hoa Hao Village in Chau Doc Province, considered the headquarters of the religion, while the Tuong faction controlled the Saigon office of the Hoa Hao at 114 Bui Thi Xuan.

Labor Unions

26. Vietnamese Confederation of Labor (Tong Lien Doan Lao Cong Viet Nam, usually called CVT after its French name). The CVT was by far the largest Vietnamese union and was headed by Tran Quoc Bui (President), and Tran Huu Quyen (General Secretary). The CVT was in the Farmer-Worker Association (No. 9) which was part of the Lien Minh (No. 7) which was a member of President Thieu's National Social Democratic Front (No. 1). Its headquarters was at 14 Le Van Duyet, Saigon.

27. Vietnamese Confederation of Industrial and Agricultural Workers (Tong Lien Doan Cong Nong Viet Nam). This recently established confederation had its headquarters at 197 Ly

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Thai To, Cholon, Saigon, and its President was Tran Sinh alias Cat Binh. The General Secretary was Le Van Thot. Its agricultural membership consisted of followers of the Buu Son Ky Huong Buddhist sect.

28. Action Labor Force in South Vietnam (Luc Luong Hanh Dong Lao Dong Mien Nam). This union movement grouped several independent unions, especially railway workers, under the leadership of Chairman Nguyen Van Cuot. Cuot was also in the National Progressive Force (No. 21). ALF headquarters were at 133 Hai Ba Trung, Saigon.

29. Federation of Free Unions (Lien Hiep Nghiep Doan Tu Do). The president was Nguyen Van Cua, and the office was at 551 Tran Hung Dao, Saigon. News accounts stated that some cadres were arrested in 1969 on suspicion of relations with the VC.

30. Vietnamese Confederation of Trade Unions (Tong Lien Doan Lao Dong Viet Nam - also called CSTV for its French name Confederation des Travailleurs du Vietnam). This confederation had split into two factions: one under Phan Van Chi with headquarters at 7 Ly Thai To, Saigon, and the other, led by Bui Van Thien, with its office at 123 Phan Van Tri, Saigon.

31. General Confederation of Free Trade Unions (Tong Cong Doan Tu Do, often called CGSL for its French name, Confederation Generale des Syndicats Libres). This group was under the leadership of Bui Luong, who was also a leader of the Vietnam Peoples Force (No. 15). Headquarters was at 550 Tran Hung Dao, Saigon.

32. Southern Old Students Association (Hoi Lien Truong). An alumni association of graduates of the four French lycees in RVN. Since universities had been only very recently established in RVN, this association tended to group the educated elite. In 1969 the chairman was Nguyen Kien Giang, editor of the daily THOI DAI MOI, who was considered a strong supporter of ex-Prime Minister Tran Van Huong. The deputy chairman was retired General Lam Van Phat, and former officers included a wide range of political personalities.

33. Vietnamese Veterans Legion (Hoi Cuu Chien Si, sometimes translated Vietnamese Veterans Association). This principal RVN veterans organization had been founded in 1956. The President since 1965, Lt. Gen. Pham Xuan Chieu, went to Seoul as Ambassador in May 1969, and the Acting President was Senator Le Van Thong (a retired Lt. Col.).

Minority Group Political Organizations

34. Chinese. There was no particular political organization based on the ethnic Chinese element in RVN. Some members of the NA and of the Saigon City Council were of Chinese ancestry.

35. Cambodians. Estimates placed the number of Cambodians in RVN at roughly one million, concentrated mainly in the eastern part of the Delta and along the Cambodian border. For the past few years the principal Cambodian national leadership had been provided by the Venerable Kim Sang on the religious side (Cambodians were Theravada Buddhists) and Son Thai Nguyen for political affairs, both leaders had their headquarters in the Chantareangse/ Monastery in Saigon. However, in March 1969, a conference took place in Can Tho at which was formed an organization of 21 monks called the Supreme Leadership Council (Hoi Dong Lanh Dao Toi Cao) with Dai Duc Danh Bao of Kien Giang Province as Secretary General and Dai Duc Thach Peach of Ba Xuyen Province as Deputy Secretary General. This new organization appeared to

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be a rival of the Saigon group for national leadership of the Cambodians. The Saigon leadership had its principal support in Vinh Binh Province, which was the province with the heaviest Cambodian population, and the new leadership council appeared to have representation in most other areas where Cambodians were living. The Cambodian Lower House member from Vinh Binh Province supported the Saigon group, and the other five Cambodian Deputies supported the Can Tho Council.

36. United Front for the Struggle of the Oppressed Races (Front Unifie de Lutte des Races Opprimees, usually called FULRO). This Montagnard organization, originally separatist but which had engaged in attempts to obtain the recognition of certain rights and privileges from the GVN, was officially disbanded on 1 Feb 69. Its dissolution came about as the result of an agreement in December 1968, between the GVN and Y Dhe Adrong, representing FULRO leader Y Bham Enuol, by which the GVN agreed to FULRO demands for a flag; for the conversion of FULRO armed forces into Regional Force companies; for the right to form political organizations, and, in more vaguely couched terms, a special Highlands Commissariat. When news of this agreement reached FULRO leaders in exile in Mondulhiri Province, Cambodia, the majority of FULRO armed forces and their dependents returned to RVN and were brought to the Ban Me Thuot area of Darlac Province. However, their leader, Y Bham Enuol, remained imprisoned in Cambodia under unexplained circumstances. Despite the disbanding of FULRO, there were indications that the movement continued to live on in the minds of many Montagnards.

37. South Vietnamese Highlands Ethnic Minorities Solidarity Movement (Phong Trao Doan Ket Cac Sac Toc Thieu So Cao Nguyen Mien Nam Viet-Nam) (Short title: Ethnic Minorities Solidarity Movement - EMSM). Acting not only in consequence of the GVN-FULRO agreement of December 1968, but with the encouragement and support of the GVN, Y Bling Buon, Krong Pang and other former high-ranking FULRO leaders began the formation of the EMSM in February 1969, and held its official inaugural ceremony in Ban Me Thuot on 21-22 Apr. The EMSM's avowed aims were basically twofold: cooperation with the GVN in the fight against Communism, and the continued pursuit of Montagnard aspirations through constitutional means. Y Bling was the party's national chairman. Executive committees were formed in the seven provinces of the Central Highlands, and recruitment was progressing in these provinces and in others having a Montagnard population. The new Montagnard political party had the support of several Montagnard Lower House Deputies.

38. Unified Bloc of Vietnamese Ethnic Minorities (Khoi Doan Ket Dan Thieu So Viet Nam, or UBVEM). This organization, headed by Senator Vong A Sang of the Chinese Nung tribe based in NVN, was established in March 1969, and included Senator Ksor Rot (a former FULRO member, see No. 36), Deputy Thanh Giac from Binh Thuan Province, who was a Cham (a small ethnic minority), Cambodian leader Son Thai Nguyen (see No. 35), and a number of other Montagnard, Cham, and Cambodian personalities.

Communist Political Organizations

39. National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN, or NLF for short; Mat-Tran Dan-Toc Giai-Phong Mier-Nam). Hanoi had announced in January 1961 that the NFLSVN had been established on 20 Dec 60; its creation followed from a resolution adopted by the Third National Congress of the Lao Dong (North Vietnamese Communist) Party in September 1960, which called on the people of RVN to form a broad national united front directed against the "US-Diem clique". Its Chairman was lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho. The ostensible components of the NFLSVN included some 19 "mass organizations" (Liberation Women's Association,

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Patriotic and Democratic Journalists' Association, etc.); five religious organizations (Buddhists, Catholics, Hoa Hao, Cao Dai); two ethnic groups (Montagnards and Cambodian); and three political parties: the People's Revolutionary Party, the Radical Socialist Party, and the (new) Democratic Party.

40. People's Revolutionary Party (PRP: Nhan-Dan Cach-Mang Dang). The name was given to a new party established by Marxists-Leninists of RVN, according to a Hanoi announcement of 1 Jan 62; PRP was simply a cover name for the southern branch of the Lao Dong Party.

41. Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces (ANDPF: Lien-Minh Cac-Luc-Luong Dan-Toc, Dan-Chu va Hoa-Binh). Headed by lawyer Trinh Dinh Thao, this front organization was established by the Communists in 1968 to appeal to urban bourgeois elements who wished to avoid direct association with the NFLSVN. It first appeared locally in Saigon, Hue, and Quang Tri during the Tet offensive in February 1968, and then "went national" on 20 Apr 68. Additional local branches had supposedly been established since that time in Danang and elsewhere.

42. The Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. (PRG SVN or PRG for short; Chanh-Phu Lam-Thoi Cach-Mang Cong-Hoa Mien-Nam Viet-Nam). Liberation Radio on 10 Jun 69, announced that the PRG had been formed at a congress of people's representatives which took place on 6, 7, and 8 Jun. The delegates at the meeting represented the NFLSVN, the Alliance, the People's Liberation Armed Forces and "other patriotic organizations." Huynh Tan Phat, the NFLSNV's Secretary General, was selected as president and a number of officers of the Alliance (No. 41) and the NFLSVN (No. 39) were named to the PRG's cabinet and consultative council. The PRG thus combined the Alliance and Front into one organization though both retained their separate identities. The PRG also assumed the "state" functions of the NFLSVN, and therefore the NFLSVN representatives abroad were converted to PRG ambassadors and the NFLSVN Delegation to the Paris Talks represented the PRG. The PRG appeared also to be developing a more formal public relationship than did the NFLSVN with the "revolutionary administrations" that the Communists claimed to have created at the local and provincial level throughout RVN since Tet, 1968. The Communist countries and a number of non-Communist nations recognized the PRG as the government of South Vietnam.

POLITICS - EXTERNAL

(U) The 1969 battle against the Communist aggression in RVN was not all fought in RVN. In Laos, for example, the US-supported determination of the RLG to resist NVN's invasion kept NVA troops occupied which could otherwise have been brought to bear against RVN. Other nations, less directly involved, also exerted pressures which influenced the arena in which COMUSMACV operated. A few of the more pertinent international developments are recorded in the treatment that follows.

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Relations with Cambodia

(S) The remaining US military detainee in Cambodia was evacuated 6 Jan under the eyes of the French and Australian Ambassadors with no harassment from the Cambodians.

(C) At a press conference for the Western press in Phnom Penh on 6 Mar, Prince Sihanouk gave what was interpreted as an open invitation to the US to bomb VC/NVA elements in Cambodian territory. Then at a 28 Mar press conference, he stated, "more and more, the Vietnamese Communists are infiltrating Cambodia." Sihanouk added that if the Vietnamese Communists "continue their escalation", he would resign and turn over control to the army, which would then decide if the country would "turn towards the US or permit the Communists to seize the country. The Communists are playing a dangerous game for themselves and for us."

(C) Seven meetings occurred during the week of 7-13 Apr between RVN district and provincial officials and Cambodian authorities at four points along the RVN-Cambodian frontier. Both sides agreed to show restraint in an effort to reduce the number of border incidents. The most encouraging indication drawn from the meetings was the willingness of Cambodian authorities to take action against the VC in their territory.

(C) The Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced 8 May, that East German and NFLSVN representation in Phnom Penh had been raised to embassy level. An editorial in the Hanoi party daily Nhan Dan extolled RVN-Cambodian solidarity and friendship and expressed sincere thanks to Prince Sihanouk.

(C) Reports indicated that the Cambodian Army fielded a sizeable force in operations against a VC/NVA base area in Cambodia opposite Pleiku Province in the central highlands. On 17 May, Prince Sihanouk confirmed these reports when he said, "I regret that our Viet Cong and Viet Minh friends who have proclaimed respect for our frontiers... are also aiding and training Khmer Reds... I will not protest (to the Communists) because it will be useless... the only way is to defend ourselves." Sihanouk announced the capture of 10 "Viet Cong of North Vietnamese origin," armed with CHICOM weapons, saying it indicated the rebellion in the northeast was not a peasant uprising.

(C) In a speech on 19 Jun, Prince Sihanouk said that VC forces were now present everywhere in Svay Rieng Province, which borders RVN. He said he had asked the NFLSVN to sign a paper with a promise that the VC would withdraw from Cambodian territory as soon as possible. Sihanouk said, "Now the Viet Cong have signed, pledging strict respect for Khmer territory, saying their presence here has been due to the fact they had lost their way and promising that once peace has been restored over there, they will no longer dare stay on Khmer territory but will leave immediately." He added, however, that he did not fully trust the written pledge.

(C) On 16 Jun Prince Sihanouk released two South Koreans who had been imprisoned in Cambodia since the spring of 1968 on charges of espionage. The two Koreans had been captured by VC in the RVN Delta city of My Tho during the 1968 Tet offensive. They had subsequently escaped from the VC into Cambodia where they were arrested.

(C) Huynh Tan Phat, President of the NFLSVN's new Provisional Revolutionary Government completed an official 6-day visit to Cambodia on 5 Jul, after talks with Prince Sihanouk and top elements of the RKG.

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(U) By the end of the year, renewed US - RKG diplomatic relations were fully operational, the RKG was continuing token operations against the VC/NVA occupants of southwestern provinces of Cambodia, movement of VC/NVA arms and supplies through Cambodia was alternately hindered and aided, RKG protests of alleged US-ARVN border violations continued to be largely pro forma, and Prince Sihanouk continued to maximize his options and seek a neutral status for his kingdom.

Swedish Developments

(S) The GVN Foreign Ministry issued a communique 13 Jan regretting the Swedish decision to establish diplomatic relations with NVN, stating that this decision did not help the meetings in Paris and only reinforced the bellicose spirits of the Communist aggressors. The statement also called for Swedish impartiality in accordance with its neutral status, and expressed the GVN's desire for rapid normalization of diplomatic bonds between Sweden and the RVN.

French Developments

(C) On 11 Jan two French employees of the French-owned Terres Rouges Plantation Company and their Vietnamese chauffeur were shot to death in an isolated rubber plantation area. Local GVN authorities claimed, citing statements by witnesses, that the men were killed by Thai Army troops. Thai authorities claimed the men were killed by the VC. The local French community, including the Consul General, was convinced that the Thais murdered the men for alleged collaboration with the VC. One of the dead employees was the director of the Binh Son estate, 30 km northeast of Saigon, which was recently closed by Thai troops on the grounds the plantation was infested with VC troops.

(C) During a press conference on 11 Apr, President Thieu announced the RVN favored friendly relations with all nations, specifically France and Cambodia. Concerning France, the president said both countries had taken some actions showing good will and RVN was ready to push forward if France agreed. Press reaction from Paris indicated the French government was not willing to move forward at that time because of its policy of maintaining the status quo during the Paris peace talks.

The Provisional Revolutionary Government

(C) According to Communist media, a "National Congress" was held 6-8 Jun, to establish the "Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) of the Republic of South Vietnam". The meeting was reportedly organized by the NFLSVN and the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces. It allegedly included representatives of political parties, people's groups, and religious and nationality organizations. The purpose of the new "government" was to unite and mobilize the people, defeat the US, and overthrow the subservient puppet administration. Most of the positions in the PRG were held by known members of the NFLSVN or Alliance. The PRG was recognized promptly by all of the Communist states and by Yugoslavia, Algeria, Syria, Congo (Brazzaville), South Yemen, the United Arab Republic, and Cambodia. (See Chapter III for additional discussion of the PRG.)

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USSR - DRV

(C) The DRV delegation headed by Premier Pham Van Dong ended its visit to Moscow on 18 Oct. During its stay the delegation concluded an economic assistance agreement, as well as a trade pact for the year 1970. Indications were that Soviet aid to NVN, programmed for 1970, surpassed that of 1969. See Chapter III, THE ENEMY.

The Paris Peace Talks

(U) As 1968 drew to a close, political leaders predicted and the general public expected a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam conflict in 1969. This optimistic view of the 1969 Paris Talks was triggered by a series of events: the Nixon administration ushering out the Johnson team with a subsequently inevitable change in US delegates to Paris; a halt in the US bombing of NVN on 1 Nov; and the announcement on 26 Nov of the GVN's decision to participate in the Paris negotiations. The atmosphere for the "new" Paris Talks was thus established and all parties were expected to begin exploring every avenue for peace on a clean slate.

(U) Four independent delegations gathered in the Salle des Fetes of the Majestic Hotel. On one side of the immense, circular table sat representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN), led by Xuan Thuy and Tran Buu Kiem; while seated at the other side, representing RVN, were delegations from the GVN and US, headed by Pham Dang Lam and Henry Cabot Lodge.

(U) In essence, the dialogue of the weekly peace talks in 1969 reflected no visible change from the 1968 meetings. The GVN delegation continued to assert its legitimacy and denounce Communist aggression and atrocities, while the US, denying any military or neo-colonial ambitions in RVN, stated that the sole purpose of its involvement was to assure self-determination for the people of RVN and uphold the US commitment resultant from the SEATO bloc. The NFLSVN delegates echoed the DRV's preconditions for "meaningful" negotiations, which demanded the unconditional, immediate withdrawal of all US and satellite forces from RVN, and claimed itself as the "voice" of the people. The DRV called for the immediate withdrawal of US "aggressors", refused to recognize the Saigon "puppet" administration, and stated that the Vietnamese people would settle their domestic problems only when interfering forces from the US departed.

(U) At the end of April 1969, even though the GVN and US had submitted the below listed proposals, no reciprocal action had been taken by the Communist factions towards the combined search for common ground upon which genuine negotiations could commence. In his State of the Nation message delivered to a joint meeting of the National Assembly, as it opened its regular spring session, President Thieu set forth six criteria for restoring peace, including:

1. Cessation of aggression by the North,
2. Withdrawal of all Northern personnel,
3. Cessation of the use of Cambodia and Laos for subversion,

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4. Acceptance of people in the south who act democratically and in accordance with the Constitution,
5. Reunification of the two Vietnams by democratic means, and
6. A system of international guarantees and inspections so RVN would not be invaded again.

President Thieu then took a major initiative for peace on 11 Jul when he challenged the Communists to accept free elections based essentially on the following principles:

1. All parties including the NFLSVN could participate if they renounced violence and pledged to accept the results.
2. All parties including the NFLSVN could be represented in an Electoral Commission which would ensure the fairness of the elections by assuring equal opportunities for campaigning and by watching the polls and the counting of ballots.
3. An international supervisory body would be established.
4. The timetable and modalities of the elections could be discussed with the other side.
5. The GVN would abide by the results of the elections, whatever they might be, and challenged the other side to declare the same. The president also renewed his offer of private talks with the NFLSVN, without preconditions.

(U) The US position was clearly enunciated in President Nixon's address on 3 Nov when he said, in part:

In a television speech on May 14, in a speech before the United Nations, and on a number of other occasions I set forth our peace proposals in great detail. We have offered the complete withdrawal of all outside forces within one year. We have proposed a cease fire under international supervision. We have offered free elections under international supervision with the Communists participating in the organization and conduct of the elections as an organized political force. The Saigon government has pledged to accept the result of the elections.

We have not put forth our proposals on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. We have indicated that we are willing to discuss the proposals that have been put forth by the other side. We have declared that anything is negotiable except the right of the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future. At the Paris Peace Conference Ambassador Lodge has demonstrated our flexibility and good faith in 40 public meetings.

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... At the time we launched our search for peace, I recognized that we might not succeed in bringing an end to the war through negotiation. I, therefore, put into effect another plan to bring peace -- a plan which will bring the war to an end regardless of what happens on the negotiation front.

It is in line with a major shift in US foreign policy which I described in my press conference at Guam on July 25. Let me briefly explain what has been described as the Nixon Doctrine -- a policy which not only will help end the war in Vietnam but which is an essential element of our program to prevent future Vietnams.

We Americans are a do-it-yourself-people -- we're an impatient people. Instead of teaching someone else to do a job, we like to do it ourselves and this trait has been carried over into our foreign policy.

In Korea and again in Vietnam, the United States furnished most of the money, most of the arms, and most of the men to help the people of those countries defend their freedom against Communist aggression.

Before any American troops were committed to Vietnam, a leader of another Asian country expressed this opinion to me when I was traveling in Asia as a private citizen. "When you are trying to assist another nation defend its freedom, U.S. policy should be to help them fight the war but not to fight the war for them."

In Guam, I laid down these three principles as guidelines for future American policy toward Asia:

1. The United States will keep all of our treaty commitments.
2. We shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.
3. In cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense....

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The defense of freedom is everybody's business -- not just America's business. And it is particularly the responsibility of the people whose freedom is threatened. In the previous administration, we Americanized the war in Vietnam; in this administration, we are Vietnamizing the search for peace. The policy of the previous administration not only resulted in our assuming the primary responsibility for fighting the war but even more significantly did not adequately stress the goal of strengthening the South Vietnamese so that they could defend themselves when we left.

The Vietnamization plan was launched following Secretary Laird's visit to Vietnam in March. Under the plan, I ordered a substantial increase in the training and equipment of South Vietnamese forces.

* * * * *

Our air operations have been reduced by over twenty percent.

We have now begun to see the results of this long overdue change in American policy in Vietnam.

After five years of Americans going into Vietnam, we are finally bringing American men home...

The South Vietnamese have continued to gain in strength. As a result they have been able to take over combat responsibilities from our American troops...

(U) After months of posturing and propaganda, the NFLSVN offered a 10-point plan at Paris on 8 May, which was endorsed by the DRV. The salient points of the proposal, as presented by the chief delegate of the NFLSVN, Tran Buu Kiem, were as follows:

1. Respect the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam.
2. The United States must unconditionally withdraw from RVN all US troops, military personnel, arms, and war materiel of the other foreign countries of the US camp; liquidate all US military bases in RVN.
3. The question of the Vietnamese armed forces in RVN should be resolved by the Vietnamese parties among themselves.

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4. The people of RVN should settle their own affairs without foreign interference and establish a coalition government.

5. During the period intervening between the restoration of peace and the holding of general elections, neither party should impose its political regime on the people of RVN.

6. RVN would carry out a foreign policy of peace and neutrality, and establish diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations with all countries with no political conditions attached.

7. The re-unification of Vietnam would be achieved step by step, by peaceful means, through discussions and agreement between the two zones without foreign interference and reach agreement on the status of the DMZ.

8. RVN and NVN would refrain from joining any military alliance with foreign countries, not allow any foreign country to maintain military bases, troops, or personnel on their respective soil, and not recognize the protection of any country or military alliance or bloc.

9. To resolve the aftermath of the war the parties would negotiate the release of soldiers captured in war and the US government must bear full responsibility for the losses and devastations it caused to the Vietnamese people in both zones.

10. The parties should reach agreement on an international supervision about the withdrawal from RVN of troops, military personnel, arms, and war materiel of the US and the other foreign countries of the American camp.

(U) In early June, Madame Nguyen Thi Binh replaced Tran Buu Kiem as chief delegate for the NFLSVN.

(U) On 10 Jun, the NFLSVN and DRV announced the formation of a "new" political party in RVN, to be represented at the peace negotiations - the PRG. The Communist delegations claimed this was in response to the "cries" of the people of RVN. The emergence of this party, which was dominated by members of the PRP and the NFLSVN, tended to complicate the Paris peace efforts. The GVN became increasingly bitter with the Communist claim that this was the legitimate RVN government. Both the US and GVN observed the entrance of the new party as a Communist maneuver to "dig in their heels". With the vocal US anti-war demonstrations a consideration for the Nixon administration, Hanoi considered time to be on its side.

(U) In the remaining months of 1969, the Paris Talks continued in their customary deadlock, with each party "rehashing" its proposals. After 39 fruitless sessions, Ambassador Lodge stated that the Communist delegations had done nothing but demand unilateral actions by the GVN and US and engage in vituperative language; the Communists had shown no desire to engage in genuine negotiations; the Paris meetings had served only as a propaganda forum and not as a peace forum. The Communists retorted that since taking office, President Nixon had continued stepping up the war of aggression in RVN and encroaching upon the sovereignty and security of the DRV, while delaying the discussions on a correct settlement of the Vietnam problem and completely obstructing the Paris conference.

(U) On 4 Dec, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge resigned as the chief US delegate to the Paris peace talks. In his farewell negotiating speech, Ambassador Lodge stated that no progress had been made in the talks during 1969. He further stated that despite America's attempts to engage "in genuine discussions of both sides' proposals, the only concrete progress here is agreement on the shape of the table."

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THE STRATEGY AND THE GOALS - II

1. Msg (TS), JCS to CINCPAC, 212233Z Aug 69, Subj: Statement of Mission of US Forces in Southeast Asia (U).
2. Rpt (S-NOFORN), CINCPAC, Measurement of Progress IN SEASIA, 31 Mar 69 and 29 May 69, Gp-4.
3. Combined Campaign Plan, 1969 (AB 144) (S), 30 Sep 68, Gp-4.
4. Msg, 28710, 280629 Sep 68, COMUSMACV to CDR 7AF et al, Subj: Operational Guidance-4th Quarter CY68 (U), Gp-4.
5. Msg, 30430, 130955Z Oct 68, COMUSMACV to CDR 7AF, et al. Subj: Operational Guidance (U), Gp-4.
6. Msg (S), 3345, 170308Z Jan 69, COMUSMACV to CDR, 7AF, et al, Subj: Operational Guidance - 1st Qtr CY69 (U), Gp-4.
7. Msg (S), 7621, 061335Z Feb 69, COMUSMACV to CDR 7AF, et al, Subj: Operational Guidance #2, Gp-4.
8. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to Cdr 7th AF, et al., 210950Z Jul 69, Subj: Counter-Sapper Techniques (U), Gp-4.
9. Msg (TS), JCS to CINCPAC, 212233Z Aug 69, Subj: Statement of Mission of US Forces in Southeast Asia (U); Msg (C) COMUSMACV to Cdr 7th AF, et. al., 251020Z Nov 69, Subj: Operational Guidance Number 6; Both Gp-4.
10. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Cdr, 7th AF, et al., 151003Z Jan 69, Subj: Contingency Reinforcement, Operation STEEL CABLE (U), Gp-4.
11. Msg (S), CG, III MAF to XXIV CTZ, 020724Z Dec 69, Subj: Contingency reinforcement, Operation STEEL CABLE (U), Gp-4.

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CHAPTER III

THE ENEMY

INTRODUCTION

(C) The Tet and post Tet offensives of 1968 had been the most significant development in the war since the decisions by both sides to commit large numbers of ground troops. The leaders of NVN were posed with fundamental questions of policy in the aftermath of these paroxysms. Ho Chi Minh, the founder of the Vietnamese Communist party, possibly contributed towards establishing the new policy, then suffered several serious heart attacks and died on 3 Sep leaving a quadrumvirate of major leaders. The leaders had worked together harmoniously while Ho had been present to mediate and guide them. With his passing, strains appeared between the two primary figures, Le Duan and Truong Chinh. The North Vietnamese leaders responded to the events of 1968 by formulating new strategy and tactics. Thus they advocated the more frequent use of smaller unit tactics in the form of sapper attacks while maintaining the option of larger unit actions. They emphasized the importance of the political aspects of the war and moved to bolster their political appeal in the South by establishing a governmental structure. They prepared for either protracted warfare or a cease fire. They tried to broaden their options in RVN, however some of their options were temporarily preempted by the realities of the situation. They emphasized the importance of controlling the rural areas and the Mekong Delta. They enunciated their major demands at Paris, unconditional withdrawal of US troops and the formation of a coalition government which would not include the present leaders of RVN, and they stuck to their demands throughout the year. NVA and VC soldiers and cadre suffered extreme hardship on the battlefields of RVN and morale was lower than in previous years. At the close of the year, the leaders of the North were posed with a choice of whether to fight a protracted war or to seek a cease fire and attempt to win the victory they sought through political means backed up by the use and threat of force. The basic campaign plan for RVN, embodied in COSVN Resolution 9, aimed to blunt the US/GVN pacification program and to foil US attempts to Vietnamize the war.

THE ROLE OF NORTH VIETNAM

The Leadership of North Vietnam

General

(U) The year 1969 saw the leadership of North Vietnam posed with four major policy challenges. They had to work out their policy at the Paris peace talks, develop their overall

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strategy in the wake of the 1968 offensives, respond to the policy developed by the new Nixon administration, and learn to function without the leadership of the founder of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Ho Chi Minh, who died in September.

(U) North Vietnam's position in the world political scene was highlighted during the first quarter of 1969 by the commencement of the expanded Paris talks. Initial desires, expressed from various quarters, for fast and fruitful results were soon dampened as the North Vietnamese maintained an intransigent position. No major external change of policy was noted during the first quarter of 1969; the North Vietnamese were uncompromising and demanded that a settlement of the war be based on their Four Point and the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam's (NFLSVN) Five Point peace proposals. In Hanoi during the first quarter of 1969, a serious policy reassessment was reaching a climax. The decisions which were reached became known as the VC/NVA delegates at Paris enunciated their positions, as COSVN Resolution 9, embodying the themes of Lao Dong Party Resolution C passed in April, was captured, and as NVN leaders made major speeches.

(U) In the second quarter of 1969, the four parties to the war enunciated their policy positions. The NFLSVN issued a "new" 10 Point peace proposal on 8 May; this solution greatly resembled the Four and Five Point programs, with the addition of one point. The key issue of the unconditional withdrawal of US and Allied forces remained. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) was quick to publicly recognize the 10 Points and to acclaim the proposal as the true and just plan for a settlement of the Vietnamese conflict.¹

(U) The Communists made another overt gesture to convince the world that they were seriously seeking a peaceful and "just" solution to the war when the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) was established on 10 Jun. Again, the DRV held this move before the world and emphasized that the PRG was the true representative of the people and that the PRG held the key to peace; the US, its Allies, and the "puppet GVN" were viewed as obstacles to peace.

(S) Throughout June, July, and August, the North Vietnamese did not appear to waver in their determination to achieve their often stated objective of unifying the north and south without outside intervention (this included their previous views on troops reductions, world opinion, Vietnamization, etc). After the Midway Communique, it appeared that Hanoi had the impression that the US was trying sincerely to get them (NVN) to reciprocate US military deescalation. NVN seemed to believe that the US was anxiously seeking ways to disengage from RVN. Basic NVN aims remained the same -- to inflict maximum casualties on US forces to affect US public opinion. NVN leaders followed developments in the US closely.²

(U) Norman Fruchter, journalist photographer who accompanied a pacifist group to Hanoi in August to accompany released US PWs, reported that DRV Premier Pham Van Dong took a much harder line toward the US and appeared much more confident of NVN success than was the case two years earlier. Pham appeared to be very skeptical of US policy, and he predicted a hard struggle for the future with 1970 being "the year of fierce fighting." Pham demanded unilateral US/Allied troop withdrawal, followed by a general election which would be supervised by

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a coalition government; he stated that such an election would "exclude the Saigon clique". Premier Pham stressed reunification of Vietnam, but he did not specify a timetable.⁴

(U) The Communist position at Paris did not appear to have crystalized completely prior to Ho Chi Minh's death on 3 Sep. Some vestigial hopes for a breakthrough at Paris remained and were fanned by an ambiguous statement by the Chief Hanoi delegate to the talks on 2 Sep. However, after Ho died, and after North Vietnamese leaders had all gathered in Hanoi during and after Ho's funeral, they remained wedded for the rest of the year to the formula which they had earlier stated.

(C) The basic components of the North Vietnamese peace formula, their basic objectives, remained the unilateral withdrawal of US troops and the establishment of a coalition government which would not include President Thieu or Vice President Ky. Ho Chi Minh had written a letter, dated 25 Aug, in response to a letter to him from President Nixon. Because of Ho's grave illness, the letter may have been written for him by the new leadership group. Although there was some debate in the US about the degree of flexibility that may have been indicated in the letter, and although the letter was slightly less dogmatic than the usual NVN pronouncements at Paris, the substance of the letter continued to assert that the keys to peace were acceptance of the 10 Points and the withdrawal of US troops from RVN. SECSTATE Rogers said later in the year that if the Hanoi leadership did not intend the letter to be a rejection of the President's letter and if there was anything in it that the US had "overlooked", then "all they have to do is pick up the phone and tell us".⁵

(C) The fourth quarter of 1969 provided a shakedown period for the new collegial leadership. Other major developments were the verbal encouragement given by the Hanoi leadership to the anti-war moratoriums in the US, the sharp criticisms of the US Vietnamization policy, and the sharp reaction against President Nixon's 3 Nov speech. Internally, the new leadership moved to tighten the party's control and spoke of the need to concentrate on building socialism in North Vietnam. One sign of the tightening was praise of Stalin on the occasion of his 90th birthday. A 21 Dec Nhan Dan editorial extolled the late dictator's role in the Russian Revolution, the defeat of Hitler, "decimating" the Japanese Army and in the development of socialism. In a departure from the practice of recent years, the article pictured Stalin as an unparalleled exponent of Leninism and urged the Vietnamese people to combine Stalin's spirit of "persistent struggle and valiant attack" with the teachings of Ho Chi Minh.⁶

(S) A rally at the beginning of 1970 stated that the VC/NVA could adopt three courses of action depending on developments on the battlefields of RVN. If the North Vietnamese were victorious, they would try to force the US to make concessions including a coalition government. If a protracted stalemate developed, the DRV and NLF/SVN would make diplomatic efforts to gain mutual concessions which would end the fighting but at the same time guarantee a completely independent and autonomous RVN and complete withdrawal of US troops. If the NVA and VC suffered a series of defeats on the battlefield which put them at a serious military disadvantage, then the diplomatic strategy at the peace talks would be to prolong them until a favorable military posture was regained.⁷ A notebook belonging to NVA General Le Trung Tin, Commanding General of the Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region indicated that Tin was called to Hanoi in May of 1969 to receive new instructions on the conduct of the war. Tin was instructed that a ceasefire agreement might be signed at the end of 1969, and that in order to prepare for such an event, Tin must immediately attempt to "seize control" of the 300,000 civilians in the Tri-Thien-Hue MR as well as to complete other essential military tasks. Tin was further directed that after the cease fire was signed, he should delay its implementation in order to gain the upper hand in

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the future "political struggle".⁸ Perhaps the instructions to General Tin reflected expectations by Hanoi's leaders in May that their objectives would be met. Periodically in 1969, there were indications that the VC/NVA leaders might have been flirting with the idea of a cease fire, although never with relinquishing their overall goals.⁹ However, at the end of 1969, it appeared that the NVA leaders were preparing for a protracted war in RVN. The New Years Day, 1970, editorial in Nhan Dan asserted that the Vietnamese people would fight as long as there were US troops in Vietnam. It also cited three major tasks for 1970; support of the war, increased production and building socialism in NVN.¹⁰ The North Vietnamese leaders seemed to be convinced at the end of 1969 that time was on their side, although they were worried about Vietnamization.¹¹

The DRV's Policy and the Paris Conference

(U) On 18 Jan 69, the North Vietnamese delegation to the Paris talks held a press conference and stated that all sides had agreed upon the procedural issues surrounding commencement of peace negotiations. A DRV spokesman, Nguyen Than Le, proposed that the first plenary session take place on 21 Jan. He also stated that the DRV would refer to the negotiations in Paris at the "The Paris Conference on Vietnam."¹²

(U) With procedural difficulties resolved, the first plenary session was held on 25 Jan. North Vietnam's chief negotiator, Xuan Thuy, delivered the DRV's opening statement. Minister Thuy immediately expounded the subjects that would become so familiar during subsequent meetings: the US was forced, unconditionally, to cease the bombing of NVN; the US was responsible for delaying the commencement of peace negotiations; public opinion favored the DRV and the NFLSVN; the US violated the Geneva Agreement -- not NVN; the GVN was a puppet administration; the DRV's Four Points and the NFLSVN's Five Points established the "correct" solution for the conflict; all troops had to be withdrawn from RVN; and the US did not want a peaceful settlement to the war.

(U) Xuan Thuy's opening statement at the first session of the negotiations was repetitious in many instances; the following are extracts from the statement:

By the Minister Xuan Thuy, Chief of the Delegation
of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam,
at the Plenary Session of the Paris Conference on Vietnam
(January 25, 1969)

After the US Government was forced to unconditionally stop all bombardments on the entire territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, on November 2, 1968, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, with the consent of the Central Committee of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, declared its readiness to participate in a conference aimed at finding a political solution to the Vietnam problem. . . . This conference should have opened on November 6, 1968. . . . But the representatives of the United States and the Saigon administration used all sorts of means to delay it.

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XUAN THUY



NGUYEN THANH LE

Leading North Vietnamese negotiators at the Paris Peace Talks. (For other photographs, and discussion of the North Vietnamese negotiating team at Paris, see footnote 13.)



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Now, because of the Vietnamese people's struggle, the demands of world public opinion, including the just and peace-loving opinion in the United States, the plenary four-party conference has at last been opened. . . .

The purpose of the Paris four-party conference is to find a political solution to the Vietnam problem on the basis of respect for the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights, namely independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam. . . .

The US Government, disregarding its commitments towards the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, has over the past 14 years and more been sabotaging these agreements, intervening in and making aggression against South Vietnam. It set up in South Vietnam a separate artificial state and US - paid puppet administration to turn South Vietnam into a US neocolony and military base and to perpetuate the partition of Vietnam. . . .

The US aggression is precisely the deep root and immediate cause of the present serious situation in Vietnam. Therefore, the correct political solution of the Vietnamese problem must be based on the cessation of the US aggression and the respect of the Vietnamese fundamental national rights.

In this spirit, on April 8, 1965, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam made public its four-point stand as follows:

1. Recognition of the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people: Peace, independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. According to the Geneva Agreements, the US Government must withdraw from South Vietnam all US troops, military personnel and weapons of all kinds, dismantle all US bases there and cancel its "military alliance" with South Vietnam. According to the Geneva Agreement, the US Government must stop its acts of war against North Vietnam, completely cease all encroachments on the territory and infringements upon the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

2. Pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, and while Vietnam is still temporarily divided into two zones, the military provisions of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam must strictly be respected: the two zones must refrain from joining any

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military alliance with foreign countries, there must be no foreign bases, troops and military personnel on their respective territory.

3. The internal affairs of South Vietnam must be settled by the South Vietnamese people themselves in accordance with the political program of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, without foreign interference.

4. The Peaceful reunification of Vietnam is to be settled by the Vietnamese people in both zones, without foreign interference. . . .

On November 3, 1968, the Central Committee of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation issued a statement on a Five Point Political solution of the South Vietnam problem which Mr. Tran Buu Kiem, Chief of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation delegation of the Paris Conference, has clearly recalled. The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam fully approves and unreservedly supports the South Vietnamese National Front for the Liberations's political program and its Five Point solution of the South Vietnam problem. . . .

While the United States speaks of "good will and peace", it continues its reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam and its bombing raids against many populated areas in Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh Provinces and the Vinh Linh Region. . . . This shows that the United States has not fitted its deeds to its words and does not really want a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem.

So long as the United States continues its aggression in Vietnam, the 31 million Vietnamese, united as one man, will go on fighting till total victory, implementing President Ho Chi Minh's November 3, 1968, appeal: "To strengthen our determination to fight and to win, to liberate the south, to defend the north, and to advance towards the peaceful reunification of the Fatherland." ¹⁴

(S) During February, the NVN line, as expressed by Xuan Thuy at Paris, visibly hardened in both tone and substance. Though the Communists did not change any of their well-known demands, they did reassert their demand for "unconditional withdrawal" of Allied forces from RVN. On 27 Feb and 6 Mar, Minister Thuy launched unprecedented attacks on the Nixon administration, though not on the President personally. Thuy charged that "... the present administration is more stubborn and perfidious than the previous one..." and that the policy of the Nixon administration was "... the only obstacle to progress..." ¹⁵

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(S) Although Hanoi continued publicly to exhibit a tough and unwavering attitude, the DRV appeared to be leaning more and more toward secret negotiations by the end of March. On 27 March the US State Department made the following analysis of the situation:

Although the Vietnamese Communists continue to assert that the US must negotiate directly with the NLF and that the Republic of Vietnam is a "puppet" regime, we believe the Communists will ultimately be prepared to enter secret negotiations under some formula acceptable to the United States and the GVN....

Hanoi's attitude toward secret negotiations contains some ambivalent elements. Hanoi would like to start secret substantive negotiations because they serve North Vietnamese negotiating tactics perfectly.... They enable Hanoi to offer US private "understandings" while we make overt and observable military concessions. They also enable Hanoi to back down from untenable public positions without losing "face".... 16

(U) On 7 Apr, President Nguyen Van Thieu issued a six-point proposal for a peaceful settlement of the war in RVN. As was expected, his efforts were denounced by the DRV:

.... Nguyen Van Thieu, the head of the Saigon Administration, put forward the so-called six-point peace program.... One wonders whether these six points are different in any way from what the United States has been saying....

Some people say that the six-point program of Saigon stands for a withdrawal of troops in accordance with the October 1966 Manila Communique, while Mr. Rogers speaks about a "mutual withdrawal".... Naturally, all such ways of posing the problem are rejected by the Vietnamese people.

What is still more insolent, in Saigon's Six Points, Nguyen Van Thieu demanded that the South Vietnam patriotic forces and the National Front for the Liberation lay down their weapons, dissolve, and submit to the US - rigged-up puppet regime. The entire people of Vietnam have condemned such an attitude. The population of temporarily occupied areas in South Vietnam have more strongly demanded the overthrow of such puppets to set up a peace-cabinet which will seriously talk with the Front at the Paris Four-Party Conference.... 17

(S) By mid-April, Hanoi appeared to view the conflict in Vietnam as a stalemate; the DRV had been able to survive the bombing above the DMZ, and it had "compelled" the US to stop the

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bombing. The VC and NVA continued to control part of the countryside in RVN and the Communist forces had a degree of tactical initiative. As the stalemate developed and the war continued, Hanoi tended to focus its attention and its hopes for a favorable settlement more and more on the US. Their objectives were to make the conflict seem unendingly costly, and unwinnable for the US. Unsure of the continuing success of these tactics, Hanoi's approach to the negotiations in Paris took a more moderate tone. Xuan Thuy dwelt less on the history of "American aggression" and began to focus on specific issues. His readiness to address specific issues, rather than to expound upon general propaganda statements, pointed to Hanoi's desires to project a more reasonable image, to influence the RVN political body -- making sure that President Thieu's policies did not go unchallenged and unrefuted, and to attempt to gain political concessions during the military lull that had begun.¹⁸

(U) On 8 May, the NFLSVN submitted a "new" proposal for the solution of the war, the NFLSVN's 10-Points (See the VCI Section of this Chapter for a complete discussion):

Proceeding from a desire to reach a political solution with a view to ending the United States imperialists' war of aggression in South Vietnam and helping restore peace in Vietnam..... The South Vietnam National Liberation Front sets forth the principles and main content of an overall solution to the South Vietnam problem to help restore peace in Vietnam...¹⁹

(U) An article in Nhan Dan, broadcast on 11 May, claimed that the NFLSVN's 10-Point proposal "has the warm welcome and support of broad sections of the world public." Furthermore, "the stand of the NFL conforms with... the legitimate interests of the American people... Even the US Government has had to take a reserved attitude in the face of the NFL's just stand and reasonable demands..." Evidently, Hanoi believed that the US Government, and even more the US public, would be far more receptive to the NFLSVN's proposals than the GVN. Hanoi used this occasion to stress the differences between US and GVN approaches to peace and made a serious attempt to drive a wedge between the US and the GVN. Hanoi's public reaction to the 10-Point proposal was also devoted to furthering US popular discontent with the war.²⁰

(U) Following the NFLSVN's announcement of their 10-Point program, President Nixon published a new eight-point proposal. The DRV's reaction followed the customary pattern of degrading the US proposal and constantly reiterating the "just" points of the NFLSVN's 10-Points:

Nearly one month has elapsed since the South Vietnamese National Front for the Liberation made public its ten-point overall solution to the South Vietnam problem. Ever since this solution was published, the Vietnamese people in both zones as well as overseas Vietnamese have unreservedly supported it.

It must be pointed out straightaway that the Front's ten-point overall solution and Mr. Nixon's eight-point program fundamentally differ from each other... The

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Front's overall solution is based on the principle of respect for the Vietnamese People's fundamental National Rights, whereas Mr. Nixon's... program still comes under the scheme of "De-Americanizing" the war to... perpetuate the partition of Vietnam.²¹

(S) During the summer, the North Vietnamese continued to assess the new administrations policy. Rumors of a pending breakthrough at Paris appeared at various times in 1969.²² One of these moments of anticipated breakthrough occurred after Xuan Thuy's comments of 2 Sep. However, during the funeral period for Ho Chi Minh, North Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong reportedly stated to the Cambodian Chief of State, Prince Sihanouk, that the Paris negotiations were not likely to achieve a quick solution to the war without further US concessions.²³ In the last months of 1969, US representatives at Paris emphasized the mistreatment of US PWs held by NVN and by the VC. The North Vietnamese response was that the PW issue could be settled once their basic demands had been met. They also attacked various alleged US/GVN actions in RVN. (See Chapter X, Prisoners of War, for further discussion of the North Vietnamese views concerning US PWs). Hanoi's representatives reiterated their basic demands; withdrawal of US troops, the establishment of a coalition government, and the demise of the present South Vietnamese government. The US requested that the four parties return to private talks. The US suggested that the GVN and the PRG and the US and Hanoi might fruitfully talk to each other. The NVN suggested that the US discuss the issue with the PRG. This was an attempt to undercut the GVN and to divide the GVN and the US. The proposal was turned down by the US. After the Chief US delegate, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, had resigned, the Chief North Vietnamese delegate stayed away and Hanoi's representatives said that the US had downgraded the talks, which the US denied.²⁴

(U) In response to a question whether the granting of an interview to a newsman by Xuan Thuy reflected his desire to talk substantively, Secretary of State Rogers replied,

Well, I think that they are getting some benefits from the talks. For example, they have ready access to the American press... that they wouldn't have if they were in Hanoi. So from that standpoint they are able to get across their point of view on a daily basis which they couldn't otherwise do.

The Secretary of State added in response to another question:

...If they are serious about talking to us about negotiating peaceful settlement why don't they discuss it in private session? Why is it necessary to go out and talk to the press about it? We are perfectly willing to meet them at any time and talk about all phases of this war.²⁵

(U) The talks were stalemated at year's end.

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Reinterpretation of the Bombing Halt

(S) On 1 Nov 68, the US ceased the bombing of North Vietnam; NVN emphasized that this action taken by the US was "unconditional". The first sentence of the DRV's opening statement at the first plenary session of the Paris talks is evidence of the importance Hanoi placed on this "fact". This theme was echoed numerous times at the Paris talks and through the various news media of NVN. By late April, Hanoi's public line on the tacit understandings which had led to the total cessation of US bombing had developed clearly and authoritatively. Hanoi tied the post-Tet attacks to stepped-up Allied military activity and argued that US actions, rather than those of DRV, had violated terms set forth in the bombing halt agreement. Hanoi initially claimed that the offensive was in reprisal for persistent US violations of the Tet cease-fire; it then widened its field of attack and cited in particular the employment of B-52 strategic bombers. Then, on 25 Feb, Radio Hanoi and Nhan Dan, the party newspaper, denied the existence of secret US-DRV understandings which had limited Communist offensive activity:

The Americans have pretended that there was a DRV-US agreement on the conditions for their cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam. The truth is that the Americans themselves pledged to unconditionally stop the bombing and strafing throughout DRV territory and agreed with the DRV to open a four-sided conference to find a political solution to the Vietnam problem. By continuing to encroach upon DRV sovereignty and security, the Americans have violated their own commitment. 26

(S) Hanoi's specific denial of any US-North Vietnamese understanding was particularly striking. Following the bombing cessation, the enemy had consistently held that it was unconditional; however, Hanoi had not previously denied the existence of an understanding. The DRV's previous failure to deny press reports, which claimed that an understanding existed, did lend credence to those reports. It was surmised that Hanoi had viewed its concessions under the bombing halt as short term in nature. Hanoi may have felt compelled to reinterpret its obligations under the bombing halt in order to have full freedom of military tactics.

(S) Beyond expanding its own range of military activities and the restriction of the US actions, the new Hanoi line appeared to be designed to squash the almost universal public assumption that Hanoi had given up something to obtain a bombing halt. Hanoi may have wanted to do this because the US had failed to deny press speculation concerning Communist concessions and later made public statements confirming the fact of reciprocity. By extension, Hanoi's statements were aimed at reducing the logic and the likelihood of US retaliatory action. 27

NVN's Position on US Troop Reduction

(S) As stated in Point One of the DRV's Four Point solution to the war, the US was expected to withdraw unconditionally its military forces from RVN; this condition became the major basis of contention during 1969. On 12 Feb, a Nhan Dan "Commentator" article repeatedly

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called for the unconditional withdrawal of Allied forces. Xuan Thuy had implied this demand in his formal presentation at Paris during the first plenary session; he openly voiced this demand at Paris on 13 Feb. Unconditional withdrawal had been an inferred North Vietnamese demand since March 1965. These two instances represented the first time that the formula had appeared in explicit terms following the commencement of official negotiations in Paris. This change of approach was viewed as a possible repeat of Hanoi's pre-bombing halt approach; Hanoi had persistently demanded an unconditional halt to US bombing. In the end of course, the bombing halt was not unconditional -- that is, Hanoi privately accepted certain strictures on its military activity. The conditions of the bombing halt, however, were never made public, and this may be precisely the sort of arrangement that Hanoi sought on the troop withdrawal issue. In such circumstances, Hanoi saw an opportunity to maintain publicly that the US withdrawal was unconditional and that the same time claim another "great victory of the Vietnamese people."

(S) A secret agreement might also have foreclosed the possibility of international supervision; thus, the Allied withdrawal would be open to public scrutiny, that of the Communist forces would not. The US would have little meaningful effective recourse in the event of Communist renunciation or violation of the agreement. In such a case, the US could postpone withdrawal, but Hanoi believed that US public opinion would not allow this to happen.

(S) The demand for unconditional withdrawal also was in harmony with the larger Communist press campaign to identify the US as the "aggressor, waging war against the Vietnamese people." As was the case with the propaganda before the bombing halt, the withdrawal line pointed to the "perfidy" and "obduracy" of the US as the aggressor in making a cessation of its aggression contingent upon conditions or concessions extracted from the "victim of aggression."²⁸

(S) From February into late April, there were no major indications of a change in Hanoi's attitude toward the troop withdrawal demand; however, on 26 Apr, Mai Van Bo reportedly stated that Hanoi would not accept selective withdrawals if the latter were accompanied by a strengthening of ARVN forces. Bo made remarks which suggested that Hanoi was considering the price it had to pay for a complete US withdrawal. He said that the Communists would be reasonable about the amount of time which the US could take to withdraw its troops once a formal announcement of intentions to withdraw them had been announced. Bo said that Hanoi could not at present answer questions concerning withdrawal of its troops from the south, he did not restate Hanoi's standard assertion that the DRV had no troops in the south. This suggested that the DRV had reached the point of seriously considering the price of reciprocal troop withdrawals.²⁹

(U) Outwardly, Hanoi did not deviate from its previous stand on the question of US troop reduction in RVN. During the 18th session of the Paris talks, the following statement was issued:

The total and unconditional withdrawal of US troops and those of other foreign countries of the US camp from South Vietnam is the key problem because so long as these troops trample the soil of Vietnam, the Vietnamese people's fundamental National Rights are infringed upon, and the South Vietnamese people are denied the right to settle themselves their internal affairs without foreign interference....

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of forces within six months. The North Vietnamese Premier also repeated the basic North Vietnamese contention that "American and World opinion... demands... rapid, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of American forces".³⁵

(S) There was a possibility that the North Vietnamese might suggest a longer period for complete US troop withdrawal. Cyrus Eaton had returned from a visit to Hanoi talking of an 18 month time span. However, a senior American diplomat, who later had talked to Eaton at Eaton's request, said that "eighteen months appears to be Eaton's idea".³⁶ The North Vietnamese seemed to be particularly anxious that all US troops leave. A visitor to Hanoi said that DRV officials had taken particular umbrage at a White House statement by the President's press secretary early in December saying that 200,000 men will be left in RVN after troop withdrawal.³⁷ Le Duc Tho, a senior member of the DRV Politburo had indicated similar concerns earlier in the year.³⁸

(C) The US position was enunciated by the President in his 3 Nov speech when he said that the US would withdraw completely from RVN within one year after all sides had agreed to do so.³⁹

Vietnamization as Seen by Hanoi

(S) Directly related to the issue of US troop withdrawals was the US policy of Vietnamization of the war in RVN (See Chapters VI and VIII). Hanoi was very concerned with this aspect of the US war policy. Hanoi could not be sure how rapidly Vietnamization would proceed or how far. On one hand, if the US chose to withdraw forces in small increments, the Communists had to view the future with serious doubts concerning the achievement of a decisive victory during 1969 or perhaps 1970. If the opposite occurred and the US decided to remove rapidly the majority or all of US troops from RVN, Hanoi could have seen Vietnamization through more optimistic eyes. In the case of a slow withdrawal, Hanoi possibly would have had to consider withdrawal of some NVN troops to achieve specific goals of a more rapid US withdrawal. Rapid withdrawal, for instance by late 1970 would have allowed Hanoi the option of avoiding any concessions.⁴⁰

(S) The Communists also feared that US withdrawals under the Vietnamization program could calm US and world public opinion to the point where it would become possible for the US to maintain, indefinitely, a significant US force in RVN. One of the NVN representatives at Paris emphasized in the late spring Hanoi's objection to, and fear of, unilateral US troop withdrawals. He seemed concerned that a partial, unilateral pullout would remove domestic pressure on President Nixon to end the war. This would then permit the US to continue fighting with a significant number of troops and still be able to reinforce the RVNAF in order to replace redeployed US troops.⁴¹ At the same time, however, depending upon the pace and composition of US withdrawals, Hanoi could see some advantage in Vietnamization in terms of a reduced Allied fighting capability, a possible slow-down in GVN pacification efforts, potential US-GVN frictions over withdrawals, and possible weakening of GVN stability and confidence.

(S) Hanoi had to consider the efforts of the US to strengthen the RVNAF, especially if US combat forces were withdrawn slowly and substantial US air and logistic support remained indefinitely. Hanoi may not have placed a very high evaluation on overall RVNAF capability, but Hanoi could not very well assume that it was only the US presence that was responsible for the fact, for example, that during the 1968 Tet Offensive many ARVN units fought well, despite having

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been caught off guard and in a state of partial readiness. That Hanoi's estimate of ARVN capability was higher than it appeared outwardly was suggested by the decision in 1964 -- when GVN and ARVN strength was at a very low point and there was no US ground combat presence -- that it was necessary to send NVA units south to administer the coup de grace. Thus, if during the process of Vietnamization, the firepower and mobility of the RVNAF substantially improve, it could, in Hanoi's eyes, become a formidable -- perhaps insurmountable -- obstacle in the path of victory.⁴²

(S) Hanoi reacted critically to President Nixon's 3 Nov speech asserting that it failed to grapple with the basic issues which they defined as their basic demands.⁴³ A 14 Nov editorial in Quan Doi Nhan Dan, North Vietnam's Army newspaper, launched one of Hanoi's strongest and most direct propaganda attacks to date on the Vietnamization process. The recent upsurge of activity in IV CTZ was tied directly to Vietnamization. The editorial made the usual exaggerated claims of Communist military success, although RVN Marines did suffer some large losses in action in the U Minh Forest region. The editorial stated that the Delta had been looked upon as the key point in the Vietnamization plan. It asserted that if elite US Forces could not defeat Communist forces, RVNAF would not be able to do it and Vietnamization would ultimately fail. From the outset of Vietnamization, the VC/NVA had frequently attacked the process, however this marked the first time that they had openly admitted a connection between it and the level of military activity. The growing intensity of propaganda and military attacks on Vietnamization revealed the increasing concern Hanoi felt over the process. It was unlikely that Hanoi's leaders were fearful that RVNAF would soon be a match for their own army, although they might have felt concern that this could occur after a period of time. What Hanoi probably feared most in 1969 was the slow disappearance of one of its most potent propaganda weapons, the portrayal of the US as an aggressor. While one of Hanoi's basic purposes was to achieve the total withdrawal of US forces, they did not wish to have the war assume the aspects of a Vietnamese versus Vietnamese struggle while there was any possibility that Saigon would grow strong enough to stand alone.⁴⁴ One visitor to NVN said of the Hanoi leadership's strong reaction against the Vietnamization idea, "They are afraid it will work, that they will wind up with a stalemate".⁴⁵

The Effect of Ho Chi Minh's Death

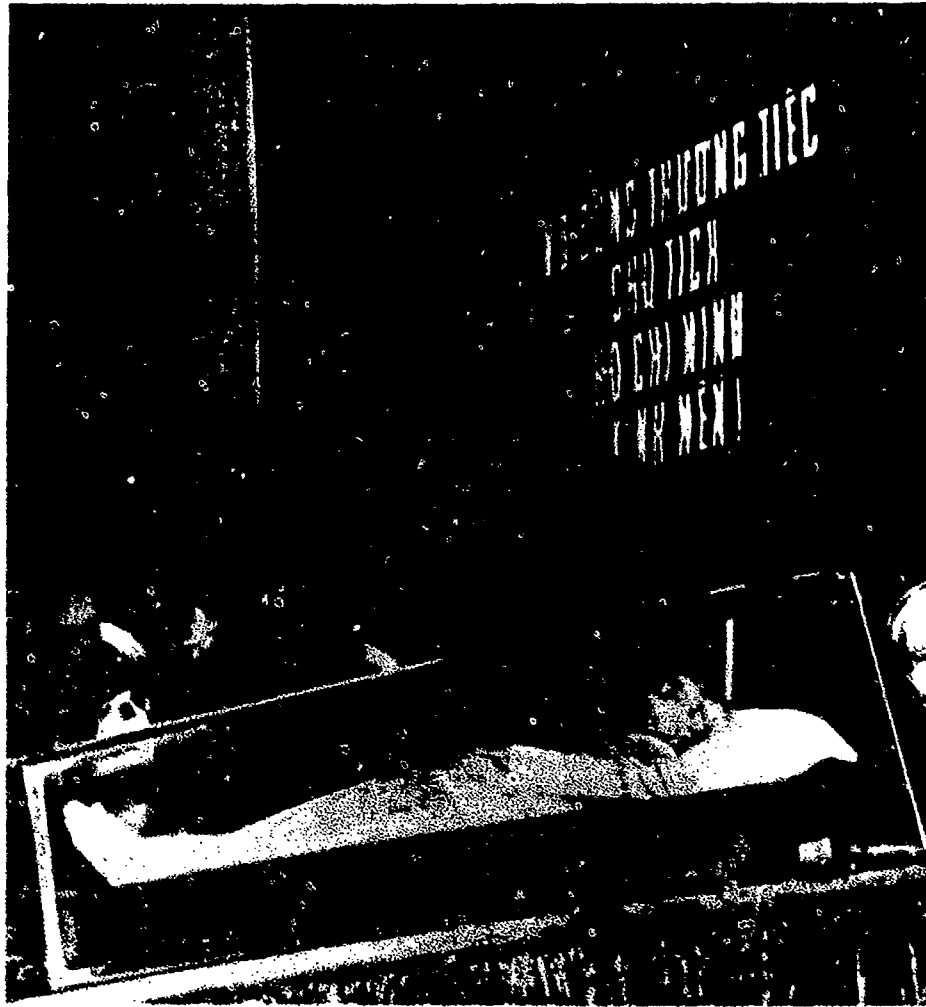
(S) The President of the DRV, Ho Chi Minh, died of a heart attack at 0947 hours on 3 Sep in Hanoi at the age of 79. He had been the father of the Communist Party in Vietnam. He had combined communism and nationalism. His death raised important questions concerning who his successor or successors would be and what effect his death would have on the domestic and international policies of the regime. Most observers agreed that Ho had not played an essential role in day-to-day governmental affairs for a year or more but had served to mediate disputes within the ruling circles in Hanoi. At his death, Ho had enormous stature in the Communist world. A captured notebook noted that Ho had fallen ill in April 69, that eminent doctors from the Communist world had been called in to treat him, that he had improved and even been able to attend a Party meeting, but that his condition worsened in July and August when he sustained several heart attacks.⁴⁶ Therefore, the major figures around Ho in the Hanoi hierarchy had some months to prepare themselves to assume complete leadership. In addition the major leaders had been contributing to policy making decisions for many years. The leadership of the DRV had been remarkably cohesive over a long period of time, beginning with the establishment

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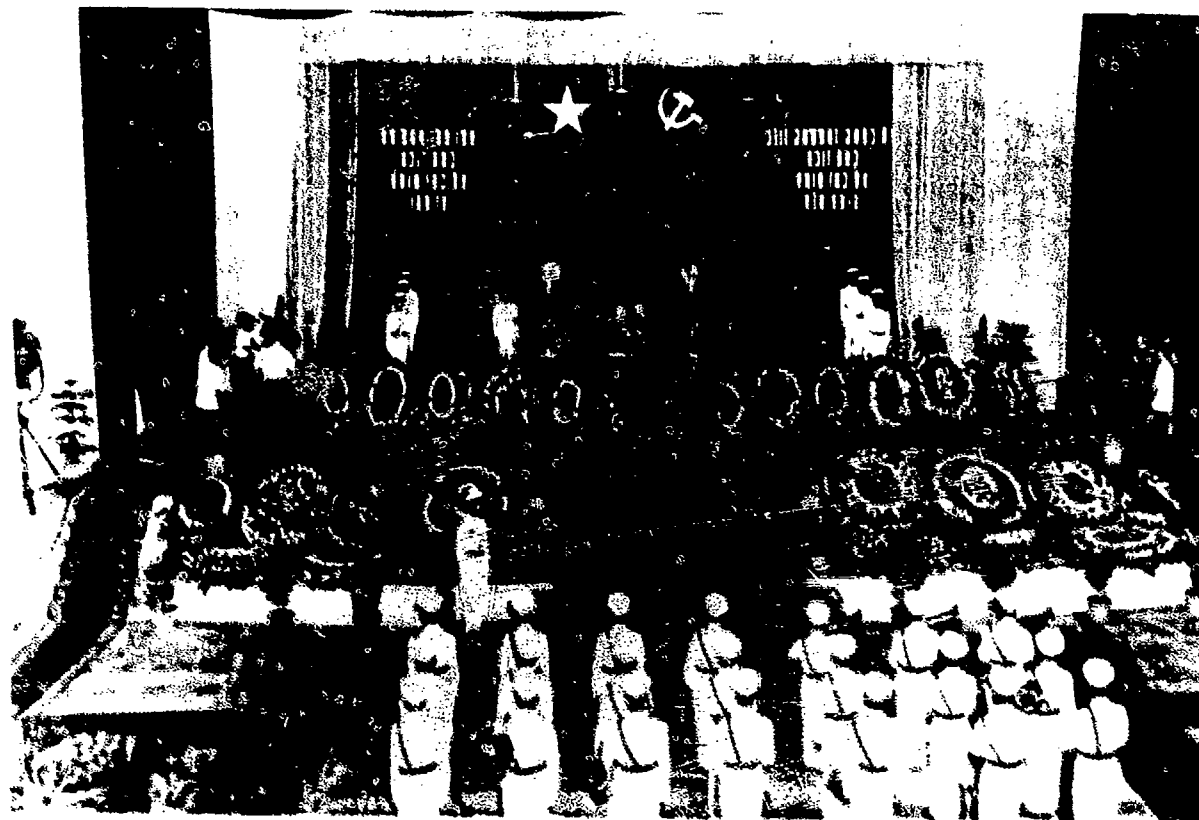
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Ho Chi Minh Lying in State

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of the Communist Party of Indochina and continuing through the formation of the Lao Dong Party, the successful prosecution of the war against France, and the creation of the government of North Vietnam in 1954. Despite considerable quantities of outside aid during the previous four years, Ho Chi Minh's ruling circle was able to maintain its power position due more to its own tenacity and skill than to outside assistance. The questions which Ho's death posed were whether the new leaders would continue to cooperate with each other, whether they could continue to maintain their independence from China and Russia, whether their faction would continue to maintain control in NVN in the absence of its revered and charismatic leader, what internal policy they would develop, and most importantly what policy towards the war they would adopt.

(S) Ho Chi Minh occupied a unique position in the party and government hierarchy at the time of his death. Even though he was 79 years old, his ability to unify factions by delicately balancing individual aspirations and party goals made him the unquestioned leader. He was also the best known Vietnamese figure and was a true national hero in the eyes of his people. As a figure above mere factionalism, Ho had been able to avoid the type of significant open disputes among the members of the Politburo that had paralyzed other Communist states and often resulted in purges of dissidents. In addition, his stature and his strategy had allowed NVN to maintain a neutral position between the feuding giants of the Communist world, the Soviet Union and Communist China. An example of his stature in the Communist world, and his sense of having a role in it, came with Ho's appeal in his "Last Will" to Communist countries to stop feuding and achieve unity. Ho's "Last Will" had summarized the political themes which he had espoused throughout his life; the importance of the unity of the North Vietnamese Communist Party, the need of the party now that it was in power to follow "revolutionary morality", his desire to persevere in the war in the South, the desire to reunify North and South Vietnam, and his wish that "dissensions" between Communist parties be ended. 47

(S) At the beginning of 1969, the Politburo and lesser levels of governmental authority had been split in a number of ways. First, there existed an ideological split between those members who were pro-Peking and those who were pro-Moscow. However, the course which Hanoi had followed in the philosophical conflict was that of studied neutrality with some attempts at pioneering an independent course in its own style. Publicly, Hanoi maintained strict neutrality and even refrained from acknowledging the existence of the split. In general, for the North Vietnamese, pragmatism had taken precedence over ideology. The US State Department had minimized the significance of this split in its assessment of the possible effects of Ho's death:

Longer-term policy changes may occur but are impossible to predict at this time. If and when such changes occur, they will probably be slight and gradual (like alternations of Communist position in past). Furthermore, such changes as may occur initially will probably result from regime's own tactical decisions on conduct of war, not from any abandonment of ultimate goals, from internal pressures, or from increase in supposed Soviet influence at expense of Chinese influence or vice versa.

Practice of labelling individual Hanoi leaders as "pro-Soviet" or "pro-Chinese" has long struck us not only as over-simplified but also as misleading, in that it obscures posture of entire leadership as "pro-Vietnamese" first and foremost. We believe Ho's

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successors will continue an independent course although this may be more difficult to do in his absence, and will continue to enjoy moral and material support of both major Communist powers. 48

(S) A second split reflected disagreement between moderates and militants in foreign and domestic policy matters. Disputes over methods and timing of policies had become more significant than ideological disputes. The militants, whose membership was composed of both civilians and military, were associated with stringent party control, imposition of domestic programs from above, and sometimes, efforts to unify North and South Vietnam. The moderates generally favored an evolutionary and cautious approach to the attainment of national goals. Their strength had grown since 1965 with the influx of massive Soviet aid and concomitant Soviet influence.

(S) The third cleavage in the ruling circles concerned conflicting beliefs in military strategy. A number of military leaders and some civilian leaders had advocated a quick, decisive military victory as opposed to a protracted war. Apparently this group had been led by Le Duan, Le Duc Tho and the Vietnamese generals on the ground in or around RVN in 1967, led by General Nguyen Chi Thanh. 49 The militants apparently had persuaded the Politburo and Giap to follow this policy until post-Tet 1968 when the hope of a victory and popular uprising was clearly crushed. The militants had also been weakened with the death of General Thanh in 1967 and his replacement as head of COSVN by Pham Hung, supposedly a party moderate. Following Tet, the policy reverted to control by the moderates, who advocated a slower pace in the RVN with efforts to make gains at the negotiating table. The ascendancy of this group was marked by a speech given by Truong Chinh in May 1968 and broadcast in September 1968 which condemned "revisionism" of the Peoples' War doctrine. This indicated a reversal of Le Duan's militant position. In 1969, Giap had apparently become a mediator between the largely militant generals and the largely civilian moderates. 50

(S) As a result of these conflicts, there had been three shifting factions in the North. The first and dominant group, which included Ho and became headed by Le Duan, advocated a firm pursuit of the war and placed lesser emphasis on domestic problems. The second faction, led by Truong Chinh, favored the Peking notion of protracted war with small scale units and without conventional attacks. A third group, led by Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, favored victory at the negotiating table, using only limited guerrilla forces. The last group was considerably weakened as a result of the "Hoang Minh Chinh Affair". More information about that affair became available in 1969. 51

(C) Hoang Minh Chinh had been Director of the Nguyen Ai Quoc Political School, the most important political school in NVN, which trained party, government, and military personnel. Since 1963, Chinh and others had favored limiting the involvement in the South to the use of political means rather than military intervention. Other North Vietnamese leaders had apparently tried to convince Chinh and others who held the same views that they were wrong. The issue came to a head in 1967, one would guess over the decision to launch the major offensive in the South which became the Tet offensive of 1968. The opposition group presented a position paper to the Central Committee of the Party. Apparently the opposition closed its appeal with a threat to take their argument to the people if its position was not recognized. Also, Chinh apparently planned to send a letter directly to Central Committee members. From September 1967 until early 1968, 200-300 cadre were arrested. Most were middle level cadre but a small

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number had held significant positions. For instance, in addition to Chinh, the Chief of the NVN Central Intelligence Organization and an army general had been arrested. Thus, a faction which had opposed the war was silenced.⁵² The decision to launch the 1968 offensive had political reverberations both before and afterwards in Hanoi.

The Successors to Ho Chi Minh

(S) The Party leaders who were considered as candidates to succeed Ho were those immediately under him in the hierarchy. Like Ho, they were highly nationalized Communists who were dedicated to the eventual completion of the revolution to encompass the entire Vietnamese nation. At the time of Ho's death, it was unclear exactly who, or what factions, would dominate NVN. There were indications that power in NVN would be shared by two or more individuals -- as in the Soviet Union; however, there were four prime candidates for the position of leadership left vacant by Ho Chi Minh's death.⁵³

1. Le Duan. The most prominent of the leaders was Le Duan, 61 years old, First Secretary of the Party who had held the number two position since 1957. He was generally considered to have been the architect of the strategy to "liberate the South" and to have established the NFLSVN in RVN. Since his elevation in 1960 to the post of First Secretary, he had frequently spoken with authority on Party matters (Duan was known as "small President Ho"). A nationalist Communist, Duan was sometimes mentioned as a member of the pro-Soviet faction in Hanoi. However, he had made pro-Chinese speeches and had followed the Chinese ideological policy of intensifying the revolutionary struggle in the South and condemning "revisionism". He had traveled to both Moscow and Peking to secure aid and to maintain good relations. The weight of evidence suggested that Le Duan and the dominant faction which he headed would take control of the government and that a power struggle would take place. This paramount group included a majority of the Politburo and was dedicated to the policies being pursued at the time of Ho Chi Minh's death. The continuation in power of the same group of men, who had labored for twenty years as a unit, gave credence to the belief that little would change in the short run.⁵⁴

2. Truong Chinh. Truong Chinh, 61 years old, was next in terms of party rank; he was identified with the pro-Peking faction in the Politburo. Chinh had held the position of Secretary-General of the party until 1957 when his excesses in carrying out the agricultural commune program had sparked a peasant revolt. The post had been abolished in 1960 after Ho had held it himself for three years. Chinh had served as Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly since July 1960. Beginning in 1965, Chinh registered a return to a position of influence in the guidance of party affairs. Even with this revival of personal power, Chinh was considered to be the most unpopular of the top Vietnamese leaders because of the uncompromising severity of his methods and outlook. Chinh's long-standing friendship with the Minister of National Defense, Vo Nguyen Giap, apparently deteriorated into a serious rivalry as Giap emerged as a popular leader outside the party. Le Duan was another of Chinh's rivals. There was apparently a good deal of maneuvering among these men, despite the facade of political unity that they presented publicly.⁵⁵ A number of Truong Chinh's thoughts enunciated over the last 25 years appeared as part of the core of North Vietnam's 1969 reassessment. In 1947 Chinh had argued for protracted war when he stated, "All that they (proponents of quick military victory) would achieve would be the premature sacrifice of the bulk of our forces in a few adventurous battles; they would commit heroic but useless suicide". He had predicted in 1947 that

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VIETNAM (NORTH)
PHAM VAN DONG, PRIME MINISTER.

1966



VIETNAM (NORTH)
TRUONG CHINH, CHAIRMAN, STANDING
COMMITTEE, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

1966



SOUTH VIETNAM
VO NGUYEN GIAP, GEN. MINISTER OF
NATIONAL DEFENSE.

1966



VIETNAM (NORTH)
LE DUAN, FIRST SECRETARY, CENTRAL
COMMITTEE, WORKERS' PARTY.

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French military advantages would weaken and that her political problems would increase as the war progressed. For Truong Chinh, the party took precedence over the military in an insurgency and was his primary focus. The party had to be indoctrinated; "We must pay particular attention to the task of thought-building". The party was to lead and he asserted,

So many active workers and peasants, so many youths fully devoted to the Revolution are ready to accept all sacrifices! Have confidence in them, employ them boldly, guide them patiently, but do not forget to control them. ⁵⁶

a. According to Chinh, and to Communist doctrine in general, a political structure was necessary to prepare the people for a "General uprising". These transitory bodies were known as Revolutionary Committees (RCs). The halfway structure to the Communist seizure of political power in Vietnam was called, until 1968, the People's Liberation Committee or Council system (PLC). However, Chinh was not satisfied that the PLCs were successfully welding the Party, military and people together. He was also flexible enough to recognize that the RC would have to appeal to a broad political spectrum of people to be successful in the general offensive against urban centers. The revised term, Revolutionary Committees, which appeared during the enemy Tet-1968 offensive, attempted to provide a new approach to enlist the support of the people as a whole.⁵⁷ The Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) established on 10 Jun was an outgrowth of the RCs.⁵⁸

b. Chinh, the dogmatist, was flexible as far as choosing tactics which would aid the Revolution. Thus he favored establishing fronts composed of as broad a political spectrum as possible in order to fight the "immediate" enemy. Through the Front, the party was to get the support of the people because "guerrilla warfare must be the tactic of the people as a whole, not of the army alone." He wrote:

The people are the eyes and ears of the army, they feed and keep our soldiers. It is they who help the army in sabotage and in battle. The people are the water and our army the fish.

He favored negotiations if they helped advance his cause. Truong Chinh also advocated strongly the use of revolutionary violence stating:

It is absolutely necessary for the people's democratic dictatorship to use violence against counter-revolutionaries and exploiters who refuse to submit to reform. Therefore, we must pay continuous attention to consolidating the repressive apparatus of the people's democratic state, the people's army, the people's police, the people's control institute, the people's tribunal, and so forth.

One of his pronouncements was "for a new-born revolutionary power to be lenient with counter-revolutionaries is tantamount to committing suicide".⁵⁹

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3. Pham Van Dong. The third ranking member was Premier Pham Van Dong, also 61 years old, the Politburo member who traditionally provided the party's direction over the governmental machinery. Dong became Premier of NVN during September 1955 and was one of the top-ranking members of the pro-Soviet faction in Hanoi. During the late 1950's, he was regarded as the most likely successor to Ho, his long time personal friend. In 1960, however, his rank fell from second to fourth in the Politburo, removing him from the position of heir-apparent.

4. Vo Nguyen Giap. A fourth figure was General Vo Nguyen Giap, 57 years old; the North's primary military strategist. He served as Vice Premier, Minister of National Defense, Commander-in-Chief, and member of the Politburo. Giap generally was aligned with the moderate factions in the Politburo and was pro-Soviet in most cases. From 1965 to 1968, he apparently sided with the militant faction which advocated a rapid and forceful response to the US military buildup in an attempt to obtain a stunning defeat similar to that at Dien Bien Phu. When this policy failed during Tet of 1968, Giap returned to his moderate position between militant generals and the less militant civilians.⁶⁰ Giap mentions five "comprehensive factors in victory" in his writings; the leadership of the Lao Dong Party, the mobilization of the entire population, the organization and spirit of the "Heroic People's Army", the aid from the "brother Socialist Republics", and the combination of political and military factors in the struggle. The basic component of Giap's strategy was the long drawn out war to wear out his opponent on the battlefield and at home recognizing the relative weakness of his forces when compared to those of his opponents, France and later the US. Giap calls this "Revolutionary War which relies on the heroic spirit to triumph over modern weapons". The essence of the strategy was to accept casualties in return for causing unacceptable losses to his opponents.⁶¹

(C) At the time of Ho Chi Minh's death, it was generally accepted by most observers that there would be no immediate benefits for the US resulting from a major shift in NVN war policy. In announcing Ho's death, Hanoi explained that "in these days of grief... (it is time for)... all party, armed forces and people to translate sorrow into revolutionary acts, strengthen solidarity, and channel all our will and forces into the great cause of fighting and defeating US aggressors..."⁶² The authoritative army newspaper Quan Doi Nhan Dan strongly reaffirmed the party's leadership of the armed forces. A pledge to maintain "determination to fight and win" included an uncommon promise "not to become disheartened -- no matter what the difficulties and hardships -- and never to become discouraged."⁶³

(C) Hanoi's first authoritative statements on the post -- Ho Chi Minh leadership were contained in an editorial published jointly by Nhan Dan and Hoc Tap (Hoc Tap was the NVN theoretical party monthly). The editorial stated that:

President Ho left behind a collective of leadership which he had taken great pains to build and nurture. It is a collective of his closest comrades in arms and most outstanding disciples. It is a collective of revolutionary fighters who have been tempered and tested in the long and arduous revolutionary struggle.⁶⁴

(C) Thus, it appeared that the Politburo would continue to function as it did when Ho was alive -- much like a board of directors. After the reading of Ho's will on 9 Sep, Le Duan pledged the party and people to continue vigorous prosecution of the "Liberation Struggle." Duan

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also said, "We swear we will forever carry aloft the banner of National Independence, resolve to fight and to defeat the US aggressors, to liberate the South, defend the North to reunify the country with a view to meeting his (Ho's) desire."

(C) Some strains in Hanoi's collective leadership showed through in the last quarter of 1969. Truong Chinh seemed to be gaining ground in his competition with Le Duan for the number one position. He seemed to have recovered completely from his downgrading in the 1950s after the peasant revolt against his harsh agrarian policy. At the same time, Le Duan's position seemed to have been weakened by the great losses suffered in the Tet offensives of 1968 which he had advocated. Some commentators remarked upon the fact that Hanoi's announcements concerning celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) in December failed to mention First Secretary Le Duan as in attendance. The State Department added however that the "frequency of public appearances by North Vietnamese leaders has not been conclusive indicator of their ranking or status".⁶⁶

(C) Public statements by Hanoi's leaders revealed the tensions as well as the policies which were likely to be followed. As early as May 68, Truong Chinh had stated in a long speech, commemorating the birthday of Marx, the themes which were to predominate in 1969 and which implicitly disagreed with Le Duan. In September 1968, Hanoi Radio began broadcasting sections of the speech. In it, Chinh had stated that the Party had to turn towards "the consolidation . . . of the socialist economy" and in general towards domestic concerns in order "... to consolidate the big rear of the resistance against US aggression. . .". He had also said, "We must . . . grasp the motto of 'Long-drawn out fight and relying mainly on one's self'".⁶⁷ Chinh began to specify his domestic targets in a speech on 6 Nov 68 which was published in the party daily, Nhan Dan, on 29 and 30 Jan 69. He returned to the agricultural sphere and criticized a system of land management which allowed for some individual initiative. North Vietnam had apparently discovered what other Communist governments had discovered; that peasants are far more productive when they farm their own plots of land and when they are allowed individual initiative than they are when forced to work on collectives. However, Truong Chinh responded dogmatically, "The idea that any method of production that increases the social product is acceptable is not the view of the working class and the Party"; rather "we must produce in accordance with socialist collectivization".⁶⁸ On 19 Oct, Hanoi radio broadcast a speech made by Truong Chinh at the 15th anniversary celebration of Bao Anh Viet-Nam, the DRV's pictorial magazine distributed overseas. Chinh stressed at that meeting, "The press as a whole must thoroughly understand and reflect these two strategic revolutionary tasks in the content of propaganda: The countrywide anti-US struggle and socialism-building in the North". In having this speech on a minor occasion broadcast throughout NVN, the hard-line leader was telling the people that, in his view at least, national priorities had changed. There would no longer be everything for the frontline but a division of effort between the war and building up the economic and political structure of North Viet-Nam. Such a course would better enable Hanoi to maintain a protracted struggle in South Vietnam.⁶⁹

(U) A speech by Le Duan broadcast in Hanoi on 31 Oct revealed signs of disagreements among the leaders. Le Duan appealed for unity in the war effort, and at one point said:

If mutual love and solidarity are to be built among the people, they must exist within the party first.

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Solidarity does not mean that diverging views are impossible. Between two comrades in the party there can be diverging views. That is normal.

Once there is a divergence of views, it is necessary to discuss these views to reach unanimity. The collective working system must be firmly maintained. It is inadvisable to adopt the opinion of one person and force all others to follow it. To make progress and understand the truth, the party must engage in criticism and self-criticism. ⁷⁰

(C) Finally, it was left to General Giap, in a long article apparently developed as part of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the NVA, to enunciate what seemed to be the position of the Hanoi leadership towards the war at the close of 1969. Giap's article, broadcast over Hanoi radio and printed in Nhan Dan and Quang Doi Nha Dan from 14-20 Dec, repeated some themes which Giap had mentioned in earlier years. It called for protracted war, for coordination of forces, for using a small force to defeat a large force, for adequate political preparations, and for the exploitation of Allied political and military weaknesses. It was different mainly in its emphases. He placed great stress on the importance of expanding and safeguarding the rear areas and bases. He explicitly stated, "If we succeed in gaining mastery over the rural areas, the revolution will acquire a firm basis for mobilizing human and material resources in order to develop its forces for protracted combat". Another new emphasis was on "fluctuations by leaps and bounds as the outcome either of our efforts, of the enemy's mistakes or of effective conditions". This could be interpreted as an explanation for the recent lack of progress as well as a suggestion that another leap might occur in the future. A third new emphasis was the notion of "rational attacks". The article also placed emphasis on the need occasionally to be on the defense "to insure that the majority of the forces are able to carry out the offense". The notion of "rational attacks" appeared to be a call for care in the commitment of forces; a decision to maintain a credible force without taking undue casualties. The thrust of the article was to counter pacification, to maintain and strengthen the rear and base areas, to prepare for protracted war, and to build up the quality of the VC/NVA units with an emphasis on innovative tactics. However, more ambitious efforts were not ignored as Giap called for strong attacks and insisted that fighting a large force with a smaller one did not reduce the need for medium and big offensives. One note of caution in assessing Giap's article was that Giap made similar statements about a protracted war in a September 1967 article which was followed by the Tet Offensive of 1968. ⁷¹

(C) The views of Giap and of Truong Chinh appear to have formed the basis of COSVN Resolution 9 (See VC/NVA Strategy and Tactics Section of this Chapter). Neither Giap, Truong Chinh nor COSVN Resolution 9 stated precisely when or where any new offensive would begin. What Giap did say was that "The big question in guiding the war is to know how to transform guerrilla warfare into regular war at the correct time and correct place...". The statements of the Hanoi leaders and of the COSVN Resolution did give a general idea of future VC/NVA actions and the regions on which offensive might focus. Developments in the latter months of 1969 were consistent with these statements.


Relations with the USSR


Introduction

(S) The DRV continued to require extensive aid from the USSR in 1969 and continued to receive it. Prior to Ho's death and afterwards, Hanoi's leaders carefully charted a neutral course between the Soviet Union and China. In fact, after Ho's death, two issues upon which Hanoi's leaders must have been unified were the need to continue to follow that neutral course and the need to urge the USSR and China to avoid war.⁷² Soviet views and actions relating to Vietnam reflected the former's conception of her own national interest. Its major concerns were that the Vietnam War not escalate to a point where it threatened to bring about a confrontation between the Soviet Union and the US and that neither China nor the US gained a firm toe hold in Vietnam. Once the war began to deescalate in 1969, the Soviet Union appeared to treat it as significant, but not one to her primary priorities which were the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia and her conflict with Communist China, primarily the latter.⁷³ For a period of time in 1969, it had appeared that the USSR and Communist China might have been drifting towards open and large scale military conflict. However, after Premiers Kosygin and Chou En-lai met shortly after Ho Chi Minh's funeral, relations became characterized by controlled disagreement rather than by polemic and minor warfare, and negotiations to resolve the issues between them opened in October. Ho Chi Minh's "Last Will" which had appealed for an end to dissension in the Communist camp may have influenced these developments.

(S) One clear trend in 1969 was the attempt of the Soviet Union to express her interests in SEASIA. For instance, a Soviet destroyer arrived at Sihanoukville, Cambodia, on the first Soviet naval visit to that country, although commercial vessels had been calling there since 1963.⁷⁴ Concurrently, as the Soviet Union expressed her interest in Asia, various non-Communist countries such as India, Laos and possibly even Thailand began to look to the Soviet Union as a possible counterweight to prevent anticipated Chinese pressure. Laotian leaders greatly feared a Sino-Soviet agreement.⁷⁵

(S) The USSR had helped in the negotiations which had resulted in the bombing halt. This agreement had lessened Soviet fears of a confrontation with the US. It also had allowed the Soviet Union to cut back on one of the very expensive items of aid to NVN, anti-aircraft weapons and ammunition.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the USSR probably would not object if a compromise agreement were reached as long as the agreement didn't give the US a "victory". A compromise agreement would have the advantage for the USSR of allowing NVN to become stronger and therefore act as a stronger blocking force in relation to China.⁷⁷ Also, it would save the USSR money. The main theme of a speech by Premier Kosygin on 15 Oct, in an exchange with Pham Van Dong, was Soviet support of a political settlement of the war. Kosygin urged the US to accept the 10 Points. The American Embassy in Moscow thought Kosygin's flirting with the idea of a regional security pact for Asia might have been merely propaganda, however, would not rule out an implication that Moscow envisioned the war receding and was focusing on a settlement in broad regional ramifications and potentialities.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, in 1969, the Soviet Union was not going to go against North Vietnam's lead. As the US SECSTATE said, "Aside from... priority areas, the Soviets have seemed content for the present either to stand pat, as on Vietnam and Laos, or simply to give the appearance of movement, largely by marching in place". He continued saying that in relation to Vietnam and Laos, "they have shown no recent signs of willingness to help". He added that "They probably now discount the danger of open US-Soviet confrontation over Vietnam and may be relatively content with events as they are, so

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long as they do not move in the direction of facilitating an expansion of Chinese influence and power. Meanwhile, Moscow continues to exploit the Vietnam issue... "79

(S) During 1968, NVN had again increased its dependence on Soviet economic, military, and political support. The USSR and NVN had signed a new trade agreement on 25 Nov 68, and both appeared to be formulating long range plans for close cooperation and support.⁸⁰ On 11 Jan 69, Hanoi Radio reaffirmed that there was no wavering in the USSR's strong support of the DRV:

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the German Communist Party once again express their solidarity with the heroic fight of the Vietnamese people and support the stand of the DRVN Government and that of the South Vietnam Front for Liberation and resolutely demand that the US Government stop its aggression against the Vietnamese people. Thus says the joint communique issued by the delegation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the German Communist Party on January 10 in Moscow.⁸¹

One visitor to Hanoi returned stating that the Soviets had given the North Vietnamese about \$1 billion worth of goods a year for the past four years, while the Communist Chinese had supplied about \$600 million a year over the same period.⁸² Seaborne petroleum exports from Russia to NVN were 370,000 tons in 1969; 3 percent below the 1968 figure, but the bombing halt probably allowed for greater efficiency.⁸³ The highest numbers of Soviet ships visited NVN at the turn of 1968-69 and at the end of 1969. Twenty seven Soviet ships arrived in NVN in December, the highest ever.⁸⁴

(S) The continued provision of 122mm rockets and explosives by the USSR to the VC/NVA supported the hypothesis that the Soviets condoned if not encouraged the terrorism and indiscriminate attacks on RVN and its people.⁸⁵

(S) On 15 Oct 69, the USSR and the DRV signed a new aid agreement. Pham Van Dong called the results of the negotiation excellent and said that it showed the willingness of the Soviet Union to strengthen its support and assistance.⁸⁶ NVN also signed a new agreement with Communist China after Ho's death. The details of the agreements were not known, but were thought to be substantial.⁸⁷

USSR's Views on the Paris Talks

I reported a discussion on the Paris Talks with the Soviet Foreign Office SEASIA Division Counselor Patorsky (phonetic). Patorsky had opened the conversations by reciting the customary stand of the Soviet official position on Vietnam, including broad criticism of all aspects of US involvement and the usual assertion that US troops had to be withdrawn from RVN before a peaceful solution could be found. Patorsky claimed that the US was trying to transform the essence of the Vietnam problem from a problem of aggressor versus victim to a problem of South Vietnam versus North Vietnam. Patorsky was queried about a DRV-US mutual troop withdrawal; he replied that only NFLSVN

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forces existed in South Vietnam and "...when US decides to take certain military action, we can reasonably assume that NLF will also take certain actions corresponding to US action." Patorsky went on to explain that the USSR had only noted one new development at Paris and that was the idea of a peace cabinet in Saigon; he indicated that a peace cabinet could possibly be the road to a solution without a total US troop withdrawal.⁸⁸

(U) Periodically, Moscow radio reaffirmed its support of the NFLSVN and other DRV-supported organizations; such was the case on 21 Apr when the following broadcast was transmitted in Vietnamese:

A year ago, a new organization was founded in South Vietnam called the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces of Vietnam... The fact that this new patriotic organization has been created in South Vietnam and that it supports the NFLSVN stand once again proves that the South Vietnamese people are more clearly united than ever and determined to defend their Fatherland....

The Soviet Union, the other socialist countries and all people of good will in the world support and are aiding the heroic Vietnamese people. Our position concerning the Vietnam problem is clearcut and unchanged....

The present situation in Vietnam clearly shows that the only way out of the aggressive war is negotiation, withdrawal of US troops from South Vietnam, and political settlement of the Vietnam problem in accordance with the aspirations and desires of the Vietnamese people.⁸⁹

Soviets Blame US for Offensive Action in RVN

(U) Following the same lines of the DRV and the NFLSVN, the USSR expressed the opinion that the US was the cause of all fighting in RVN. An Izvestia commentary on 13 Jan stressed that "...threat hangs over peace because of the US continuing to escalate... the war against the Vietnamese people." Pravda followed suit on 14 Jan, possibly implied that the DRV-NFLSVN was losing patience, and that the CHICOMS were gaining influence in SEASIA as a result of the apparent lack of progress in the Paris negotiations.⁹⁰

(U) With the VC/NVA attacks on 22-23 Feb, Soviet comments again pointed out that such activity was the result of the US attitude; one news release stated that the "...US has no cause to 'resent' attacks since the US was at fault for deadlock in talks and for renewal of fighting as a result of its own conduct of punitive operations". The article concluded that perhaps these blows would bring "...someone in Washington to his senses..." and finally end the hope of a US military victory in Vietnam. This press reaction was expected by the US; however, it was noted

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that Pravda ventured no immediate comments on the new VC/NVA offensive and thereby indicated a desire to keep the Soviet profile low in RVN developments.⁹¹

(U) Throughout March and April, official Soviet news agencies gave the war in RVN general coverage and no major changes in approach were detected; however, on 6 May, Pravda published an article entitled "Aggressor Suffers Losses" and devoted much attention to US casualty statistics -- indicating that the US had suffered 104,000 KIA in the first five weeks of the Post-Tet Offensive. This shift in approach was viewed as a gesture of Soviet support for the DRV/NFLSVN efforts to impress the world with their ability to conduct vigorous and successful offensive operations. It was also significant that this article came on the heels of Le Duc Tho's visit to Moscow, which was followed on 8 May, by the NFLSVN's announcement of its 10-Point solution for the war.⁹²

(C) The NFLSVN published its 10-Point solution to the war on 8 May; in response, Pravda published an article entitled "The Way Out of the Blind Alley". The article lauded the 10-Point proposal as a new initiative that again showed the "profound gap" between the DRV/NFLSVN who had come to the talks with good will and a serious desire for settlement, and the US, who used the talks to camouflage aggressive plans. The Soviet Embassy's Second Secretary, Komarovsky expanded the Soviet position on the 10-Point proposal. He emphasized that the program indicated a very flexible position on the part of the NFLSVN and that all parties to the Paris talks could accept the program as a basis for negotiations. Komarovsky said that the Soviet Government was consulted by the NFLSVN and NVN on all important policies and implied that this was true with regards to the 10-Point program.

(C) Komarovsky did not explain the program point by point but did offer views on some of the points. Regarding Point Three, he said that NVN was unable to admit that they had troops in RVN, but this point implied that such was the case. In Points Four and Five, he said that the NFLSVN had not excluded important personages of the GVN from participation in a coalition government. Komarovsky said that the "international supervision" referred to in Point 10 was very important. He stated that though the NFLSVN's official position called for unilateral US withdrawal of troops, it actually expected a simultaneous withdrawal.

(C) Komarovsky was questioned about the possibility of a Geneva-type conference to settle the problem and he stated that without CPR participation any solution was meaningless. He said that the Soviets were trying to influence the NVN position, but it was very difficult due to the Soviet-Chinese problem.⁹³

USSR Recognizes "Provisional Revolutionary Government of SVN"

(U) Tass reported that on 13 Jun the NFLSVN representative Dang Quang Minh had been received and the USSR had officially recognized the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) of South Vietnam (See VC Infrastructure Section of this Chapter). Pravda hailed the formation of the PRG as a major step in opening "new" prospects for peaceful settlement of the war; one writer claimed that the "government" controlled 4/5ths of RVN territory and that the PRG was the "true representative" of the people.⁹⁴ Coupled with its recognition of the PRG, the Soviet Union missed few opportunities to cite the unacceptability of the Thieu Government.⁹⁵

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NVN Reaction to President Nixon's Visit to Rumania

(FOUO) Hanoi reacted strongly against the President's visit. Hanoi valued the unity of the Communist bloc in support of NVN and valued the aid which she had received. Hanoi responded as if she felt that the unity was threatened and criticized the Rumanians for inviting the President while the war continued.⁹⁶

USSR Reaction to Ho Chi Minh's Death

(FOUO) The USSR sent a high level delegation headed by Premier Kosygin to Ho's funeral. In the period following the death of the North Vietnamese leader, the Soviet Union showed every sign of wishing to express full support of the new leaders. In the latter months of 1969, the Soviet Union followed the lead of North Vietnam in expressing opinion about the developing situation in RVN.⁹⁷

USSR Reaction to US Troop Withdrawals and Vietnamization

(C) The Soviet Union reacted negatively, at least in public, to US troop withdrawals. Although it was clear that the Soviets favored a deescalation of the war, Tass commented on the US announcement in September of a 35,000 troop reduction that it was done to quiet opposition in the US and to quiet demands in the world for a complete US withdrawal.⁹⁸ The Soviets had a strong reaction against the 3 Nov speech of President Nixon. Soviet President Podgorny said that the speech showed that "sober approach to solution of this problem has not yet prevailed in US ruling circles".⁹⁹ The Soviets expressed concern that Vietnamization might work. The American Embassy in Moscow commented at the end of the year, "Soviets continue to show concern that the Vietnamization Policy improves the USG position at home and abroad, and that the administration is pursuing that policy confidently and resolutely."¹⁰⁰ The Soviet Union continued to make propaganda use of actions and alleged actions of US troops in RVN.¹⁰¹

Post War Planning

(S) The Soviet Union and other Socialist countries planned to provide post war assistance to NVN according to a source based on remarks made by a Soviet diplomat. However the official had stated that they could only provide about 1/4 to 1/2 of what NVN was requesting. NVN was expected to rely heavily on French and Japanese aid.¹⁰² French aid would have the added advantage of giving Hanoi some additional room to maneuver between Russia and China.¹⁰³ North Vietnamese officials were assuring the USSR that they would use post war aid efficiently. The Soviet official thought that the NVN would probably use this aid wisely, but he stated that the Soviet Union had strong memories of aid wasted through poor management by the North Koreans after the Korean War.¹⁰⁴

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Summary

(C) In December, an American diplomat characterized the attitude of a Soviet diplomat, Pavlov, by saying that Pavlov presented a carefully controlled and friendly exterior while persistently advancing the line that "1) progress at Paris depends upon US and 2) 'Vietnamization' policy reveals lack 'sincere' negotiating posture." ¹⁰⁵

Relations with Communist China

Introduction

(S) In 1969, Communist China improved relations with North Vietnam and, in spite of intense enmity, softened its relations with the Soviet Union. As some Japanese experts on China concluded, China seemed to have been in the process of moving away from its state of "absence of diplomacy." ¹⁰⁶ Signs also appeared that China was beginning to slowly push outward and to express her influence in Asia. One sign was extensive new road building in Laos, which China incidentally denied. ¹⁰⁷ Another sign was a number of reports of Chinese acting as advisors to VC/NVA units in Cambodian base areas. ¹⁰⁸ CHICOM diplomacy changed in the closing months of 1969; in addition to improved relations with NVN and negotiations with Russia, more normal relations were established with Yugoslavia, Rumania and with Asian neighbors such as North Korea and Burma. ¹⁰⁹ However, the normalizing of diplomatic relations did not alter China's course of aiding and fomenting national revolutionary movements in Thailand, Laos and Burma. ¹¹⁰ A US mission in Laos coordinated report of December 1969 stated, "Thailand is to be a Chinese-directed insurrection." ¹¹¹

The Disagreement

(S) Communist China's relations with the DRV had deteriorated somewhat during 1968; Peking's coverage of the Vietnam War had virtually ceased during July of 1968, and this trend had not changed by the end of the year. The key to the worsening of relations had been the North Vietnamese decision to go to Paris. As 1969 began, it appeared that Peking regarded Hanoi's drift toward the Soviet Union as one of the primary reasons for the DRV's acceptance of a negotiated peace strategy. One sign of the distance between Hanoi and Peking in 1968 was that Hanoi had greeted the invasion of Czechoslovakia as a "noble act" while Peking was much more reserved in its response. ¹¹² On 2 Jan 69, the US consulate in Hong Kong predicted that Hanoi's dependence on Peking would diminish and that divergencies between them would increase at least while Peking maintained its 'carry the war through to the end' policy. ¹¹³

(U) While Peking continued to preach that victory in Vietnam could only be achieved by carrying the war through to the end, it apparently did not interpret the 1969 Tet Offensive, launched on 22-23 Feb, as signalling a basic change in Hanoi's negotiating strategy and return by Hanoi to the Peking view. In contrast to their extensive treatment of the 1968 Tet Offensive, the CHICOM news media as of 3 Mar had made no comment on the 1969 attacks. ¹¹⁴ However,

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there were limits to the degree of disagreement between China and NVN. China allowed Soviet supplies destined for NVN to continue to flow through her territory and quickly denied allegations that she had stopped Soviet supplies. Soviet rail shipments to NVN through China even continued during the Ussuri River Border clash between the Soviets and CHICOMS at Damansky (Chen Tao) Island in early 1969.¹¹⁵ Chinese supplies continued to flow to NVN. Contact between the leaders of the two countries continued.¹¹⁶

Slightly Warmer Relations

(C) Gradually in the spring of 1969 China's attitude towards NVN thawed. In April, a CHICOM Ninth Party Congress report deviated somewhat from Peking's silent treatment of the war and expressed some support for the Vietnam "people's struggle". Also, during the period 28-30 Apr, Le Duc Tho stopped in Peking and this event was reported by the host media; this was the first report of a visit by a member or a DRV/NFLSVN delegation since February. Peking was careful, however, not to issue any statement that might indicate that the CPR approved of the Paris talks.¹¹⁷ On 4 May, Peking broke its long silence on VC military activities with a story based on NFLSVN press releases. This report was followed on 28 May with an account of Ho Chi Minh's reception of NVA cadres. According to one newspaper, Ho stressed that liberation, peace, and unification "can take place only after US (is) wholly and completely driven from Vietnam and (the) treacherous clique of Vietnamese traitors overthrown". Perhaps this meeting was cited because of its similarity to Peking "carry the war through to the end" thinking, for Peking had not changed its attitude on the solution to the war. Peking warned the CHICOM nation to stay alert for a US-Soviet threat to world revolution. This warning probably was not prompted by fears of imminent attack, but was designed, in part, to discredit the US peace moves and to shed unfavorable light on the USSR just prior to the scheduled Moscow Conference.¹¹⁸ The Chinese recognized the PRG in June; however they did so hesitatingly since the formation of the PRG was tied to Hanoi's negotiation strategy.¹¹⁹ In general, in the period of cool relations between China and NVN, the Chinese had responded more warmly towards the NFLSVN than towards the DRV.¹²⁰ Another sign of gradually improving relations was that the NVN economic delegation, which made a yearly trip to Communist capitals to work out aid arrangements, stopped first in Peking arriving on 17 Aug. Peking had traditionally been the first stop on the trip until 1968 when it had been visited last.¹²¹ A strong defense by NVN of its position at Paris, which appeared in an editorial in Nhan Dan on 20 Aug, may have further smoothed the way towards a Chinese-North Vietnamese rapprochement.¹²² Chinese congratulations on independence day, 2 Sep, were slightly warmer than in 1968, but the Chinese repeated their view about the need to pursue the war to complete victory.¹²³

The Effect of Ho Chi Minh's Death

(S) A dramatic change in relations occurred with Ho's death. Chen En-lai appeared in Hanoi on 4 Sep, one day after Ho's death. From that point on, relations between the two countries were much improved. Ho's death and his "Last Will" contributed towards bringing the countries together. Also, North Vietnam had adopted a position at Paris and was not altering it, which probably appealed to Peking. In addition, Peking's primary concern was the USSR. Peking softened its opposition to negotiation in principle, particularly after it began to negotiate

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with the Soviet Union.¹²⁴ However, this did not mean that China favored a compromise solution to the war. On the contrary, signs were that Peking would attempt to support those leaders in the North who favored fighting the war indefinitely.¹²⁵ Signs of China's slight relaxation of her opposition to negotiation came when Chou En-lai, in a speech during a visit of Pham Van Dong, failed to include the usual Chinese comment about persevering in the military struggle. Pham Van Dong had made a speech pressing for a political solution to the war, albeit on Hanoi's terms, and these references to a political solution to the war were carried without editing by the New China News Agency (NCNA).¹²⁶

Chinese Economic Aid to NVN

(C) NVN and Communist China signed the 1970 "Economic Assistance" agreement on 26 Sep 69. The Chinese continued in 1969 to be a major supplier of arms and material to NVN.¹²⁷

Chinese Anti-US Propaganda

(C) Communist China continued throughout 1969 a general propaganda assault on the US, commenting on the first US troop withdrawal announcement as an "out-and-out fraud".¹²⁸ However, an article in the 28 Sep NCNA left "the impression", according to the American Consulate in Hong Kong, that "Peking no longer considers US to be immediate danger to CHICOM security."¹²⁹ This reflected US de-escalation of the war in RVN. The article also probably reflected Chinese concern about relations with the Soviet Union.

Summary

(S) Developments in 1969 seemed to reveal Hanoi's independence of Communist China as well as the USSR. Hanoi made its own decisions. Developments in the war and Hanoi's decisions affected the DRV's relations with the two major Communist powers more than did the USSR and China influence changes in the war or Hanoi's decisions. However, the USSR and China did continue to provide NVN the material with which to fight the war and Soviet and CHICOM (particularly CHICOM) views and pressures undoubtedly had some effect.¹³⁰

Conditions in North Vietnam

Introduction

(S) Following the bombing halt on 1 Nov 68, there was evidence that Hanoi temporarily experienced a "peace mood." One visitor to Hanoi at the start of 1970 said that there was an "after the war" attitude in Hanoi, with a feeling that the war "began in 1965" when the bombing started and "ended in 1968" with the bombing halt.¹³¹ A variety of reports indicated that

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economic and morale problems had increased. The Swedish Ambassador to Peking visited Hanoi in early 1969 and reported that the bombing halt had achieved certain effects that the bombing itself had been unable to create; he stated that morale in Hanoi was "now significantly down", and that the populace was afflicted with a "pervasive sense of disorganization". Newspaper editorials and radio broadcasts from Hanoi tended to corroborate this information. Hoc Tap, the Party's theoretical journal, pointed to widespread popular disaffection with the war effort and called upon party members to "permanently and continuously carry out the task of educating the masses, so that they will correctly understand the new situation". With the need to support the war in the south and to restore the economy of the north, the leadership of NVN followed a hard line approach towards anyone who was not wholeheartedly supporting DRV policies. The hard line was evidenced during the first quarter of 1969 by the launching of a "rectification" campaign; editorials complained of shortfalls in production and pinpointed "loose management", poor organization, and lax labor practices as the causes. "Individualism", fear of hardship, and corruption within the party were also singled out for condemnation.¹³²

President Ho has recommended that we heighten our revolutionary ethics, to resolutely wipe out individualism, and to strengthen our collective thoughts, our spirit of solidarity, and our organizational and disciplinary sense. . . . 133

Each Cadre, each Party member must place the interests of the revolution, the Party, and the people above everything. It is necessary, first of all, to resolutely eliminate individualism, enhance revolutionary ethics, improve collective ideology, the spirit of unity, and the sense of organization and discipline. . . . 134

The Economy

(S) At the beginning of 1969, industrial output was about 25 percent below the pre-bombing peak, and agricultural output in 1968 was down 10 - 15 percent.¹³⁵ An upward swing in NVN's economy had been observed following the bombing halt and this trend continued during the first quarter of 1969. Manpower shortages led women to do jobs formerly done by men. A North Vietnamese who came South said that there was no noticeable effect on production capabilities since seven to ten women were hired to replace every five men who were drafted.¹³⁶ However, propaganda continued to refer to the necessity of upgrading the technical abilities of women-turned-workers and of improving the administration of "hundreds of thousands" of female laborers, suggesting that economic productivity had been affected by manpower shortages which had persisted despite the bombing halt. Another visitor to NVN found little evidence of a severe manpower shortage.¹³⁷ However, due to the manpower shortage, military units participated at times in heavy labor activities such as flood and typhoon control-dike building.¹³⁸

(S) Though the problems were clearly serious enough to generate considerable Hanoi concern, they probably did not materially affect Hanoi's capacity to sustain the DRV's military and political strategies. Hanoi continued to get extensive material aid from abroad.¹³⁹ Industrial production had continued to improve, though not at the rate desired by Hanoi. The

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real lack of progress was in agricultural output. The Communist domestic service constantly reminded the people of the need to improve this area of production.¹⁴⁰

Considerable changes have taken place in the crop cultivation structure: The density of food crops in the total cultivated acreage has decreased; the density of industrial crops has increased, but at a low rate....

This year's State Plan requires agriculture to reach higher norms in acreage, output, and production of a number of crucial industrial plants.... The labor arrangement is not yet reasonable. When devoting themselves to harvesting the tenth-month crop and preparing the fifth-month crop, many cooperatives did not set aside an adequate number of laborers to cultivate industrial plants.¹⁴¹

(S) NVN had to rely on imports for an adequate supply of staple food items. Prior to September 1969, Communist China had clearly been the primary source of foodstuffs. After September, the Soviet Union shipped more foodstuffs than did Communist China although the year end figures showed that China had shipped 377 thousand metric tons of foodstuffs while the Soviet Union had shipped 321 thousand metric tons.¹⁴² Rationing had begun in 1960.¹⁴³ Although life had become easier since the bombing halt,¹⁴⁴ rationing was still imposed and quality foods such as sugar, meat, milk, eggs and fish sauce were scarce. This scarcity was reflected in prices on both the free and black markets: foodstuffs cost up to six times the official prices. Since the people often failed to receive enough food to live on from the legal market, the black market was used extensively.¹⁴⁵ To relieve the scarcity of food, the DRV established goals and quotas on almost every type of production: "It is necessary to achieve these three objectives: five tons of paddy per hectare on two-crop ricefields, two pigs per hectare, and one person per hectare.... to meet the requirements of the people and armed forces and to lead the anti-US struggle to victory."¹⁴⁶

(C) The general response of the DRV as the months of 1969 passed was to talk of tightening control in the party and of the party over the country. Truong Chinh and others spoke of building socialism and emphasized collectivism in agriculture. In the background, plans were made for post war reconstruction; in the present, however, the economy remained geared to the war.¹⁴⁷

Living Conditions

(C) A captured NVA soldier provided a vivid description of the living conditions in NVN. An 8 hour work day was observed; office workers worked 4 1/2 hours in the morning and 3 1/2 hours in the afternoon. Manual workers worked 8 hours straight and were replaced in shifts. On Sundays, the workers were required to engage in military training. (Most of the workers in NVN were organized into para-military units.)¹⁴⁸ Every week, each worker was required to attend two sessions of political training and two sessions of cultural training; these sessions lasted from 1800 hours to 2100 hours. Old workers who could not engage in military training on Sundays were required to participate in labor duty, digging air raid shelters and gun

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emplacements. Wages were considered to be grossly inadequate. A married couple with two children had to work continuously and still suffered hardships.¹⁴⁹

(S) One visitor to North Vietnam in 1969 said that NVN was "in ruins", that North Vietnam had been set back 20 years by the bombing and that recovery hadn't yet occurred. He said,

"It's impossible to find the simplest items-buttons, safety pins, paper, pens, wire and wool anywhere. A friend of mine said the most valuable present he could offer people when he left Hanoi was a ball-point pen. You can't even find chalk for blackboards in the school rooms".¹⁵⁰

A North Vietnamese who came to the South in 1969 added other details about life in NVN. People were forbidden to listen to foreign broadcasts. The sources of information about local and international events were the controlled radio and newspapers. People who spread rumors which were contrary to the government provided information were lectured or punished. Medical care was good. To travel anywhere in NVN, one needed a travel permit. Hanoi was divided into areas of approximately 800 to 1000 people called blocks. Within each block was a security section directly subordinate to the government. Attempts to defect to the South were severely punished. Mail service had worsened (Mail service between NVN and the troops in the South was bad or non-existent; one of the US PWs released in 1969 had been told by an interpreter that he had not heard from his family in the North for five years.)¹⁵¹ To add to NVN's difficulties, floods and hemorrhagic and dengue fevers struck NVN in 1969.

LOC's

(S) Lines of communication improvements and construction continued during 1969 to include road, railroad and airfield construction and repair. In some aspects, LOC's were better after construction and reconstruction were completed than they had been prior to the bombing.¹⁵² Additional roads were extended into Laos. Work continued on the construction of the petroleum pipelines west and southwest of Vinh: NVN's POL pipelines were the 4-inch Soviet tactical field pipeline which was designed to be quickly repaired if bombed. These POL lines were expected to greatly enhance NVN's highly dispersed POL storage system, improve distribution to needed areas, and lessen requirements for motor transportation. At mid-year, one POL pipeline ran 145 miles through North Vietnam and 34 miles into Laos, and expansion undoubtedly continued in both countries.¹⁵³ It required a truck one day to carry approximately three metric tons of POL from Vinh to the Mu Gia Pass, a distance of about 95 miles. The pipeline could pump 1,130 metric tons during the same period.¹⁵⁴

Material Aid

(S) Seaborne deliveries of foreign aid to North Vietnam continued at a high level, as did overland deliveries.¹⁵⁵ A Central Intelligence Agency Directorate of Intelligence Memorandum summarized trends in foreign shipping to North Vietnam (aid and trade) in 1969.¹⁵⁶

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(S) North Vietnam's seaborne foreign trade fell off in 1969 mainly because of a sharp reduction in coal exports. Total seaborne exports of 570,000 tons were the lowest since US bombing began in 1965. Imports of nearly 1.9 million tons were slightly below the record level of 1968, with small declines registered in the imports of foodstuffs, fertilizer, petroleum, and general and miscellaneous cargo.

(S) There were no known seaborne deliveries of combat arms or ammunition. However, imports included the first known seaborne delivery of unidentified cargo (800 tons) associated with the Chief Engineering Directorate (GIU), the Soviet organization responsible for military aid abroad. Although these cargoes were almost certainly for military use, their contents could have included a wide range of items. Other changes in the pattern of deliveries included a tripling in seaborne imports of trucks to 4,500, more than half from the Soviet Far East. In the past, only small quantities of trucks had been loaded in this area. Finally, the USSR delivered sporting arms and ammunition for the first time by sea.

(S) Imports from Communist countries, which accounted for 93 percent of total imports, were marked by an 11 percent increase in deliveries from the USSR to a new high of 930,000 tons and by a 22 percent decrease in shipments from China to 543,000 tons. Soviet imports were highlighted by increased deliveries of foodstuffs and record deliveries of petroleum. There was a significant increase in shipments from the Free World, reflecting large-scale fertilizer deliveries from Japan. In terms of volume, Japan emerged as the major Free World exporter to North Vietnam.

(S) During 1969, exports of apatite and cement, suspended prior to 1968 because of US bombing, resumed. Moreover, for the first time a substantial quantity of rice (33,000 tons) was exported to the Free World.

(S) In the wake of declining trade with China and North Korea, foreign ship arrivals in North Vietnam dropped during 1969 for the first time since 1966. Although Soviet arrivals reached a record high in 1969, there was a sizable drop in Chinese and Free World arrivals. This overall reduction in ship arrivals and increased berthing space fostered a considerable reduction in congestion at Haiphong, and in November, for the first time in nearly three years, it was virtually eliminated. Average layover time for departing dry cargo ships continued to decline in 1969, and in December fell to a 32-month low of 14 days. The CIA Memorandum included a chart on Cargoes in Thousand Metric Tons. ¹⁵⁷ (See Table III-1.)

Losses in RVN

(U) The worst difficulty faced by the population of NVN was the great loss of men who went to the South and did not return.

North Vietnam Armed Forces

Strength

(S) The estimated strength of the NVN Armed Forces in NVN continued to reflect a high level of mobilization. At the end of the third quarter of 1969, the total regular personnel in

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MATERIEL SHIPPED TO NVN

<u>Origin</u>	<u>1968</u>		<u>1969</u>		<u>Percent Change</u>
	<u>Cargo</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Cargo</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
Total imports	1,966	100	1,889	100	-4
Communist	<u>1,919</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>1,747</u>	<u>92</u>	-9
USSR	838	43	930	49	11
Communist China	700	36	543	29	-22
Eastern Europe	233	12	212	11	-9
North Korea	89	5	19	1	-79
Cuba	58	3	45	2	-22
Free World	<u>47</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>7</u>	200
Japan	9	Negl.	96	5	967
Cambodia	27	1	43	2	59
Other Free World	11	1	3	Negl.	-73

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TABLE III-1

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the Army, Navy, and Air Force numbered approximately 370,500; 358,000 in the Army, 2,500 in the navy and 10,000 in the air force (The figures did not include NVN forces in and around the borders of RVN). The majority of the combat units in NVN were considered to be combat effective and NVA units continued to be well equipped combat forces. The estimate of CHICOM military strength in NVN was 5,000. Prior to the bombing halt, it had been estimated that there had been as many as 50,000 Chinese in NVN. This figure declined gradually after the bombing halt. Most of the Chinese remaining in NVN at the end of September 1969 were believed to be in railway engineer and road building units. 158

(S) North Vietnam's major combat and combat support units, including those deployed in Laos and RVN, consisted of 18 infantry divisions, one airborne infantry brigade, and 28 independent infantry regiments: an artillery command comprising 11 regiments, four independent artillery regiments, and an armored command of two regiments. Service and support elements included an air defense command controlling 89 AA regiments, eight independent engineer regiments, 35-40 independent SAM battalions, and 6 independent transportation groups or regiments. Armed Public Security Forces had a strength of 16,500 organized into one regiment and 30 separate battalions. The militia, comprised of part-time, lightly armed troops, had a strength of about three million. In North Vietnam an estimated 80,000-85,000 members of the military performed transportation and engineer, control and communication, and logistic support functions. Some 121,000 NVA personnel were engaged in air defense. It was anticipated that the overall strength of the NVA of 507,700 (as of October and including forces in NVN, Laos, and in and around RVN) would be reduced to approximately the 1966 level of 430,000 after withdrawal⁵⁹

Conscription Policy and Practice

(C) NVA prisoners captured in Laos in early 1970 provided extensive information about conscription practices in NVN throughout the 1960's. The prisoners stated that as of early January 1970 the government of North Vietnam was conscripting soldiers from "set three", which was the class of recruits designated for conscription from 1968 to 1970. Sets one and two had already been conscripted beginning in 1960. "Set one" was the conscription group for the period 1960 to 1964 and had been limited to young men from 18 to 25 years of age. "Set two" covered the period from 1965 to 1967 and had included men from 17 to 30 years of age. The present group for conscription, "set three", included men from 16 to 35 years of age.

(C) Since the beginning of 1968 the majority of men from 30 to 35 had been conscripted without exception. Sixteen year old boys had not been conscripted overtly, but the government encouraged students to volunteer and widely publicized such volunteers in all schools and villages. This indirect pressure had been highly successful, especially in the countryside. As of early January 1970, about 70 percent of rural 16 year olds were in the army, and about 55 or 60 percent of urban 16 year olds.

(C) In addition to increasing the age limits for conscription, the government began recalling former officers under the age of 45 and squad leaders and noncommissioned officers under the age of 35 to active duty for indefinite tours.

(C) Exemptions for reasons of family hardship had been drastically curtailed. The one exemption which remained in effect provided that the only son of an elderly couple would be stationed in NVN. An only child of a middle-aged couple was liable for service in Laos or RVN.



Exemption was not granted heads of families who were the sole means of support of their dependents. The state undertook to support the family.

(C) As of the end of 1969, about 90 percent of the new recruits were destined for service in RVN, about five percent went to Laos and about 5 percent remained in North Vietnam. As a result of fear of death on the part of the recruits, desertion rates were rising among recent recruits and trainees. There were indications that North Vietnamese leaders were concerned about the situation. Government policy in this regard was simply to return them to duty after the first offense, to sent them to a "correction camp" if they deserted twice, and to imprison them for three years at hard labor if they deserted three times. Deserters who were former government officials were sentenced to work on collective farms.

(C) As a result of the drain on the manpower resources of the country, the government had begun to assign women to fill administrative posts as village and district chairmen and to serve on various committees at the district level. In Nam Ha Province women filled about 10-20 percent of the posts at the province level and 30-35 percent of the posts at the district and village levels. 160



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NVN INFILTRATION AND RELATED ACTIVITY

Infiltration

Background

(C) Following the partitioning of Vietnam by a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), there had been a flow of personnel in both directions as people regrouped to either the north or the south. The French had tailed some 130,000 persons regrouping north, of which approximately 80,000 were military personnel, the vast majority being of ethnic central and south Vietnamese and Montagnard origin. These regroupees were settled in the north on various agricultural and work sites or served in the military. The proposed countrywide (north and south) referendum was never held and when insurgency activity began in the south, the regroupees began to infiltrate back into RVN. At first they had appeared among refugees entering RVN, then small groups of less than 100 were infiltrated through the mountains and jungles. By the early 1960's, large groups of personnel averaging 200-300 men were entering RVN either through the DMZ or through Laos. This trend continued until the latter part of 1964 when the pool of regroupees was all but exhausted. Starting in 1965, NVA combat units also began to infiltrate as replacement groups and tactical units; both contained an ethnic majority of North Vietnamese.

(C) The infiltration routes also shifted with time and circumstances. During the late 1950's, groups had moved directly through the DMZ. However, as the size of the groups increased, a more secure route had been established that cut across the western half of the DMZ, entered Laos, and then reentered RVN. The bombing of NVN forced several changes in the movement pattern. Groups began to leave NVN much farther north crossing over the Troong Son Mountain Range into Laos, then down a corridor that extended parallel to the RVN frontier, thence into Cambodia from where they entered the southern part of RVN. With the cessation of the bombing of the north on 1 Nov 68, travel through NVN became somewhat easier and groups were transported by rail, truck, or barge. Also, the old route across the western edge of the DMZ and into Laos was again activated.¹⁶¹

(S) As of 1 Nov 68, there was no evidence of any infiltration groups moving south in NVN. About 15,000 men were believed to have been enroute in Laos and Cambodia, all of whom should have arrived in RVN prior to 31 Dec 68. During September and October, less than 6,000 men had entered the infiltration pipeline. During the October-December period, the enemy had sustained a net loss of 16,700 men based on gains of 36,500 and losses of 53,200. Only III CTZ showed a net gain for the three month period, primarily due to infiltration of over 18,000 men. Although infiltration and recruitment were substantial in I CTZ, combat losses of 19,000 men created a large deficit of manpower. Although losses sustained by the enemy in November and December were approximately equal, the lower level of infiltration in December caused a large negative balance; therefore, the enemy closed the year faced with a declining manpower situation--net losses were doubling in each successive month.¹⁶²

Introduction - 1969

(S) North Vietnam continued to infiltrate substantial numbers of troops into RVN in 1969. It was estimated that approximately 103,000 NVA troops completed the journey into RVN during

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the year.¹⁶³ The figure was far lower than the estimated 235,000 personnel that the leaders of NVN had sent into RVN during the offensives of 1968 (See Figure III-1).¹⁶⁴ However, the figure was somewhat higher than the estimated average of approximately 8,000 men per month infiltrated in 1966 and 1967. The infiltration figures of 1969 resembled those of 1966 and 1967 far more than those of 1968 (See Figure III-1). Infiltration into RVN tended to be seasonal with many more men infiltrated in the first eight months of the year than in the last four. Enemy strength declined in 1969. Some thought that the NVA might attempt to increase their infiltration rate dramatically in the last months of 1969. Although infiltration increased, the anticipated surge comparable to 1968 failed to develop.¹⁶⁵ What did occur was an extensive increase in the flow of supplies down the pipeline towards the end of the year.

Confirmed Infiltration

(C) The Combined Intelligence Command, Vietnam (CICV) provided a monthly report of NVN infiltration into RVN (See Table III-2). Infiltration data was listed under two categories. The accepted category included (1) confirmed -- those personnel whose presence in RVN was established by two sources (PW/returnees or captured documents) from the unit/group or a combination thereof and (2) probable -- those personnel whose presence in RVN was established by one source from the unit/group and supported by other probable evidence. The second category, possible, included personnel who might have been in RVN based on reports evaluated as possibly true, even though no PW, returnee, or documents were available to verify the reports. CICV also had additional data gathered from various sources, but which was too inconclusive to be placed on Table III-2. CICV's report traced infiltration back to October 1965. Since the information was based on collateral information, it was always changing and being updated as information about infiltration groups became known. Trends in infiltration were able to be drawn from the figures.¹⁶⁶

Infiltration Routes and Destinations

(S) Approximately 47 percent of the 1969 infiltration was assigned to the COSVN area.¹⁶⁷ Infiltration of personnel and material into RVN was accomplished across the DMZ, through Laos and Cambodia into RVN, by an interchangeable use of main roads, a nexus of trails and inland waterways, and to a very minor degree by various sea routes. (For a discussion of attempts to infiltrate by sea, see Chapter 5, MARKET TIME. For maps of infiltration routes into RVN see Figure III-2 and also the 1968 MACV Command History, pages 57 and 58. Also see Chapter 5, Figure V-17. Table III-3 shows the CTZs and provinces to which NVA personnel who infiltrated from January 1968 until June 1969 were sent in RVN.) The CICV study was based on the same criteria as Table III-2 above. Routes employed to infiltrate into Laos were believed to be Routes 137, 1A, 101, 102, 1036 and, to some extent, 103, plus numerous trails. Primary routes within Laos were generally parallel to major roads. For those people who entered Laos in the Ban Karai Pass area, movement was along trails which passed West and South of Tchepone. This corridor joined another coming from the DMZ in the vicinity of the junction of Routes 92 and 922. From there the main flow was south, paralleling Routes 192 and 96, west of the junction of Routes 96/110 and south into Cambodia. Eastern branches passed through base areas and then entered RVN. The initial infiltration routes through Cambodia and IV CTZ were less well known.¹⁶⁸ The very significant infiltration into IV CTZ after May was primarily the infiltration of established NVA units from III CTZ rather than of individuals arriving from NVN, although individual NVA fillers continued to be sent to the Delta.

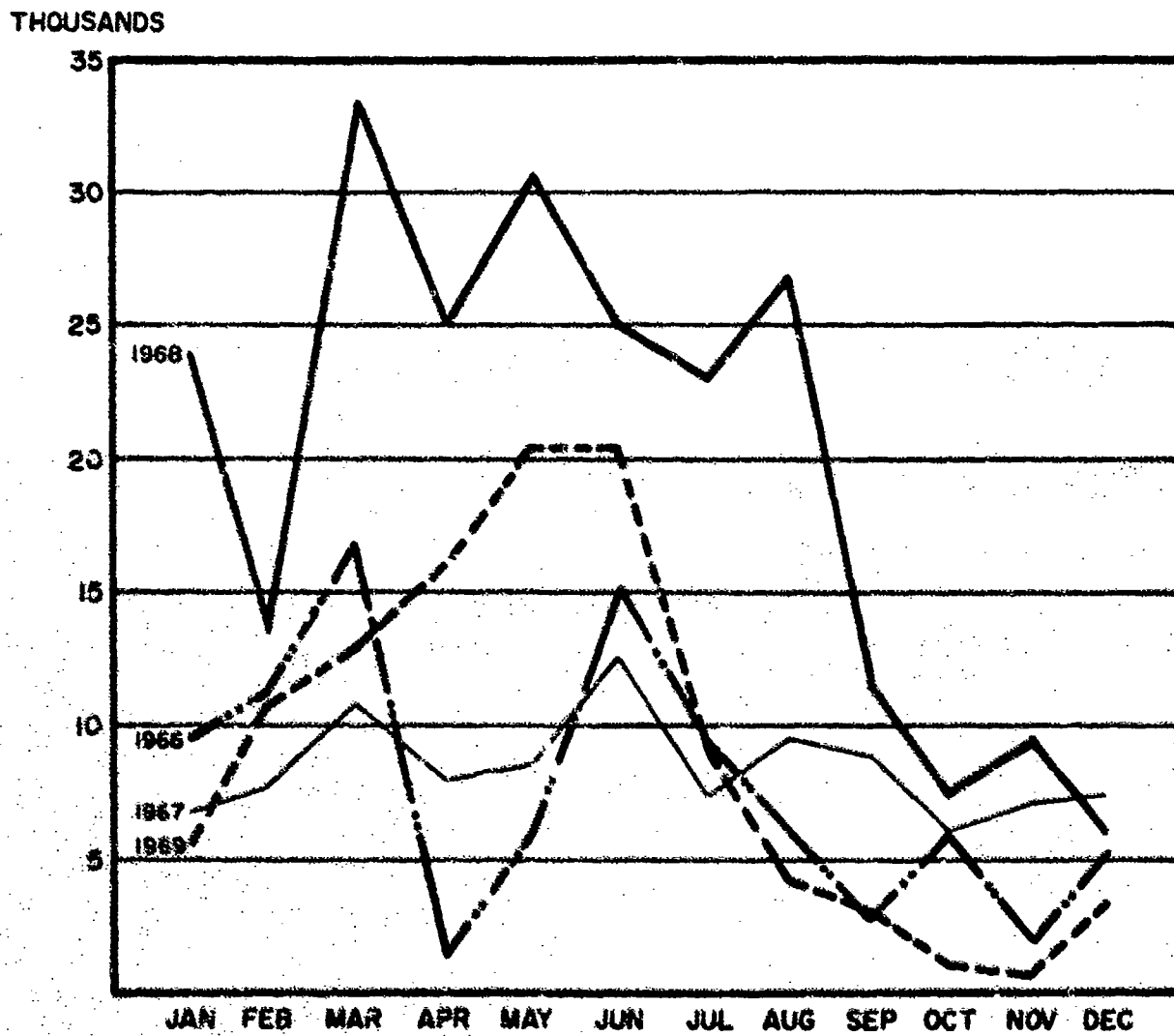
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INFILTRATION

(ESTIMATED MONTHLY TOTALS OF ARRIVALS IN SVN)



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FIGURE III-1

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Confirmed, Probable and Possible Infiltration into RVN - 1969

Month	Accepted		Total	Possible	Total
	Confirmed	Probable			
Jan 69	740	30	770	1,600	2,370
Feb 69	1,100	500	1,600	3,400	5,000
Mar 69	4,810	520	5,320	1,414	6,744
Apr 69	5,105	4,747	9,852	3,981	13,833
May 69	4,135	2,920	7,055	3,051	10,106
Jun 69	4,470	1,910	6,380	4,968	11,348
Jul 69	1,540	1,900	3,440	3,530	6,970
Aug 69	1,505	600	2,105	1,450	3,555
Sep 69	400	-----	400	2,060	2,460
Oct 69	-----	800	800	600	1,400
Nov 69	-----	600	600	300	900
Dec 69	600	-----	600	1,100	1,700

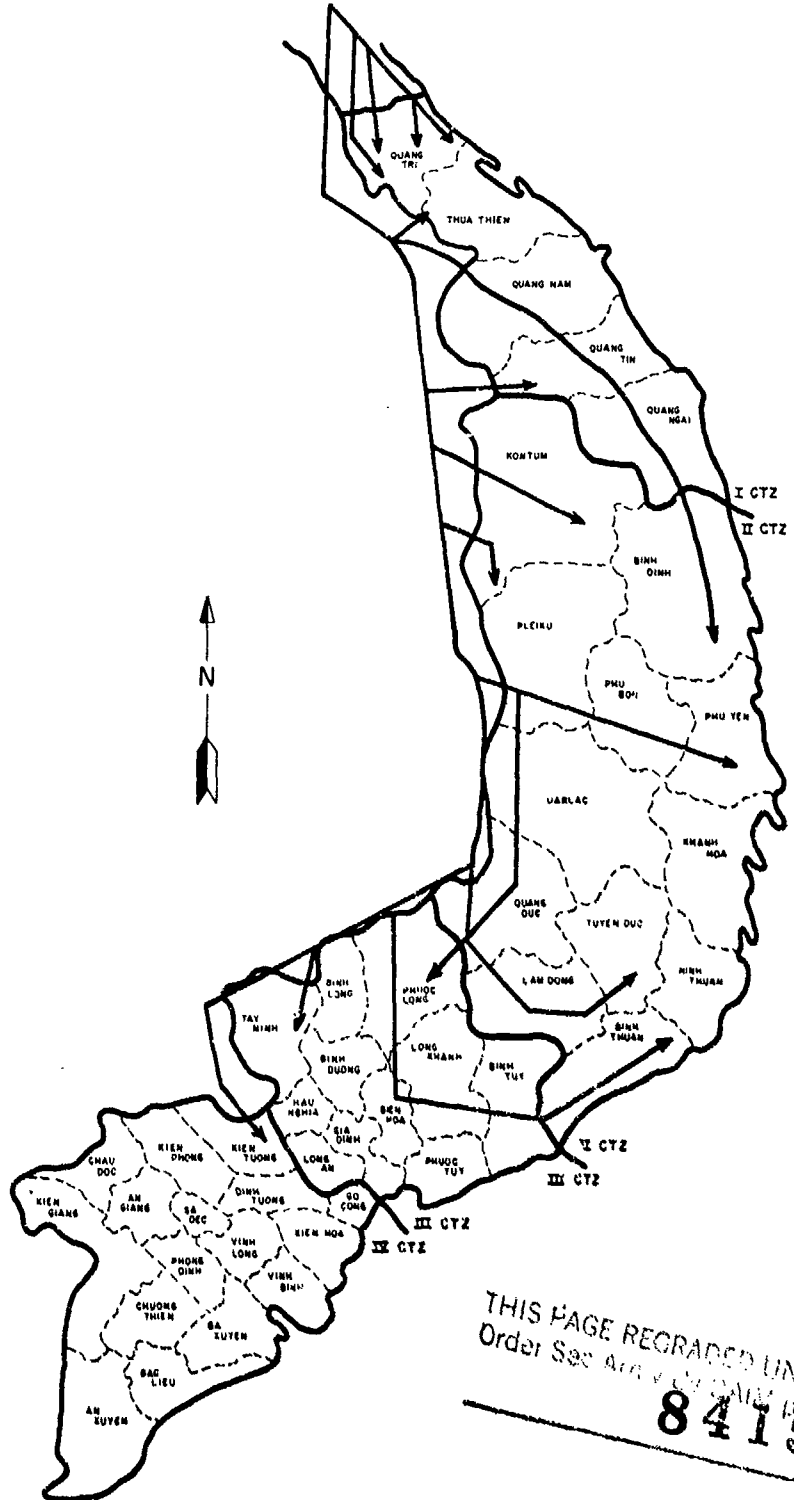
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TABLE III-2

INFILTRATION ROUTES INTO RVN



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FIGURE III-2

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Infiltration Breakdown

<u>Province</u>	<u>#Gps</u>	<u>#Infiltrators</u>	<u>% of Total Infil</u>	<u>% of CTZ Infil</u>
<u>I CTZ</u>				
Quang Tri	37	27,315	14.5	38.7
Thua Thien	13	4,084	2.2	5.8
Quang Nam	42	21,382	11.3	30.3
Quang Tin	1	480	.3	.7
Quang Ngai	15	8,205	4.3	11.6
Unk Loc	<u>13</u>	<u>9,503</u>	<u>4.7</u>	<u>12.9</u>
	121	70,519	37.3	
<u>II CTZ</u>				
Kontum	35	25,801	13.7	50.8
Binh Dinh	23	9,786	5.2	19.3
Pleiku	6	2,350	1.2	4.6
Phu Yen	3	1,377	.7	2.7
Darlac	3	850	.4	1.7
Khanh Hoa	2	944	.3	1.3
Quang Duc	1	250	.2	.5
Tuyen Duc	1	500	.1	1.0
Ninh Thuan	1	160	.1	.3
Unk Loc	<u>22</u>	<u>9,092</u>	<u>4.8</u>	<u>17.8</u>
	97	50,810	26.9	
<u>III CTZ</u>				
Phuoc Long	12	4,896	2.6	7.5
Binh Long	3	1,750	.9	2.7
Tay Ninh	77	31,425	16.7	48.0
Binh Duong	8	2,660	1.4	4.0
Hau Nghia	5	1,850	1.0	2.8
Gia Dinh	8	2,804	1.5	4.3
Bien Hoa	3	1,375	.7	2.1
Long An	4	2,023	1.2	3.1
Unk Loc	<u>45</u>	<u>16,617</u>	<u>8.8</u>	<u>25.5</u>
	165	65,400	34.8	
<u>IV CTZ</u>				
Kien Tuong	1	600	.3	30.5
Dinh Tuong	2	570	.3	28.9
Unk Loc	<u>1</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>.4</u>	<u>40.6</u>
	4	1,970	1.0	

Total groups 387
 Total infil 188,699 since Jan 1968 thru June 1969

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TABLE III-3

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Composition of Infiltration Groups and the Journey

(S) CICV estimated that the average infiltration group consisted of approximately 500 men in 1969. CINCPAC estimated that the North Vietnamese who arrived in the RVN represented a cross section of all types of NVA personnel and probably included not only combat and combat support units and replacements, but also some administrative service and political personnel. NVA personnel infiltrating into RVN received an average of three months training and had an average age of 18-19 years. However, sapper training required six months or more training. Also, as older men were drafted, they required a longer period of conditioning.¹⁶⁹ The journey to RVN was arduous. A significant number of troops became sick with malaria along the way.

North Vietnamese Policy

(S) Infiltration into RVN in 1969 reflected decisions probably taken by the Hanoi leaders in the winter and spring of 1968-69. CICV concluded that the decision to reduce infiltration from the extremely high figures of 1968 were made by NVN leaders in February 1969 and that decisions to intensify infiltration again were made in early November 1969. The CICV assessment was based on climatic conditions, training cycles and political-military factors. Infiltration historically had been planned to coincide with the dry season along the Ho Chi Minh trail, October to May. The monsoon and dry seasons were reversed in NVN so the best time for training in the North was during the dry season from May to October, such that groups could be placed in the infiltration pipeline from October to January. Under optimum conditions, planning therefore was completed by June of each year, however training could always be speeded up with new men rapidly called up and sent south. (NVN did not have a set number of draft calls per year.) Indications were that this had occurred in 1968 when men were sent south in the largest numbers of the war to replace the losses of the Tet and May offensives. Infiltration in 1969 was characterized by a sharp decline from mid-March to October and a rise in November (See Figure III-1). CICV concluded that both changes had been the product of calculated decisions arrived at in Hanoi. CICV hypothesized that the decision which they thought had been arrived at in Hanoi in February or early March had reflected the desire of NVN leaders to allow the new administration in the US to develop its new policy while NVN followed a policy which could be interpreted as a willingness to scale down the war. A series of high level meetings were held in Hanoi in April and May, including the NVA Commanding General of MR Tri-Thien-Hue and possibly others from the South. The meetings apparently concentrated on logistics and personnel problems; General Tin from MR TTH was apparently told not to expect aid from increased infiltration. CICV speculated that the second decision to increase the rate of infiltration in November was made after President Nixon's 3 Nov speech, although preliminary discussions had probably occurred after Ho Chi Minh's death in September.¹⁷⁰

(S) The overall infiltration rate of NVN troops in 1969 was consistent with the North Vietnamese leadership's strategy of attempting to broaden its options.

(S) The number of men infiltrated into RVN in 1969 permitted the NVN leadership to follow Giap's strategy of combining large scale guerrilla warfare with resort to large unit attacks when the opportunities presented themselves. Significant offensive activity could be launched but the VC/NVA probably lacked the capability to sustain an offensive as they did during the Tet and May offensives of 1968.¹⁷¹ One North Vietnamese diplomat, when asked in December about reports of large numbers of infiltrators into the RVN, denied the reports saying that the number of troops necessary to carry out recent attacks had been in place ever since the bombing halt.

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He added that US bombing in Laos had serious impact on transportation lines and had brought difficulties in the movement of troops and supplies. He concluded, however, that North Vietnam had enough troops in Laos and RVN to carry out large scale offensives. ¹⁷²

Laos

Introduction

(S) Events in Laos in 1969 could be separated into developments relating to infiltration of men and supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail into RVN and military and political developments throughout the rest of Laos.

Infiltration Through Laos

(S) North Vietnam continued to pour supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. There had been a high level of truck activity in Laos in December 1968 although it was slightly lower than in December 1967. Then, truck activity increased sharply in January 1969, was at a record high in March, and then declined until in June sensors showed truck traffic had fallen to 10 percent of the average for the first quarter 1969. Truck sightings dropped 73 percent between 1 May and 30 Jun compared to 65 percent and 56 percent for the same periods in 1967 and 1968 respectively. The combination of the effects of interdiction plus the rainy season reduced traffic extensively. Virtually no cross border traffic was observed at the Mu Gia and Ban Karai Passes during the summer. The resupply effort that did occur sought to bypass the Laotian route structure and focussed on the DMZ area. In August, the flow of traffic remained low, but signs appeared that the NVA was stockpiling supplies in the vicinity of the major passes. In September, the supply buildup at the passes inside North Vietnam continued. In October, NVN road repair crews worked extensively along the entire system. Input of supplies into STEEL TIGER rose from four trucks per day in September to 19 per day in October. A greater than fourfold increase in vehicle detections occurred from October to November and the pattern continued in December. The Ban Karai Pass was heavily used in both months. ¹⁷³ December sensor detections were up 100 percent over December 1968. At year's end, the NVA was engaged in a major logistic operation. In addition to repair of existing facilities, construction of new roads was noted. It was estimated that 40 percent more supplies were introduced into the Laotian parhandle in the last quarter 1969 than in the equivalent period of 1968. The AA threat in Laos increased during 1969 along LOCs and generally throughout Laos (See Chapter 5). ¹⁷⁴

Political and Military Developments

(S) Military developments in Laos were characterized in 1969 by an alteration in the previous pattern of the war. Traditionally, the struggle in Laos had followed a rather predictable pattern. During the dry season (October to May for most of the country), the insurgents tended to have the initiative, launching limited offensives to seize tactically important positions and to replenish their food stocks. The Royal Laotian Government (RLG) forces had the advantage during the wet season because of the greater mobility allowed by their superior military equipment, including US air support. ¹⁷⁵ Within the framework of relative territorial stability resulting from the alternating cycle of conquest and retreat, the RLG had made some limited

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gains in 1966 and 1967 while NVA/Pathet Lao (PL) pressure had been felt throughout the country in 1968.¹⁷⁶ In the 1968-69 dry season offensive, the NVA/PL made gains. However, they also launched an attack during the wet season instead of following the seasonal pattern of limiting activity to minor skirmishes. NVA/PL units captured Moung Soui (See Figure III-3) in June.¹⁷⁷ However, the NVA/PL had apparently outrun their supply lines.¹⁷⁸ During the summer, Laotian government troops, primarily the Meo guerrillas led by General Vang Pao and royalist troops, launched an offensive with US air support named "About Face" which took back the Plaine Des Jarres for the first time since 1964. Large caches of supplies were captured.¹⁷⁹ Then, as the year drew towards a close, the North Vietnamese began an extensive supply and troop buildup in Laos. The North Vietnamese 316th Div, which had been in Laos for years, was reinforced by the 312th NVA Div and elements of three other regiments.¹⁸⁰

(S) The forces facing each other in Laos towards the end of the year consisted of an estimated 71,000 NVA (as of 1 Nov 69), and an estimated 31,500 PL on one side and a 30,000 man Forces Armees Royales (FAR), 3,000 members of the Forces Armees Neutralist (FAN), and 18,000 Meo tribesman on the other.¹⁸¹

(S) Souvanna Phouma, the Laotian Neutralist Premier, wanted to restore the situation that had been established by the Geneva Accords of 1962, which had established a tripartite coalition government of "rightists", "neutralists", and the PL/Neo Lao Hak Sak or Lao Patriotic Front "leftists". The NLHS had left the government shortly after the agreement had been signed, but Souvanna Phouma symbolically left their chairs empty at Cabinet meetings and appealed to NLHS Cabinet members to return. The country was divided into two spheres with the PL controlling northern areas of the country and the largely mountainous regions along the Vietnamese border and the government controlling the southern and western tiers of the country and the majority of the population centers.¹⁸²

(S) NLHS policy aimed at improving the Communist political position and achieving dominance on the Laotian political scene and in the Cabinet.

(S) North Vietnamese policy motives could only be conjectured. Perhaps, Hanoi's leaders wanted to strengthen NVN's position prior to any possible bargaining at Paris. One source stated that the leaders in Hanoi wanted to prove to the US and international public opinion that the Vietnamese problem was insolvable.¹⁸³ The North Vietnamese may have wanted to ensure that the Pathet Lao controlled extensive areas of Laos. Another aim may have been to attempt to divide the US war effort between RVN and Laos. Perhaps developments in Laos reflected some agreement between NVN and China concerning spheres of influence in that country. NVN may have hoped to force a situation where a new coalition government would be formed in which neutralists favorable to the Laotian Communists would be placed in the center of the new political spectrum and Souvanna Phouma would be placed in the farthest right position. This would exclude the rightists from government representation and give the NLHS dominance.¹⁸⁴ North Vietnam may also have wanted to build up morale through victories in Laos at a time when the war in RVN had become more difficult. One North Vietnamese policy objective which was clear was the desire to keep Laotian troops away from the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex. In Southern Laos, the NVA followed a traditional strategy of trying to keep government forces occupied in Western Laos, away from the trail in the east.¹⁸⁵

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The Chinese Road

(S) In 1969 the Chinese Communists had as many as 6,000 men in Laos engaged in road construction.¹⁸⁶ In the early 1960's, Laotian officials had agreed to allow China to build several roads into Laos. Building roads in Laos often meant primarily improving roads rather than constructing them from nothing. Thus a road from Meng La in China's Yunnan Province to Ban Botene in Laos was completed in 1962 and a road from Meng La to Phong Sally was started in 1962 and completed in 1963. In 1968, the Chinese had started improving and constructing roads again in Laos and in 1969 they turned to extensive construction. Laotian officials did not sanction this development but were powerless to stop it. The stretch of road between Ban Botene and Moug Sai was started during November 1968 and completed in January 1969; the construction averaged approximately 1.4 km per day, mostly over rugged terrain.¹⁸⁷ Once the road had reached Moug Sai, it began to be extended both northeast towards Dien Bien Phu and southwest towards the villages of Moug Houn and Pak Beng and towards Thailand down the Beng River valley. From 1968 to 1969 the road was completed from Dien Bien Phu to Moug Khoua and from Moug Sai to Moug La. From September 1969 to December 1969 improvement of the stretch between Moug Sai and Moug Houn was begun and survey traces were observed along the entire stretch of potential roadway. Although the terrain was less rugged than the Ban Botene to Moug Sai stretch, the rate of construction was lower.¹⁸⁸ Some signs of survey traces also appeared between Moug Houn and Pak Beng. (See Figure III-3 for the locations of the villages and the Chinese road). The road served as an expression of Chinese influence towards the south. China's motivation could only be conjectured. A December Mission Report from the American Embassy in Vientiane stated that the Thai insurrection was to be under Chinese influence.¹⁸⁹ The Chinese road may have been primarily aimed at allowing China to aid the Thai insurrection. China may have viewed the road in general terms rather than with specific goals in mind; as a means of extending her influence into SEASIA depending on what China chose to do in the future. The road also may have been directed in response to Soviet initiatives in SEASIA and to Soviet influence in Hanoi.¹⁹⁰

Selected Comments on Laos

(S) Ambassador Sullivan. Upon his departure from the position of US Ambassador to Laos, on 18 March 1969, Ambassador Sullivan made the following remarks concerning the situation in Laos:

As I leave Laos, I wish I could say that I am leaving it in much better condition than I found it in 1964. Unfortunately, that is far from true. There have been some improvements--in political stability, in the spread of economic benefits, and in the provision of social services. But the fundamental, overriding problem of the war has not, repeat not, been resolved. Until it is, the survival of Laos as a sovereign and independent nation remains in peril.

The war is a vicious cycle. So long as it continues, the country must maintain a large military establishment. So long as the country must maintain a large military establishment, the budget will remain

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LAOS-MILITARY REGIONS- CHINESE ROAD-1969

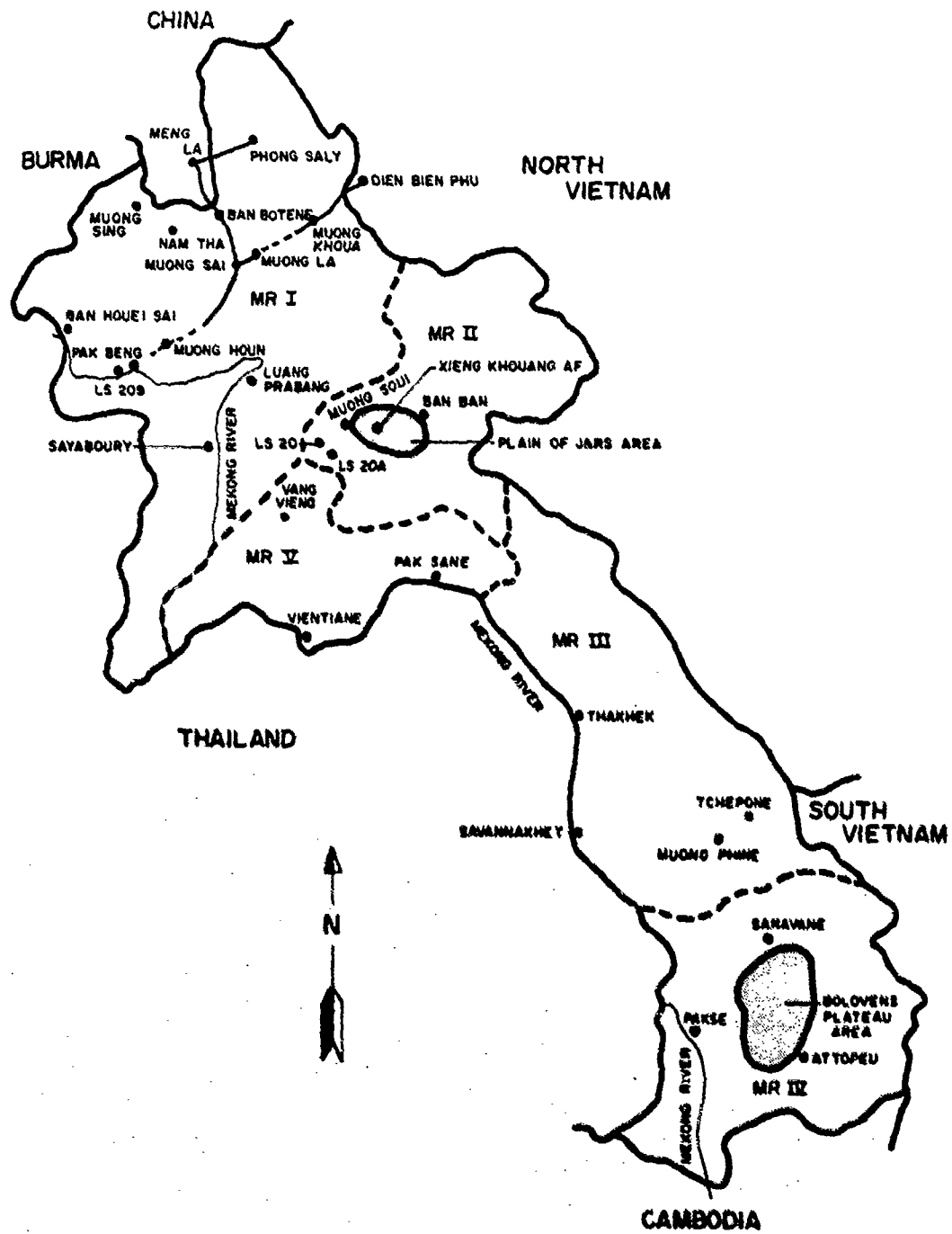


FIGURE III-3

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hopelessly out of balance and revenues will never suffice to permit economic independence or progressive development.

While this same military establishment is the prime instrument for defending the country and has done better than we expected, it has also built up institutionalized privileged, corruption, and law-evasion, which, in turn, alienate the villagers from the government which the military represents. Therefore, while intended to defend the Central Government and advance its interests, the military end by corrupting its rule and corroding its prestige. Thus the enemy, merely by posing a threat by the government, succeeds in weakening the authority of that government.

The Lao had genuinely hoped, when the Paris negotiations began, that peace would be restored in Southeast Asia before the current dry season. They felt grievously deceived when this hope was dashed and had little stomach for the fight this year. Hence, they gave up more terrain this season than was truly taken from them by force of arms. It remains to be seen how much more will be lost in the six or seven weeks which remain in the dry season.

But no matter what situation we find when the rains come, I think we should be under no, repeat no, illusions as to the future. The Lao have suffered enormously under all these years of war. Among the Meo, for example, practically an entire generation of fighting men has been wiped out. It is pitiful to see their units so heavily manned by young boys of 14 and 15 years of age.

In fact, it is, in my judgment, a miracle that the Lao have fought so sturdily for so long and that the fabric of their primitive society has not totally collapsed prior to this time. They have been held together by spit and straw, aid, encouragement, and hope.

But all this is drawing to a close. If the North Vietnamese push as heavily next dry season as they have this year, and if they abandon their political restraints, I doubt that Laos could successfully weather another offensive without losing some vital areas of its territory and leadership. Therefore, in my view, the period between now and next November is critical. 191

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(C) Secretary of State Rogers. Following is a portion of Secretary of State Roger's statement presented in a closed session of a SEATO meeting held on 20 May 1969:

... There are reasons to be disturbed about the present situation in Laos. Since November the North Vietnamese have overrun a number of guerrilla outposts in Northeast Laos and seized a strategic district capital in the south. Their current dry-season operations include intensified activities in three areas: terrorism, including the assassinations of five Frenchmen working in an agricultural school, five Thai technicians working on Mekong Projects, and one American in the International Volunteer Service, to say nothing of the scores of Lao who also lost their lives in this way; the interdiction of Route 13 in several places; and the establishment under North Vietnamese leadership, of their country base area mainly in Southwest Laos but spilling over into Cambodia and Thailand.

Another disturbing development is the building of a 50-mile road from the Yunan Border into northern Laos by the Communist Chinese construction workers.

... The military pressures against Laos seem increasingly serious in the light of the strain on the human and material resources of this small country. But despite tactical advances, and with the exception of occasional terror attacks, the areas of military activity still remain those which were under Pathet Lao influence or in contest at the time of agreement on the 1962 Accords...

My government continues to believe that the problem of Laos can best be resolved by full implementation of the 1962 Geneva Agreements. We strongly support Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma in his efforts in this connection.

We are making it clear in our conversations in Paris that compliance with the Geneva Agreements by withdrawing their troops from Laos--Cambodia--as well--is an essential element for a lasting settlement in Southeast Asia... 192

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Enemy Activity - Cambodia

Introduction

(S) Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the Cambodian Chief of State, consistently pursued one major goal: the survival of Cambodia as an independent sovereign state. To achieve that goal, he always strove to maximize his options.¹⁹³ His tactics in 1969 included tacking to and fro between the VC/NVA and the US. Three primary factors influenced the paths he charted in 1969:

1. The VC/NVA were not winning the war and the struggle had become much longer than originally anticipated.
2. Allied military success had caused the development of large enclaves, permanently garrisoned and over which Cambodia had limited or no sovereignty.
3. Sihanouk and the Cambodian government feared the indigenous Communist insurgency in Cambodia and the aid which the VC, NVN and Communist China gave to it and might give to it in the future.¹⁹⁴

General

(S) During 1968 and 1969, Cambodia was plagued by economic, political, and military difficulties. Cambodian territory had continued to be used by Vietnamese Communist forces as infiltration routes, logistic bases, troop sanctuaries, and secure main supply routes (See Figure III-4).¹⁹⁵ But, a number of actions were taken by Sihanouk indicating that he had not abandoned the idea of resuming relations with the US--in his own way. An increasing number of reports were received during the year involving the movement of large quantities of arms, ammunition, foodstuffs, and other supplies through Cambodia to VC/NVA units in RVN. Many of these reports indicated that several governmental and military officials were implicated in this traffic. Other evidence revealed that a considerable expansion of enemy storage and support facilities took place within the country.¹⁹⁶ The importance of Cambodia to the Vietnamese Communist effort in RVN was stressed by a 29 May 1969 debriefing of the Commanding General, Delta Military Assistance Command, and Senior Advisor, IV CTZ, which covered the period 15 Jan 68 to 1 Jun 69. It was emphasized that "Our pacification efforts are doomed to failure unless we can do a better job of shutting off the flow of supplies and personnel from Cambodia".¹⁹⁷

Logistical Developments

(S) In 1966, with the U. S. Navy's MARKET TIME operations effectively preventing most seaborne infiltration of munitions and supplies into the coastal areas of RVN (See Chapter 5), the Communists had begun developing an extensive munitions logistic system in Cambodia.

(S) Concurrent with the increased effectiveness of MARKET TIME, the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville began receiving increased shipments. Since October 1966, 15 CHICOM and Soviet ships were suspected of having unloaded munitions at that port. Based on many reports from agents in Cambodia, it was estimated that these CHICOM and Soviet ships had delivered over 17,000 tons of arms and munitions to Sihanoukville. The shipments ostensibly were made

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CAMBODIAN VC/NVA LOGISTICAL SUPPLY ROUTES-1969

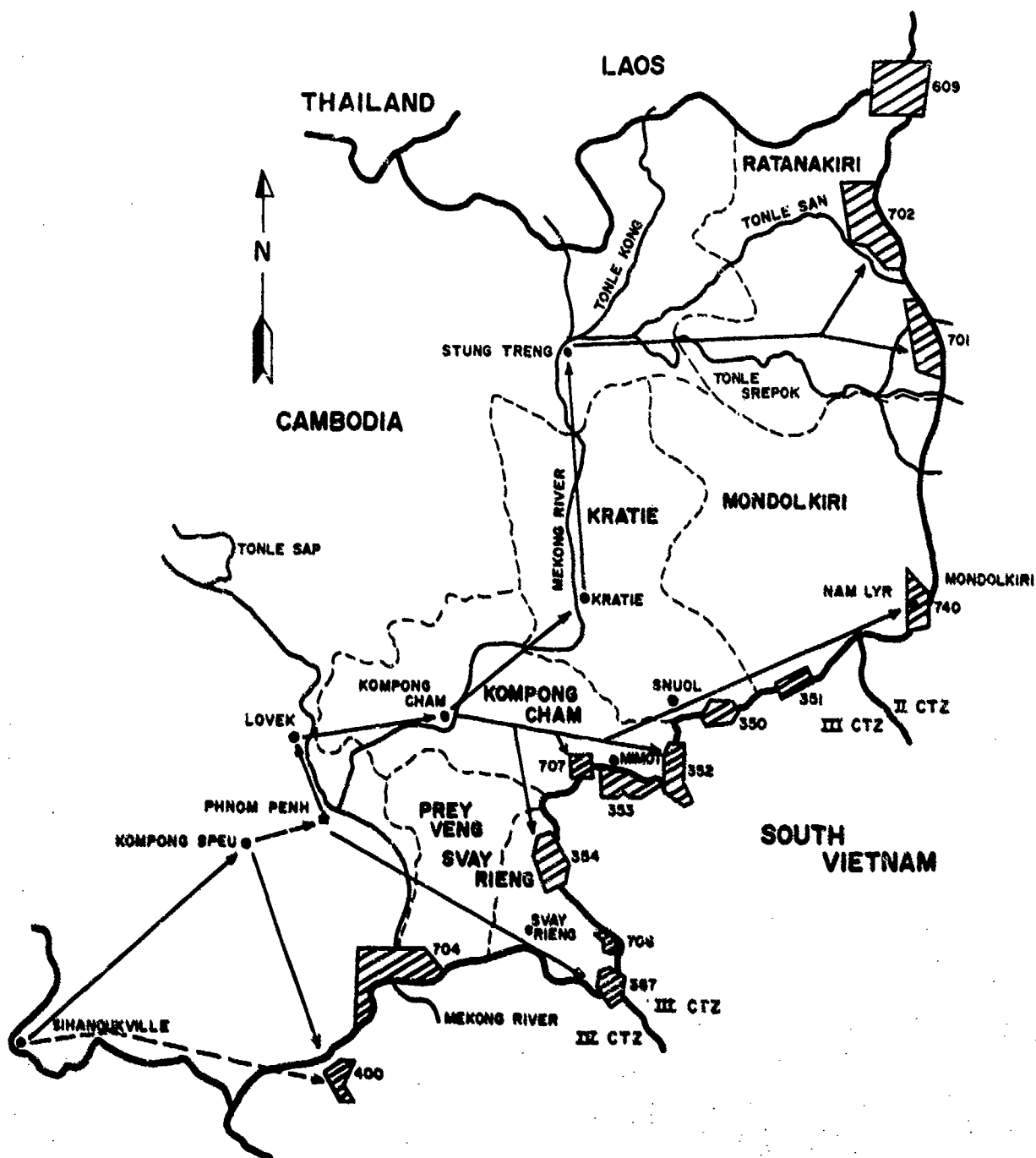


FIGURE III-4

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pursuant to military aid agreements with Communist China and the Soviet Union, and supposedly, were for use by the Cambodian armed forces. However, the Cambodian requirements for arms and ammunition during the same period was estimated to have been 4,600 tons, far below the amount imported. The estimated VC/NVA munitions requirements in III and IV CTZs during the period was approximately 11,000 tons, which when added to the Cambodian needs, approached the cumulative total of the munitions received at Sihanoukville.

(S) Also significant was the correlation between major arms shipments to Cambodia and the VC/NVA offensives and high points in RVN. Prior to the 1968 Tet offensive, almost 4,000 tons of ordnance were detected being delivered to Sihanoukville. Before the May 1968 offensive, approximately 3,000 tons were delivered, and the enemy's third offensive during August and September 1968 was preceded by 2,000 tons of munitions, which were off-loaded in August.

(S) In 1969, a shipment of nearly 4,800 tons of munitions to Sihanoukville in January was followed by the February and March post-Tet offensive. Similarly, the May and June high points were preceded by a shipment of almost 2,000 tons in March. The high points of August and September were preceded by a shipment of nearly 1,000 tons in July. Thus, shipments of munitions arriving in Cambodia provided a clue to the timing of enemy offensives and high points in the Cambodian border areas of RVN (See Figure III-5).¹⁹⁸

(S) The Machim Bophea and Hak Ly trucking firms in Cambodia had been frequently mentioned in reports as the major participants in the movement of arms and ammunition from Sihanoukville to the RVN border. The firm of Machim Bophea was known to have had an existing capital of \$30,000 in 1964. The company claimed gross profits of nearly 1.5 million dollars in 1967, which probably meant the company increased its net worth to approximately \$715,000--a growth of 2,500 percent in three years. The other trucking firm, Hak Ly, appeared to be owned outright by the NFLSVN and funded by the CHICOM Embassy in Phnom Penh.¹⁹⁹ It was thought that the Hak Ly Transportation Company was the center of VC/NVA logistical effort in Cambodia. The firm's main office, major truck depot, and maintenance facility were in Phnom Penh. Branch offices were said to have been in Stung Treng and Kratie and may also have been in Kompong Cham, Svay Rieng, and other major towns (See Figure III-4). With their headquarters in Phnom Penh, Hak Ly officials were able to negotiate readily with the government, the VC, and representatives of Communist Bloc countries.

(S) Since late 1967, the Hak Ly Company reportedly had been transporting weapons, munitions, food, medical supplies, POL, and other critical items to the VC/NVA along the RVN border. Arms, munitions, and, in the more recent past, rice had been delivered by Communist owned ships through the Port of Sihanoukville. The port was usually closed when an arms shipment arrived, and unloading was accomplished by or under the supervision of Cambodian Army (FARK) personnel.²⁰⁰

(S) After leaving Sihanoukville, the munitions were transported by Hak Ly and subcontractors (The Machim Bophea Co. was frequently subcontracted) to temporary storage areas; Cambodian Army arms depots, at Kompong Speu and Lovek, or in some cases, to Phnom Penh itself (See Figure III-4). At these points, the arms and ammunition destined for the VC and NVA apparently were separated and transported during nighttime hours over Cambodian LOCs in convoys to Kompong Cham, Kratie, Stung Treng, and Siem Pang; Mimot, Snoul, and Monduliri; and to Svay Rieng (See Figure III-4). In the border regions, the VC/NVA had developed 13 major areas and storage complexes which served as transshipment points for munitions arriving from the Cambodian ordnance depots. The supplies were turned over to the VC or their agents

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**MONTHLY TONNAGE DELIVERY
TO SIHANOUKVILLE**

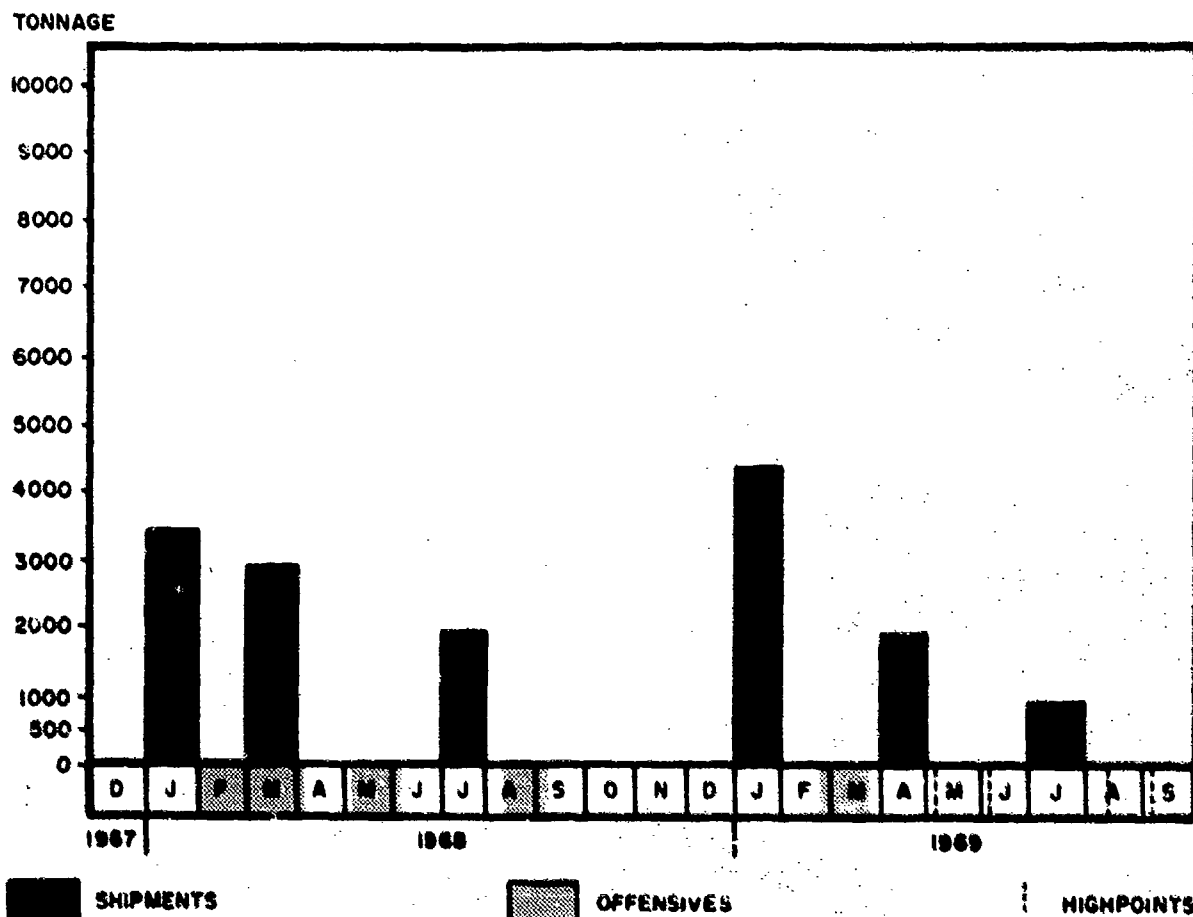


FIGURE III-5
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at locations near the border or in Communist-controlled areas. In the IV CTZ area of RVN, it appeared that many of the arms shipments were made by boat along the numerous canals and tributaries of the Mekong River. The same type of transportation was used in northeastern Cambodia, where arms were trucked to Stung Treng and from there transported by boat, usually Cambodian Army river craft, up navigable rivers to transfer points near VC and NVA base camps. In the central areas of Cambodia--the "Parrot's Beak", Tay Ninh and points farther north--the cargo was apparently trucked directly to the VC and NVA base camp transshipment points.²⁰¹ In northeastern Cambodia, a logistical route which served the B-3 front and the central highlands in northern II CTZ had been described by a rallier in August 1968 as a pack bicycle route extending south from the tri-border area. This route served the Tonle Srepok, the branches of which were used to further the flow of supplies into Pleiku and Darlac Provinces. The ralliers specified two points, one on the Tonle San, and the other on the Tonle Srepok, which served as transshipment points for supplies arriving by truck and sampans from Stung Treng to the west. Another important logistical route was located north of Stung Treng, on the Tonle Kong River. Fuel and foodstuffs, principally rice, had been reported moving north to Laos as early as December 1965. Four reports mentioned the movement of ordnance to Laos via this supply channel. On 21 Feb 69, a wooden case being off-loaded from a FARK truck at Siem Pang was reported to have broken open revealing the contents to be AK 47s. The cargo was probably being taken across southern Laos on Route 11 -- to VC/NVA forces operating in the RVN and in the Laotian panhandle (See Figure III-4).²⁰²

(S) Hak Ly used various procedures to conceal the nature of its activities. In order to attract minimum attention, convoys often consisted of small numbers of trucks. All cargo was tightly covered and secured to prevent disclosure of the contents. Hak Ly convoys also appeared to have right-of-way and were not subject to inspection at either military or police checkpoints. Indications were that the Cambodian military and civilian officials involved received substantial sums of money for their efforts to cut official red tape and for their finesse in handling the delicate situation. One report stated that Hak Ly handled almost 3,000 truckloads in an 11-month period. Extensive subcontracting was necessary to handle the volume.²⁰³

(S) Some high level Cambodian military and civilian officials were involved in the traffic. It is unclear how much Sihanouk knew of these activities and it did not appear that he was personally involved. As part of improving US-Cambodian relations in early 1969, US diplomats formally apprised Sihanouk of the Communist arms shipments and of the extent of control of Cambodian territory by the VC/NVA.²⁰⁴ Sihanouk seemed to be surprised.

(S) The most dramatic reports received indicating FARK officer participation in NVA arms traffic involved meetings of representatives of FARK, the Sihanouk regime, the Hak Ly Trucking Company, and the NFLSVN. These meetings were held to discuss the movement of supplies through Cambodia to VC units and to ensure the secrecy of Cambodian involvement. Information concerning incoming cargo was passed during these meetings to ensure that the RKG would not treat it as contraband. According to a FARK officer, the Hak Ly Company was financed by the Communists in the following manner: in Phnom Penh, the CHICOM Embassy transferred Hong Kong dollars to the North Vietnamese Embassy, which in turn transferred money to the NFLSVN. Mr. Hak Ly, who served as the NFLSVN Mission Economic Attache in a covert manner, received the Hong Kong dollars and changed them to Cambodian riels in a Phnom Penh Bank.²⁰⁵

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Cambodian - VC/NVA Relations

(S) During the first quarter of 1969, there were growing indications that Prince Sihanouk was becoming concerned over the presence of VC/NVA forces on Cambodian soil and the threat to Cambodian independence which these forces represented. During this time several instances of armed confrontation between FARK and VC/NVA forces occurred. In a press conference on 6 Mar, Sihanouk, for the first time in over a year, raised the issue of VC/NVA presence in Cambodia; he cited specific areas which were occupied by these forces:

But how many Viet Cong and Viet Minh have infiltrated. One must go to count them, but one does not want to. What about certain areas occupied by them? Our Army, which (words indistinct, ED) cannot go...

If you look at a map, near Mondolkiri... there is Nam (Nam Lean) and there are plenty of Viet Cong and Viet Minh there. If you go up to Ratanakiri you will see Laban Siek. Further north is Ro Khanh,... let us stop there, it is full (of Viet Cong and Viet Minh, Prince laughs -- ED).²⁰⁶

(S) The Cambodian Government continued to apply pressure against the VC/NVA and, by June, some local Cambodian officials in the border areas had gone so far as to contact their RVN counterparts to discuss ways in which they could cooperate against the VC. An increased number of armed clashes between FARK and VC/NVA troops occurred in April and May after a smaller number of clashes had occurred earlier in the year.²⁰⁷ The change in the Cambodian attitude was partly the result of heavier fighting along the border and the extent to which the Communist troops had made increasing use of their bases in the southern half of Cambodia. One NVA prisoner reportedly told interrogators that "newly" infiltrated NVA troops were the cause of much of the tension. He said that the VC cadre, who had operated in Cambodia for many years, were on better terms with the Cambodians. Problems had arisen because the Communists had been taking increasing liberties by expanding bases into new areas and building new fortifications; these liberties had upset understandings reached long before with local Cambodian officials. The Cambodians also believed that the Communists were supporting local rebels.

(S) The increasing willingness of local Cambodian forces to act on long-standing instructions to limit Communist activities was almost certainly a reflection of Phnom Penh's preoccupation with the problem of the Communist presence. Cambodian news media began describing VC violations of the border in greater detail, and NFLSVN representatives were maneuvered into admitting publicly that such incidents had occurred. By applying pressures of this kind on the Communists, while at the same time moving toward resumption of relations with the US, Prince Sihanouk was again trying to achieve goals by political maneuvering that could not be gained by military measures.

(S) For their part, the Communists were trying to maintain as cordial relations with the Cambodians as possible. The Cambodian actions did not seriously threaten Communist bases in Cambodia in the sense that the Cambodian army lacked sufficient numbers forcibly to evict the VC/NVA and Sihanouk recognized that fact. Sihanouk, however did have one trump card; the VC/NVA need for supplies and particularly munitions.²⁰⁸

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The Communist Influence

(S) The Communists appear to have played a significant role in bringing about Cambodia's apparent policy change. The enemy's continued use of the Cambodian border was a major contributing factor. VC/NVA dependence upon, and control of, the border region created serious concern over the territorial integrity of Cambodia. It also raised the risk that the war would spill over into Cambodian territory. Communist involvement in Cambodian internal problems (CHICOM as well as VC/NVA) also prompted Phnom Penh's actions. Sihanouk often indicated that he regarded Communist support to the Cambodian rebels as a threat to his sovereignty.

(S) The growing number of armed incidents which occurred between VC/NVA and FARK troops was certainly a factor in Cambodia's attitude. One particularly displeasing episode was described by Prince Sihanouk during a 28 Mar press conference. He explained that the VC had attacked and overrun a Cambodian police post. This attack occurred on the anniversary of Sihanouk's personal political party, the Sangkum.

(S) Cambodia was also deeply disturbed by events transpiring in Laos. In the past, Cambodia had actively engaged in attempting to preserve the neutrality of Laos; the 1961 Geneva Conference was initiated by Prince Sihanouk. Consequently, despite the vocal support the Prince gave to the PL leader, Souphanouvong, Communist successes in southern Laos gave Sihanouk grounds for reflection. The fall of the Bolovens Plateau would have vastly improved Communist access to his country. Thus, the enemy may have brought Sihanouk to the realization that the VC/NVA were no more tolerant of "neutrality" than other courses of action, no matter how broadly that term was defined.

US/GVN Influence

(S) Allied pressures for a change in Cambodian foreign policy were considerably different from those of the Communists. Such pressure, however, did appear to have a considerable impact. A principal source of US/GVN pressure was the threat of hot-pursuit or cross-border operations directed against VC/NVA installations in the border regions.

(S) Perhaps as important as the threat of violence was the prospect, with improved US-Cambodian relations, of US economic aid. Cambodia's chronic difficulties were among Sihanouk's most severe domestic problems. Significant aid assistance would have reduced some of Cambodia's economic strains. The US had cut off aid to Cambodia in 1963; following this, aid had been unobtainable in equivalent amounts from other sources.

(S) Improved relations with the US further produced a declaration of recognition and respect for Cambodia's borders -- a point which had been pursued by Prince Sihanouk since July of 1967. Finally, Cambodia was aware that improved contacts with the US would probably produce better relations between Cambodia, Thailand, and the RVN. Among other benefits, this would free considerable numbers of FARK troops from the Thai border for duty in VC/NVA controlled areas. 209

(U) Agreement was reached to resume diplomatic relations between the US and Cambodia in June and formal relations were resumed in August.

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Cambodian Embargo on Shipment of Supplies to the VC/NVA

(S) As relations with the US improved in the spring and as the VC/NVA post Tet offensives failed to reveal increased VC/NVA power, Sihanouk moved to cut off the flow of supplies through Cambodia. Either in April or early May, Cambodia cut off the flow of munitions and other supplies to the VC/NVA by placing an embargo on the transshipment of arms from the supply depots at Kompong Speu and Lovek. The stoppage applied to the whole system. One report indicated that Sihanouk had stopped the flow of supplies to the northeastern part of the country because they were going to the PL in Laos who were aiding the Khmer Rouge insurgency in Cambodia. A report stated that the VC in Mondolkiri Province lacked enough rice. A VC colonel said that Cambodia had suspended shipments even though FARK and the VC had an agreement which was supposed to run for another two years. Negotiations between the Cambodians and the VC/NVA commenced and the President of the PRG Huynh-Tan-Phat, visited Phnom Penh on 30 Jun. 210

The End of the Embargo

(S) The embargo lasted until mid-September. Sihanouk journeyed to Hanoi in September to attend the funeral of Ho Chi Minh. While he was there, a meeting was arranged, apparently by Chou En-lai, between Sihanouk and VC and NVA leaders, from which an agreement ensued. 211 It was speculated that the arrangement to release the arms was the product of a quid pro quo arrangement whereby the VC/NVA were:

1. To confine their activities to specified enclaves whose boundaries would not be contiguous with the border in order not to invite US/ARVN intrusion or fire.
2. To stop aiding the Khmer Rouge and Khmer Loeu insurgents.
3. To stop harassing the local Cambodian population.

On his return from Hanoi, Sihanouk said:

...Pham Van Dong promised me a great deal. If he does not keep his promises 100 percent, then 70 percent or even 30 percent is better than nothing... (Pham Van Dong) said that he would even stop supporting the enemies in (our) country... 212

A trade agreement with the PRG was signed on 25 Sep for the trade of non-military goods. 213 This agreement plus Sihanouk's move to dissolve the International Control Commission (ICC) in October can be seen as aspects of Sihanouk's attempts to maintain good relations with Communist China, NVN and the PRG. 214

Developments During the Last Quarter

(S) Developments throughout the remainder of 1969 were highlighted by continued Cambodian attempts to combat Khmer Rouge insurgents and VC/NVA units in Cambodia, a series of border incidents between Cambodians and the US, and the resumption of the flow of supplies including munitions to the VC/NVA through Cambodia.

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(S) FARK efforts were primarily designed to re-establish Cambodian sovereignty in areas which the VC/NVA were willing to vacate, to impede further infiltration, and to restrict VC/NVA activities to specified enclaves. Associated with these FARK actions were attempts to eliminate insurgent activity which occurred in generally the same areas in which the VC/NVA operated. The fact that insurgents were generally shot while VC/NVA PWs were usually returned to the PRG Embassy in Phnom Penh was evidence of the different objectives of the Cambodian government towards each group. ²¹⁵ The worst US Cambodian border incident occurred at Dak Dam (See the discussion of the Dak Dam incident under "Rules of Engagement, Chapter 2).

(S) Sihanouk responded to the overall situation at year's end with a pessimistic assessment. On 15 Dec, Sihanouk made the following statement referencing the Dak Dam incident of mid-November, "Who triggered the Dak Dam incident? It was the Viet Cong who fired at the Americans from our territory. When the Americans got hit, they became angry and bombed us. Then the Viet Cong and the Viet Minh fled, and only Khmer inhabitants were left to become victims. That is the whole story". Sihanouk went on to say "If we rupture diplomatic relations with (the Americans) then we will have to do the same thing with the Viet Minh and the Viet Cong, because they still continue to commit aggression against our territory even after we established diplomatic relations with them". A more significant statement expressing the fear of Communist intent toward Cambodia as well as his pessimistic assessment of the overall situation was an editorial by Sihanouk which appeared in two separate government publications. In reference to the attitudes of the Chinese and Vietnamese Communists toward Cambodia, Sihanouk stated "No matter how popular the government and Sangkum are in Cambodia, we will always be classified in the category of reactionary regimes and leaders which are enemies of the people and must be overthrown. Therefore, New China, Socialist Vietnam, and other Communist powers will be neither able nor willing to help us in respect to settling the problems of the Khmer Red's Rebellion and the Viet Cong and Viet Minh infiltration and occupation of our territory. This as everybody knows, is because the Communists' special policy is to promote, by all possible means, the communization of countries which are not yet their ideological brothers even though these countries have been officially qualified as friends". He continued "If the Vietnam war... drags on for long, the future will be rather gloomy since we are caught between the hammer and the anvil. Pressures will probably build up on and within our unfortunate country, making it impossible for it to maintain its neutrality..." ²¹⁶

(S) It was reported that 3,000 tons of arms and ammunition and 5,000 tons of rice were delivered from Cambodia to VC/NVA forces in and adjacent to RVN between mid-November and the end of December 1969. ²¹⁷

(S) As the year ended, Sihanouk still faced military, political, and economic problems. He continued the most complex balancing act in SEASIA and perhaps in the world.

(U) In general in 1969, the interdiction of men and supplies into III and IV CTZs from Cambodia was made more difficult by US and RVNAF interdiction of LOCs from Cambodia to RVN (See Chapter 5, SEA LORDS).

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THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST INFRASTRUCTURE

Leadership

Introduction

(C) The Vietnamese Communist Infrastructure (VCI) was the political and administrative organization through which the Vietnamese Communist Party controlled or sought to control the people of RVN. This "shadow government" was operated by thousands of well-trained, dedicated VCI cadre who sought to control and then to organize all facets of the South Vietnamese people's lives toward full support of the insurgency. In areas under Communist control, the infrastructure acted as a civil government; in contested and GVN-controlled areas, it directed a program of intense propaganda mixed with terrorism, aimed at undermining the GVN's authority. The organization of this government took the form of the "party control" structure used by Communists all over the world. It consisted of a front organization appearing to have control and an administrative unit backed by the local Communist party which contained the true leaders but which remained in the background.

(U) The VCI, a much misunderstood term, became better defined during 1969. The discussion above describes the VCI as a political entity. The VCI as a person was defined by the functions he performed in the enemy organization as outlined in "The Current Breakout of VCI Executive and Significant Cadres" published by the RVN on 17 Dec 68, and revised on 1 Jan 70. The primary revision placed all Communist Party Members, or probationary members, in category A status, requiring a two year jail sentence when apprehended. Guerrilla leaders at the village and hamlet level were redefined as VCI. 218

(C) In February of 1967, administrative services first had appeared as a category of enemy units in the MACV Order of Battle listing, although the concept of administrative services could be traced to 1962. Prior to 1962, control of Communist efforts in Vietnam had been vested in two regional committees of the Communist Party, the Interregion V Committee in the northern part of RVN, and the Nam Bo Interzone Committee in the southern areas. Also during 1962, the Communist Party in the RVN was renamed the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). This semantic change was to promote the facade of an indigenous political movement in the south, and to appeal to a broader spectrum of people. The Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) was created in the Nam Bo Interzone, which became the enemy theater level military-political headquarters in charge of the insurgency in those provinces of the RVN south of, and excluding, Darlac and Khanh Hoa Provinces. (See 1967 MACV Command History, p. 15). 219

(C) Overall control of Communist activities in RVN came from NVN, whose military guidance, supplies, and NVA units kept the war going. Hanoi acted through the PRP, and administrative control of Communist operations was vested in four agencies. COSVN was charged with directing activities in the southern portion of RVN including GVN III and IV CTZs. The Tri-Thien-Hue (TTH) MR was responsible for the extreme northern portion of RVN to include Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. The B-3 Front was responsible for activities in the highlands of RVN and operated in conjunction with MR 5. MR 5 controlled the activities in the central and coastal areas of RVN. COSVN informed the other three agencies of its activities and coordinated operations of mutual interest.

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The People's Revolutionary Party

(C) The Party Executive Committee was the principal party management organ of the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). It was responsible for all Communist military and political activity at each echelon down to village level. The committee was composed of a secretary, deputy secretary (or secretaries), and members who were usually chiefs of important functional sections. The committee secretary was normally the senior member of the Current Affairs Committee at his echelon. The province level Committee Secretary also served as a member of the Region Party Committee.

(C) The Central Executive Committee met periodically to make broad policy decisions. The Region Party Committee interpreted the broad COSVN policy decisions in terms of regional differences or special requirements, passing somewhat modified or mission-type directives to provinces for action. The Province Committee formulated specific directives for implementing COSVN policies. The District Committee translated these directives, which in turn were executed by the Village Committee. (For a detailed discussion of the PRP, see pp. 62-69 of the 1968 MACV Command History).

The Central Office of South Vietnam

(C) The most important position in the Communist power structure in RVN was held by the COSVN.

(S) The key to COSVN's mission was its place within the Communist system. It was simultaneously the Central Committee of the PRP and a regional committee of the NVN Communist Party. This promoted the facade of a separate southern party and its top level headquarters, when in fact, the top men in COSVN were either full or alternate members of the NVN Communist Party Central Committee. 220

(C) COSVN issued broad mission type directives as well as specific orders which limited freedom of action for all subordinates. As an administrative agency, COSVN's functions were similar to those of a national government providing administrative support to subordinate elements. This support included training cadre for lower echelons of the VCI, producing propaganda, disseminating information, and coordinating operations. (See p. 64, 1968 MACV Command History for organization Chart). The COSVN headquarters was believed to be located across the Cambodian border to the north of GVN Tay Ninh Province. 221

(C) A VC returnee, ⁷ reported that he had served for over eight years as a member of a security section responsible for the security of COSVN headquarters and drew a sketch of the COSVN complex (See Figure III-6). 222

National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam

(C) The National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN) was the VC organizational contact with the masses of people, both in-country and world-wide. Thus, though there was some representation in the form of a central committee at each echelon, the Front had operational units only at village/hamlet and the national levels, where its contacts were made. Designed to put every Vietnamese citizen in touch with the "true revolution of the oppressed masses", the Front organized associations for all categories of people; thus, it created the impression that it represented "the people." Actually, the front had absolutely no authority

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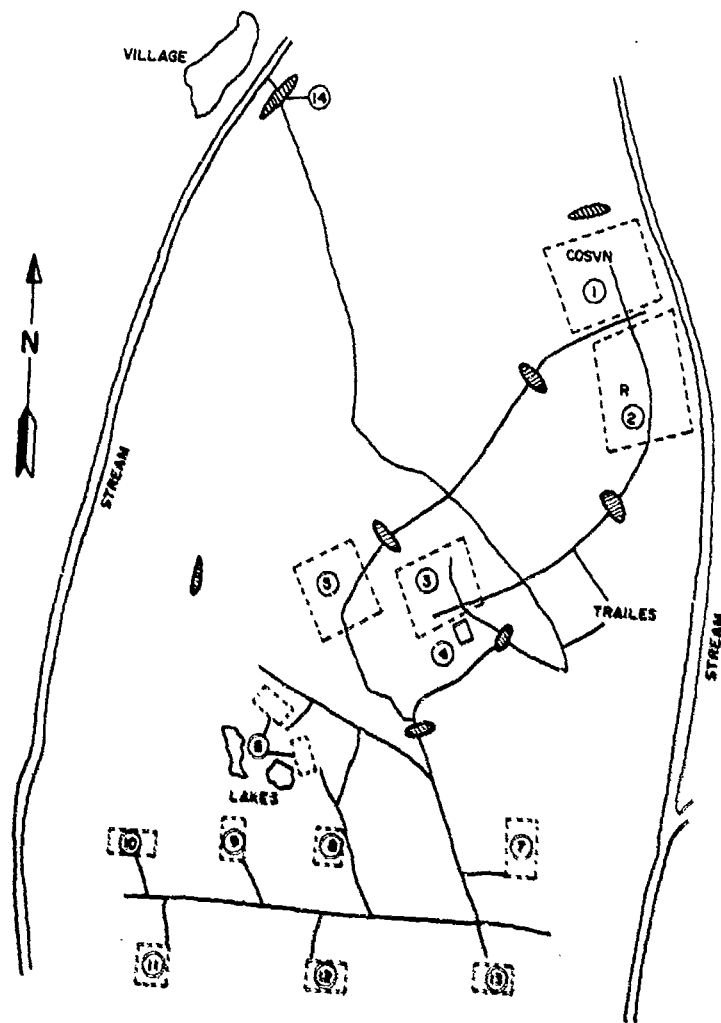
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MEMORY SKETCH COSVN HEADQUARTERS



1. COSVN HQ: Consisted of approx 10 identical wooden barracks type buildings, size 15m long x 10m wide x 4m high.
2. R area. Also consisted of approx 10 barracks type wooden buildings of the same size as in the COSVN area.
3. Temporary quarters for cadre visiting R.
4. Conference building. The visiting cadre were never allowed to enter COSVN HQ in the R area and all conferences took place at this building.
5. Temporary quarters for cadre visiting COSVN.
6. 1st Security Co quarters.
7. Comm section.
8. Personnel section.
9. Radio Transmitting Receiving section.
10. Teletype (Inward) section.
11. Liaison office.
12. H-7 Hospital. Consisted of five buildings and a total of approx 10 beds.
13. Mess service section.
14. Guard posts.

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FIGURE III-6
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independent of the PRP. It merely acted in the Party's name in an attempt to legitimize the Party's activities. A former NVN intelligence officer who rallied to the GVN asserted that he had heard information in 1967 to the effect that the head of the NFLSVN, Nguyen Huu Tho, had become disenchanted because COSVN and the Lao Dong Party controlled everything leaving the NFLSVN leaders as figureheads used to appeal to intellectuals and the members of the middle classes in RVN. In addition, Tho was alleged to have objected to the sending of cadres from the North to hold important positions in the South.²²³ This theme became significant in 1969.

(C) There were thirteen identified "associations" established by the NFLSVN:

1. Liberation Youth Association
2. Liberation Women's Association
3. Liberation Peasant (Farmer's) Association
4. The Liberation Workers' Association
5. South Vietnam Patriotic Buddhists' Association
6. Western Highlands People's Autonomy Movement
7. South Vietnam Liberation Psywar Entertainment Association
8. South Vietnam Patriotic Teachers' Association
9. South Vietnam Patriotic Journalist Association
10. Former Resistance Members' Association
11. Central War Invalids' and Heroes' Association
12. Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Association
13. Liberation Laborers' Association

(C) All of these associations attempted to involve the particular occupations, religious, ethnic, or solidarity groups as indicated by their titles. Discussion of four of the associations cited above follows:

1. The most important popular front organization was the Liberation Farmers' Association. Its members included the village and hamlet community leaders and all of the male population not involved in the Youth Association. The Farmers Association Executive Committee was responsible for directing most of the community development and production work. At hamlet level, the committee chairman could have been the NFLSVN chairman as well as the Civilian Proselyting Section Chief. He responded to the orders of the village Party Secretary which could call him to perform any duty from persuading people to pay their VC taxes to gathering forced labor for duty as porters.

2. As the second most important mass organization, the Liberation Youth Association sought to convert young people to Communism and supplied the manpower pool from which most laborers, guerrillas, and Party members were drawn. Members could be as old as 35 years, and any "good element" below that age of either sex was eligible for membership. The youth aided the Party in all aspects: constructing combat villages, proselyting, propagandizing, carrying ammunition, persuading people to pay taxes, holding themselves up for emulation by the people, or by actual combat.

3. The Liberation Women's Association was the third most important NFLSVN organization. Its membership was open to all women who were not in the Liberation Youth Association. The women produced NFLSVN flags, sharpened spikes, prepared food and shelter for transient VC troops, and participated in face-to-face struggles with RVN authorities. These struggles

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took the form of a near-riot if they were well organized, and they were mounted to demand such things as a decrease in rice prices, release of a politically sensitive prisoner, or abolition of conscription.

4. The Liberation Workers' Association was formed to provide a vehicle for organizing city and rural workers who were not farmers or youth. Duties of the executive committee were ostensibly to establish labor unions, organize labor struggle movements, and create labor unrest. Efforts to accomplish these goals were weak and only sporadically successful. 224

Other Political Organizations

(S) The Alliance of National Democratic and Peace Forces (ANDPF) had been established by the VC during the 1968 Tet Offensive; it was supposed to have been an alternative to both the Saigon government and the NFLSVN and to have served as a unifying body to replace the NFLSVN in conjunction with elected People's Councils and the eventual formulation of a coalition government. (See pp. 75, 76, 1968 MACV Command History). The Alliance had been formed to gain support in the cities; to attract dissident students, GVN officials, and intellectuals to whom the NFLSVN was a discredited and unacceptable political organization. It was thought that non-Communists in the cities would be attracted to the interim goal of a democratic and neutralist coalition government. The VC/NVA had expected the Tet Offensive of 1968 to be greeted by a popular revolution. The ANDPF was to have been a part of the process. When the "alliance" fronts were formed and announced, they failed to get the anticipated popular support. In 1969, at the founding of the PRG, it was announced that the new government had been formed at a "National Congress" representing the NFLSVN, the ANDPF and other political, religious and nationality groups throughout RVN. Some ANDPF figures became members of the PRG and the PRG Advisory Council, however, the positions which they held were less significant than those held by members of the NFLSVN. At year's end, the ANDPF was still in existence somewhere near or at COSVN Headquarters. The leadership of the VC probably still hoped that the Alliance would be useful for propaganda purposes and that it might still gain some support for the VC. However, the ANDPF's first year and a half had been much less spectacular than many observers had expected when it had first been created. On 19 Feb 69, a DIA intelligence estimate summarized its existence in this manner: "The year-old Alliance of National Democratic and Peace Forces in South Vietnam was and is a failure." Nothing occurred in 1969 to alter the assessment. 225

(C) People's Liberation Councils and their executive bodies, People's Liberation Committees, which had been implemented by the Communists in the RVN in various forms since 1963, turned up under a new name in 1968. The Revolutionary Committee (RC) was to take the place of the Party and military directed committees and councils. These new committees were to consist of "elected" representatives of the people, or NFLSVN association representatives. Emphasis was placed on the formation of RCs at village level, and by February 1969 Communist propaganda claimed administrative control over large segments of RVN's population through the establishment of 2,287 RCs. By Communist reckoning, this represented the final step on the takeover of villages and hamlets. They were designed to bridge the gap between covert and overt VCI government. 226

(C) Following more propagandistic fanfare that claimed district and provincial level RCs had become effective, the Communists announced formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) on 10 Jun 69. The overall Communist national objective was the formation of a provisional coalition government in which the PRG forces would play the major role while the RCs would lay the groundwork for future elections. The claimed RCs were announced to have

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sent representatives to congresses which selected PRG officials. The purpose was to indicate legitimacy of Communist claims that the PRG was the de facto government of RVN. 227

(C) The actual situation had not changed under the new apparatus. Enemy military capabilities steadily diminished during 1969, and increasing numbers of VCI were neutralized. The population over which the Communists had control declined to the extent that low indigenous manpower recruitment further increased the ratio of NVA troops to local enemy troops. External logistics for food became a necessity to sustain enemy military forces. The VCI began to be reinforced with the NVA. As 1969 ended there was every indication that the Communists were attempting to salvage a basic insurgency, rather than finalize a military and political victory. 228

(C) RCs did function in areas of RVN controlled by the VC/NVA. MACJ2 estimated that total RCs increased from 1,002 in March 1969 to 1,220 in January 1970. The monthly increase rate of RCs for the first six months of 1969 was 33, however, after June the rate was nine RCs per month. These figures revealed decreasing ability of the VCI to extend further its influence even though Party directives continued to exhort added effort to form RCs. Since the formation of the PRG, the number of villages in which RCs operated overtly, on a daily basis, had dropped from 578 in June to 554 in December. In IV CTZ, 20.1 percent of the population was exposed to RCs with medium to high influence. 229

(U) The data cited above was based on estimates and "could not be reliably confirmed by documents, interrogations, and situation reports". 230

Paris Conference on the War in Vietnam

(U) Due to the obvious relationship between the NFLSVN and the DRV, a separate discussion of the NFLSVN's position in Paris will not be included as such. Certain highlights have been included, however, because they ostensibly originated with the VC.

(FOUO) As with the DRV delegation to Paris, the NFLSVN held a press conference on 17 Jan 69 to "make clear" certain points prior to the opening session of the Paris Conference. The NFLSVN's representative, Tran Hoai Nam began by saying that the conference could have been started two months prior if it had not been for the "bad will" of the US and "sabotage" on the part of the Saigon Administration. Nam went on to add:

The US imperialist aggression which has been continued for the last 14 years, violated the 1954 Geneva Accords, and the rights of the people of South Vietnam. The people of South Vietnam are one with the world in wanting a stop to this aggression.

The NLF is participating in tomorrow's conference as an independent and equal negotiator. As leaders of the People's war of resistance, and authentic representatives of the people, and as an organization fully qualified to manage all problems concerning South Vietnam, the NLF has defined its position in its statement on November 3, 1968. 231

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(FOUO) During the same press conference, in answer to a question, Nam provided a reiteration of the NFLSVN's Five Points and thereby established the boundaries within which the Front intended to negotiate during 1969:

...the U.S. must stop its aggression in SVN, withdraw all its troops and those of its satellites and all its war equipment from SVN. It must eliminate all U.S. military bases in SVN and let the people of SVN settle their own problems according to the political program of the NLF without foreign interference. There must be set up a national democratic union government; free general elections must be held with a view to the eventual reunification of the country. 232

(C) Following the opening of the Paris talks on 25 Jan 69, the NFLSVN's first major "change" in political strategy came on 8 May with the announcement of the "10-Point proposal for the solution of the conflict in Vietnam." The 10 Points follow:

POINT I

To respect the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights, i.e. independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, as recognized by the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam.

POINT II

The United States Government must withdraw from South Vietnam all United States troops, military personnel, arms and war materiel of the other foreign countries of the United States camp without posing any condition whatsoever; liquidate all United States military bases in South Vietnam; renounce all encroachments on the sovereignty, territory and security of South Vietnam and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

POINT III

The Vietnamese People's right to fight for the defense of their fatherland is the sacred, inalienable right to self-defense of all peoples. The question of the Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam shall be resolved by the Vietnamese parties among themselves.

POINT IV

The people of South Vietnam shall settle themselves their own affairs without foreign interference. They shall decide themselves the political regime of South Vietnam through free and democratic general elections; a constituent assembly will be set up, a constitution worked out and a coalition government of South Vietnam installed, reflecting national concord and the broad union of all social strata.

POINT V

The provisional coalition government is to have the following tasks: (A) To implement the agreement to be concluded on the withdrawal of the troops of the United States and the other foreign countries of the American camp. (B) To achieve national concord, and a broad union of all

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social strata, political forces, nationalities, religious communities and all persons, no matter what their political beliefs and their past may be, provided they stand for peace, independence and neutrality. (C) To achieve broad democratic freedoms - freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of belief, freedom to form political parties and organizations, freedom to demonstrate, etc.; to set free those persons jailed on political backgrounds; to prohibit all acts of terror, reprisal and discrimination against people having collaborated with either side, and who are now in the country or abroad, as provided for in the 1954 Geneva agreement on Vietnam. (D) To heal the war wounds, restore and develop the economy, to restore the normal life of the people and to improve the living conditions of the laboring people. (E) To hold free and democratic general elections in the whole of South Vietnam with a view to achieving the South Vietnam people's right to self-determination, in accordance with the content of point 4 mentioned above.

POINT VI

South Vietnam will carry out a foreign policy of peace and neutrality. To carry out a policy of good neighborly relations with the Kingdom of Cambodia on the basis of respect for her independence, sovereignty, neutrality and territorial integrity within her present borders; to carry out a policy of good neighborly relations with the Kingdom of Laos on the basis of respect for the 1962 Geneva agreements on Laos. To establish diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with all countries, irrespective of political and social regime, including the United States, in accordance with the five principles of peaceful coexistence: Mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, nonaggression, noninterference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence, to accept economic and technical aid with no political conditions attached from any country.

POINT VII

The reunification of Vietnam will be achieved step by step, by peaceful means, through discussions and agreement between the two zones, without foreign interference. Pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, the two zones shall re-establish normal relations in all fields on the basis of mutual respect. The military demarcation line between the two zones at the 17th parallel, as provided for by the 1954 Geneva agreements, is only of a provisional character and does not constitute in any way a political or territorial boundary. The two zones shall reach agreement on the status of the demilitarized zone, and work out modalities for movements across the provisional military demarcation line.

POINT VIII

As provided for in the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam, the two zones, North and South Vietnam, shall undertake to refrain from joining any military alliance with foreign countries, not allow any foreign country to maintain military bases, troops and military personnel on their respective soil, and not recognize the protection of any country or military alliance or bloc.

POINT IX

To resolve the aftermath of the war: (A) The parties will negotiate the release of soldiers captured in war. (B) The United States government must bear full responsibility for the losses and devastations it has caused to the Vietnamese people in both zones.

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POINT X

The parties shall reach agreement on an international supervision about the withdrawal from South Vietnam of the troops, military personnel, arms and war materiel of the United States and the other foreign countries of the American camp. The principles and content of the over-all solution expounded above form an integrated whole. On the basis of these principles and content, the parties shall reach understanding to the effect of concluding agreements on the above-mentioned questions with a view to ending the war in South Vietnam, and contributing to restore peace in Vietnam.

Hanoi and VC Liberation radio gave the 10-Points extensive coverage, calling it extremely important and asserting that it offered a fair and reasonable basis for an honorable solution to the war. In general, the Communist media did not claim that the proposal covered any new ground but emphasized its comprehensive approach and the concrete guidelines it set forth. According to the various broadcasts, a solution depended on US willingness to withdraw its forces and to abandon its "aggression". One of the major points stressed that withdrawal did not have to be mutual, because the Vietnamese were entitled to fight aggression anywhere in their country. 233

(C) A directive captured on 19 May, published by the T20 Current Affairs Party Committee, provided instruction for the dissemination of the 10-Point peace program. The directive explained that by 30 May, all subordinates should have studied the 10-Points and that by 5 Jun, all local civilians should have been acquainted with it. Emphasis was to have been placed on the second point of the formula and on the efforts to be displayed by all VC personnel during the 1969 Summer Campaign. A similar directive published by "Nam Truong" provided clarification and guidelines relating to the 10-Points:

This formula represents a new move in our diplomatic offensive, and its essence is basically similar to the NFLSVN's political platform and the five-point statement. It truly reflects our steadfast standpoint on principle matters, especially those which guarantee independence, sovereignty, reunification, complete withdrawal of U.S. and satellite troops, dismantlement of bases, and the settlement of internal affairs by the South Vietnamese themselves without foreign intervention. 234

(C) On the eve of the Midway Conference, held between President Nixon and RVN President Thieu on 8 Jun, Communist statements at the 20th plenary session of the Paris talks were confined largely to attacks on the US position on mutual troop withdrawal and to repetition of elements of the NFLSVN program for settlement. The NFLSVN spokesman declared that US statements on mutual troop withdrawals "conceal perfidious maneuvers" and were "... nothing but empty words."

(S) Following the conclusion of the conference and the publication of agreements, the Vietnamese Communists reacted with predictable harshness. The announcement of limited US troop withdrawals was described by a NVN spokesman in Paris as "a resumption of play acting" and "a crude farce." A representative of the NFLSVN explained that the conference was only a "propaganda maneuver intended to calm the demands of the American people and mislead world

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opinion". The NFLSVN's Liberation press agency underscored what the Communists saw as the major obstacle in the announced agreements of the Midway Conference; in a 9 Jun broadcast, it charged that further withdrawals of US troops would be contingent on the ability of RVNAF forces to replace US units, progress in the Paris talks, and the level of combat. This line reiterated a long standing Communist fear that a mutual withdrawal of forces, coupled with stronger RVNAF would leave the Communist military and political apparatus overly exposed. The withdrawal announcement was probably no surprise to Hanoi, for there were indications that the Communists foresaw a limited unilateral US troop reduction. Beginning in early May, NVN propaganda organs had explained that any unilateral US withdrawal would not be the result of an improved RVNAF military capability, but would reflect a US defeat. Thus, the rationale was prepared for a Communist declaration similar to the one made following the 1 Nov 68 bombing halt-- that it was a move forced on the US by NVN action. 235

The Formation, Leadership and Functioning of the PRG

(C) According to Radio Hanoi and the NFLSVN radio, on 23 May an NFLSVN delegation headed by Nguyen Huu Tho, President of the Presidium of the NFLSVN Central Committee, and the People's Alliance delegation, headed by Thinh Dinh Thao, Chairman of the ANDPF Central Committee, discussed and decided to hold a National Representatives Congress for the establishment of a South Vietnam Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG). On the basis of this decision, 88 representatives from "all political parties, people's groups, and religious and nationality organizations" held a "National Congress" between 6 and 8 Jun; according to the Communists, this meeting was also attended by "72 guests of honor". ... This congress "elected" members of the PRG and an advisory council to be placed under its control.

(C) The formation of the PRG in the RVN marked the first Communist attempt to create an organization designed to administer South Vietnam and was the culmination of a lengthy period of organizational activity; Communist domination of the new organization was clearly evident at this point. Establishment of the PRG was carried out at a time when political struggle in RVN were expected to become more intense, against a background of the facts that the Paris Conference was entering into its "second round", centering on the NFLSVN's 10-Points and the US 8-Point proposal, and reduction of US forces to be carried out unilaterally. This was also considered to be the NFLSVN's consolidation of its own organization to counter solidification of political forces by the GVN; this included the GVN's establishment of the "National Democratic Socialist Front".

(C) As for the goals of the NFLSVN, one of the primary desires was to raise the status of the Vietnamese Communists at least to the same level as that of the GVN. In other words, in order to avoid being regarded merely as one of the various forces within RVN, the NFLSVN probably was attempting to gain recognition as one of the two major forces and thus become the equivalent to the GVN. 236

(S) The structure of the PRG was similar to that of a functioning government, and it was therefore markedly different from the NFLSVN's organization. According to the VC Liberation Radio, the PRG was to consist of a total of 25 members including a chairman; three vice-chairmen also headed ministries. The most important ministerial positions were defense, foreign affairs, interior, and economic/financial.

(S) With this organization, the PRG claimed to represent virtually all of the people of RVN; it did not, however, make any effort to conceal the presence and dominance of long time Communists in the cabinet positions. Biographic information identified 12 as NFLSVN Central

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PHAM HUNG



Huynh Tan Phat - secretary-general, NLF
Central Committee, 1964 to date



Tran Ban Kiem - secretary-general, NLF
Central Committee, 1963-1964



Tran Nam Trung - secretary-general,
PRP



SOUTH VIETNAM PRIOR TO 1965
NGUYEN HUU THO, PRESIDENT OF SOUTH
VIETNAM LIBERATION FRONT.

Viet Cong Leaders

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Committee members, including five who were members of the NFLSVN Central Committee's Presidium or Secretariat: Huynh Tan Phat, Phung Van Cung, Tran Nam Trung, Tran Buu Kiem, and Ung Ngoc Ky. Additionally, four PRG cabinet members were active NFLSVN members although they did not sit on the NFLSVN Central Committee. Thus, 16 of the 25 cabinet positions in the PRG went to members of the NFLSVN. Five cabinet officers were ANDPF members. Two cabinet members had not been identified: Vice Minister of Economy-Finance, Nguyen Van Trieu, and Vice Minister of Information and Culture, Lu Khoi. 237

(S) Three of the members had no known position in the Front or the ANDPF but were nevertheless prominently identified with the Communist cause:

1. Vice Minister of Defense: Dong Van Cong was Deputy Commander of the COSVN, held the rank of Major General, and was commander of VC Military Region (MR) 3.

2. Vice Minister of Defense: Nguyen Chanh was reported as a possible member of the Current Affairs Section of the Military Affairs Section of VC Sub-Region (SR) 2.

3. Vice Minister of Health, Social Welfare, and War Disabled: Ho Van Hue was Chief of COSVN Medical Staff and was a Deputy Chief of the Medical Department until he infiltrated south in 1963 or 1964; he is possibly the older brother of Ho Thu, Deputy Secretary of the NFLSVN. 238

(S) Completing the list of the upper echelons of the PRG was Tran Nam Trung who was identified as the Minister of Defense. Trung was a cover name for the VC or NVA general who controlled VC forces at a particular period of time. Either MG Tran Phi or LTG Tran Van Tra was the incumbent at the time of the announcement of the PRG's formation. Trung was also listed as a Vice Chairman of the NFLSVN's Central Committee Presidium and Chairman of its Military Affairs Committee.

(S) In addition to the cabinet posts, there were 13 members of the PRG's Advisory Council. For the most part, this body was made up of lesser known individuals except for Advisory Council Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho, head of the NFLSVN. Four of the Council members were also members of the NFLSVN's Central Committee and six were Alliance members. Huuuh Van Tri and Nguyen Cao Phuong were not members of either organization; Tri was, however, identified as a member of the DRV's National Assembly and a member of the DRV's Fatherland Front. 239

(C) The interrelationship between various offices in RVN and NVN is shown in Table III-4. 240

(C) Liberation Radio claimed that the PRG was "an organ endowed with the right to deal with foreign affairs; establish diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations; and to solve the Vietnam problem in accordance with the Front's 10 points." Thus, the PRG was ostensibly empowered to perform normal government functions. Among the first acts of the new government was the adoption of 14 articles ranging from the selection of a national flag (that of the NFLSVN) to a statement on foreign policy. In answer to a question, Tran Buu Kiem had this to say about the PRG.

The NLF is the organizer and the leader of the South Vietnamese population in its resistance against

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30 KEY LEADERS IN THE SOUTH

NAME (*North Vietnamese)	CEC, PRP	CAC	MAC, SVNLA	NFLSVN	PRG	NVN Office	Lao Dong 1	PRINCIPAL JOB(S)
*Pham Hung	X	X	X			X	P, CC	Secy, PO, CO-COSVN&SVNLA, Former NVA Dep Premier
Muoi Ut	X	X					P	1st Dep Secy-COSVN
Hai Van	X	X		X			CC	2d Dep Secy - COSVN
*LTG Hoang Van Thai	X	X	X			X	CC	CO-COSVN&MR5. Former 1st Dep NVN Min Def
*LTG Tran Luong	X	X		X	X		CC	Chief, Civ Proselyt Sec-COSVN, Chmn MAC & V Chmn Pres-NFLSVN Min Def-PRG
*LTG Tran Van Tra	X	X	X			X	Alt CC	1st Dep CO-SVNLA. 4th Dep C/S of NVA Mbr, Cent M. I. Cmtr of NVN
*MG Tran Do	X	X	X			X	Alt CC	Dep PO-COSVN, Mbr, Cent Mil Cmte of NVN
Ba Huong	X	X					CC?	Unknown
Nguyen Van Kiet	X	X						Poss CO-SR6 LA
Hai Xe Ngua	X	X						Chief, Fin & Econ Sec-COSVN
*Tran Bach Dang	X	X		X			CC?	Secy-SR6
*MG Le Trong Tan	X		X			X	Alt CC	3d Dep CO-SVNLA. Mbr, Cent Mil Cmte of NVN
*MG Hoan Duc Anh	X		X				CC	4th Dep CO SVNLA
Mrs Nguyen Thi Dinh	X		X	X			CC?	5th Dep CO-SVNLA in chg of Guer
Tam Than	X							Ch, Base Area - COSVN
Gao Dong Chiem	X							Dep Ch, Security Sec - COSVN
Le Lu Nhiem	X							Dep Ch, Org Sec- COSVN
MG Tran Le	X							Poss Secy - MR6
BG Nguyen Minh Chau	X							Poss Secy - MR6
Le Man	X							Secy - MR2
Muoi Bung	X							Secy - MR3
*LTG Le Trung Chuong	X						Mbr	Secy - MRTTH
*LTG Nguyen Hau Xuyen			X				CC?	2d Dep CO - SVNLA
Nguyen Huu Tho				X	X			Chmn, Presidium-NFLSVN Chmn, Advisory Council to PRG
*Huynh Tan Phat				X	X		CC?	V Chmn, Presidium NFLSVN, Chmn PRG
Nguyen Thi Binh				X	X		CC?	Min For Aff-PRG
Dong Van Cong					X			Dep CO-COSVN&CO-MR3, VMinDefPRG
*Tran Huu Kiem				X	X		CC?	Min of Chmn's Off-PRG
Nguyen Chanh					X			Mbr CAC or MAC-SR2
Tran Van Du	X							Ch, Mil Proselyt Sec-COSVN

1/P - Politburo

CC - Central Committee

CEC - Central Executive Committee

CAC - Current Affairs Committee

MAC - Military Affairs Committee

CC? - Possible Covert Mbr, Central Comm

XI-11Alt CC - Alternate Mbr, Central Comm

TABLE III-4

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American aggression and for national salvation. During the Congress of Representatives of the people of South Vietnam, the NLF agreed to transfer to the PRG all functions of the State in both domestic and foreign policies. These functions have been carried out by the Front itself by the past nine years. From now on, the NLF pledges to continue to rally the SVN population around the PRG to bring to final victory the struggle undertaken to set up an independent, democratic, peaceful and neutral South Vietnam...

...The NLF will continue with the job of mobilizing and rallying the South Vietnamese population in support of the PRG according to the decision of the NLF taken in the framework of the Congress of Representatives of the South Vietnamese population. 241

(S) The formation of the PRG capped a lengthy period of organizational work by the Communists to set up a government to rival the GVN. At the twentieth meeting of the expanded Paris peace talks on 5 Jun, VC spokesman Tran Hoai Nam disclosed that "contacts are in the process of beginning" between the NFLSVN and other groups, specifically for the purpose of forming a provisional coalition government in RVN without the consent or participation of the GVN. This, coupled with the Liberation Radio accounts of the PRG's formation, left no room for doubt that no real representative election could have been undertaken. This was simply a step in a series of related developments extending back to the creation of "autonomous" administrative committees at village level in 1964. January 1968 had seen a revival of emphasis in this approach which resulted in the creation of revolutionary committees and councils in hundreds of villages in RVN; by the end of 1968, the Communists were claiming that provisional governments had established at the province and district level. The next logical step was the claim that a provisional government had been established at the national level as well.

(S) All responsibilities for foreign affairs were transferred from the NFLSVN to the PRG. The PRG immediately sought to gain international recognition. PRG representatives travelled widely seeking and achieving some success. The PRG received full diplomatic recognition from 13 Communist countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Communist China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Outer Mongolia, North Korea, Poland, Rumania, the USSR, and Yugoslavia) and from 10 non-Communist countries (Algeria, Cambodia, Congo (Brazzaville), Iraq, Mali, Mauritania, Southern Yemen, Sudan, Syria, and the United Arab Republic. North Vietnam established a "special relationship" with the PRG, but withheld full diplomatic recognition so as not to legitimize the concept of a separate government in the South. The PRG also signed a trade agreement with Cambodia on 25 Sep (See section of this chapter concerning Cambodia). Because of its strategic location in relation to RVN, relations with Cambodia was the most important diplomatic task of the PRG with the exception of the Paris talks. 242

(U) At Paris, the PRG followed the same course as the NFLSVN had followed and generally enunciated the same policy as the DRV, emphasizing the 10-Points, particularly US withdrawal, and the formation of a coalition government. Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, the PRG Foreign Minister; the Chief PRG delegate at the Paris talks, and other delegates and spokesmen, used the platform at Paris to castigate US actions and alleged actions in RVN. The one sign of possible PRG flexibility at Paris came in the fall when Madame Binh briefly indicated that the PRG might

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be interested in talking to Big Minh about a coalition government. This was consistent, however, with PRG views favoring the formation of a coalition government.

(S) With the formulation of the PRG, the Communists advanced a formal claim to a share of the national power in RVN. What benefit the PRG would have for the Communists could be seen in the prospective functions that the new organization would fulfill at all levels. None of the various Communist front organizations in RVN functioned as a governing body; however, the series of revolutionary committees and councils which had sprung up in 1968 were well suited for a variety of administrative roles that the PRG claimed to have, including conducting elections. With the establishment of the PRG, the VC had established a party (PRP), a potential government (PRG) and a Front (NFLSVN).²⁴³ In addition, the VC hoped to create regional local support for the PRG through the RC's and expended great efforts in that direction in 1969. The goal of the PRG domestic and foreign policies was its own dissolution and its replacement by a Communist-dominated coalition government in the RVN.²⁴⁴

(S) The Communists conceivably did not really expect that they would achieve a rapid political settlement of the war on their own terms and they therefore had to prepare for a longer struggle. This interpretation would suggest that the Communists intended to maintain their uncompromising position toward the GVN and their opposition to any political settlement that did not begin with a "coalition government" to replace the GVN. With the formulation of the PRG, the VC could claim to have a framework for alternatives which could be viewed as concessions on their part. Thus they would have made "concessions" of allowing certain non-Communist figures to become members of the PRG, thus transforming it into a peace cabinet or a provisional "coalition" government. The PRG created the appearance of greater political strength from which to negotiate at some future date.²⁴⁵ In addition, even if there was a cease fire, and there were numerous indications that the VC at least considered the possibility, the PRG and the RC's were planned to be an important part of VC maneuvers during the period succeeding a cease fire announcement.

VCI Strength

(C) In 1969, VCI strength decreased to an estimated 76,398 due to losses suffered in battle, incurred through decisions of VCI to rally, and resulting from the Phung Hoang Program. The primary targets of the Phung Hoang Program were those VCI serving at district level and above and those serving in RCs, Current Affairs Committees, Finance-Economy Sections, and Security Sections at all echelons.²⁴⁶ (The Phung Hoang Program is discussed in Chapter VIII) CORDS emphasized the role of the Phung Hoang program in neutralizing members of the VCI,²⁴⁷ while J2 stressed the significance of battlefield attrition.²⁴⁸ Of the total neutralizations of 19,534 in 1969, 4,229 served in positions at district and higher level. The neutralizations in the priority elements totaled 9,394. The total number of primary target neutralizations was 11,675. This consisted of the 9,394 serving in priority elements and the 2,281 other VCI who were from district level or higher. (See Table III-5).²⁴⁹

(C) VCI strength decreased about 4,700 during the past year and there were clear indications that due to this attrition, VCI personnel had less experience and training than a year ago.²⁵⁰ However, in spite of recruiting difficulties, strength trends of the latter part of 1969 indicated that the VCI maintained a strong regenerative capability.²⁵¹ See Table III-6 for VCI strengths for each CTZ and province as of 15 Jan 70.²⁵² (For a map of VC Provinces, See page 63 of the 1968 MACV Command History.)

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1969 VCI NEUTRALIZATIONS BY ECHELON AND PRIORITY TARGETS

<u>All Personnel</u>	<u>Hamlet</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>COSVN</u>	<u>Total</u>
Killed-in-action	941	3,746	87	1,158	219	34	2	6,187
Captured	1,668	4,651	719	1,077	319	63	18	8,515
Rallied	1,232	2,487	53	796	232	29	3	4,832
<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>3,841</u>	<u>10,884</u>	<u>859</u>	<u>3,031</u>	<u>770</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>19,534</u>
<u>1969 PRIORITY TARGETS</u>								
Revolutionary Committee	569	491	19	23	6			1,108
Current Affairs Committee	203	271	24	97	13	1		609
Finance-Economy Section	581	2,455	125	409	87	12	1	3,670
Security Section	511	2,087	235	881	226	64	3	4,007
<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>1,864</u>	<u>5,304</u>	<u>403</u>	<u>1,410</u>	<u>332</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9,394</u>

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TABLE III-5

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JANUARY ESTIMATE OF
VC INFRASTRUCTURE STRENGTHS BY PROVINCE*

I CTZ	PROVINCE TOTAL	IDENTIFIED	IDENTIFIED	VARIANCE		
			(BEST ESTIMATE)	PLUS	MINUS	
			505	94	33	
	QUANG TRI	1419	914	1028	94	
	THUA THIEN	2282	1254	2437	194	
	QUANG NAM	6339	3902	2260	182	
	QUANG TIN	5750	3490	2048	66	
	QUANG NGAI	4551	2503			
	HUE	**				
	DANANG	**				
	CTZ TOTALS	20,341	12,063	8,278	569	
II CTZ						
	KONTUM	520	196	324	241	37
	BINH DINH	4595	3074	1521	200	76
	PLEIKU	601	234	367	158	33
	PHU BON	208	86	122	251	1
	PHU YEN	1794	1053	741	362	41
	DARLAC	2173	1034	1139	191	123
	KHANH HOA	645	272	371	5	142
	NINH THUAN	698	470	228	25	259
	TUYEN DUC	431	201	230	160	17
	QUANG DUC	393	256	137	129	31
	LAM DONG	218	196	22	400	7
	BINH THUAN	2155	1556	599	270	49
	CAM RANH	36	9	27	**	**
	DALAT	209	32	177	**	**
	CTZ TOTALS	14,676	8,671	6,005	2,392	816
III CTZ						
	BINH TUY	176	115	61	71	3
	LONG KHANH	441	237	204	183	17
	PHUOC LONG	473	208	265	242	15
	BINH LONG	267	193	74	169	5
	BINH DUONG	889	525	364	96	13
	TAY NINH	748	419	329	265	43
	HAU NGH'A	980	719	261	219	23
	BIEN HOA	836	548	288	202	7
	PHUOC TUY	374	111	263	224	25
	LONG AN	1364	896	468	141	33
	GIA DINH	833	463	370	125	7
	VUNG TAU	158	13	125	**	**
	SAIGON/CHOLON	130	55	75	**	**
	CTZ TOTAL	7,649	4,502	3,147	1,937	191

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TABLE III-6 (CONTINUED)

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IV CTZ	PROVINCE	IDENTIFIED	IDENTIFIED	VARIANCE	
	TOTAL		(BEST ESTIMATE)	PLUS	MINUS
GO CONG	800	397	403	7	35
KIEN TUONG	860	538	322	167	80
KIEN PHONG	1652	1113	539	90	21
DINH TUONG	4123	2663	1460	495	58
KIEN HOA	3807	1945	1862	250	107
VINH BINH	6057	3551	2506	382	239
AN GIANG	1277	309	968	673	141
VINH LONG	2922	1998	924	33	77
KIEN GIANG	1129	570	559	86	58
CHUONG THIEN	1845	1107	738	41	208
PHONG DINH	1932	1189	743	259	66
BA XUYEN	1449	954	495	120	37
AN XUYEN	2440	1094	1346	145	199
BAC LIEU	1048	565	483	103	56
CHAU DOC	710	428	282	155	52
SA DEC	581	405	176	219	5
CTZ TOTAL	32,632	18,826	13,806	3,225	1,439
RVN TOTAL	75,298	44,062	31,236	8,438	3,015
COSVN TOTAL	1,100				
TOTAL	76,398				

* This estimate includes GVN autonomous cities.

** Reporting is now under study and information not presently available.

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TABLE III-6

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The Role of the VCI

(C) The VCI occupied a central role in COSVN's strategy for the war in RVN. COSVN's primary goal was political dominance in RVN. To achieve it, COSVN advocated VCI use of both political and military tactics; tactics of persuasion and tactics of force.

VCI Attempt to Provide Services

(C) The VCI attempted to establish itself as the legitimate government of RVN. (In fact the desire to portray itself as the legitimate government of RVN was a very significant motivating factor behind much of the military strategy employed in 1969 in that the VC sought to capture a major provincial city in order to use it as a capital.) The infrastructure attempted to provide people in areas which it controlled with the services that a government would provide. For instance, a MACV profile of VC province Kien Hoa stated:

In an effort to provide services comparable to the GVN, the VC in Kien Hoa Province have established a large network of schools which appear to be very active and well coordinated. The teachers are well qualified and have attended colleges in either North or South Vietnam. All civilian teachers are members of a Party cell subordinate to the Education Subsection. This is indicative of the highly organized VCI structure in Kien Hoa Province. The VC have also established farming cooperatives and hospital facilities for the local populace in this area. These attempts to offer public services comparable to those of the GVN are not new to Kien Hoa and are likely to expand in 1970. 253

Also, the VC had a civil health system subordinate to the political infrastructure and separate from the military medical apparatus. The best estimate of the number of persons involved in the civic health effort was 5,000 to 10,000. Several hundred of these individuals were doctors and personnel who had received at least some formal medical training. However, the majority of civil health personnel were litter bearers, orderlies, cooks, and other unskilled laborers.²⁵⁴ The program emphasized local self-help and provided extensive training of civilians. The sections provided medical aid to all echelons of the VC/NVA military structure and to the civilian population.²⁵⁵

(C) "Captured medical supplies and medical personnel have confirmed that the enemy provides civil health functions, however, there have also been reports that both medical and education services were limited to Party members and families."²⁵⁶ At the same time, MACJ2 said, "Although civilians constitute a significant portion of the patients, the VC are unable to muster the resources necessary for adequate care of all civilians living under their control."²⁵⁷ Epidemics in NVN during 1969 revealed that in contested areas brought under GVN control during the year, the VCI had provided very little substantive social services.²⁵⁸ In summary, although the VC were able to provide services in areas which they controlled, it became harder or impossible to provide them in contested areas. In all likelihood, these services were of necessity discontinued in many areas during the year.

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(C) Another aspect of VC political persuasion was the effort to appeal to the different religious groups in RVN. These activities were often proselyting and propaganda activities and sometimes took the form of military pressure. The VC urged the cadre not to show any religious discrimination and to respect the beliefs of the people. Efforts to undermine organized religions were to come only after power had been achieved. The VC attempted to infiltrate agents into the religious groups, although there were indications that they had not been very successful.²⁵⁹ For instance there had been some penetration of the membership of the An Quang Buddhists, but no controlling influence had been gained over the leadership.²⁶⁰ The VC attempted to win over the leaders of religious groups or to separate the leaders and the religious groups from support of the Thieu government. Sometimes individuals or groups were offered important positions in VC fronts or in future governments. The VC exploited factionalism within the religious groups. Those such as Buddhists and Hoa Hao attempted to maintain their independence from both the GVN and the VC.²⁶¹

VC Use of Force

(C) In addition to the use of the "carrot" was the use of the "stick."²⁶² The VC used force extensively. The VC/NVA advocated killing their enemies and their enemies were often broadly defined as government supporters and members of classes other than the poor. The worst example of VC/NVA extermination of its enemies occurred at Hue in 1968 and was disclosed in 1969. Several VC/NVA after action reports on Hue lauded the 1968 killing of "three thousand reactionaries" as an accomplishment of the offensive.²⁶³ The theory behind such actions could be found among the writings of Truong Chinh (See NVN Leadership Section of this Chapter), although it was not known which level of authority ordered the killings at Hue. In 1969, there were reports that "black lists" or censuses of supporters of the government and of other categories of people were being drawn up in preparation for future coalition elections and for the elimination of opponents.²⁶⁴ However, there were other reports in which cadre argued that the undisciplined extensive use of force alienated people. Other policy guidance advocated "thought reform" rather than death for opponents. A major NVN figure abroad asserted that no bloodbath would follow a US withdrawal.²⁶⁵ From the evidence which appeared in 1969, it could be conjectured that VC/NVA leaders would be divided on the issue of the extent of executions to be carried out if the VC/NVA gained control of RVN with some leaders advocating extensive executions while others might settle for extensive "thought reform."

(C) The VCI were extremely important components of the VC/NVA military effort in RVN. The VCI was responsible for providing funds, obtained primarily through extortion and taxation from the populace, food, and other supplies to the military units, collecting intelligence related to Allied plans and personalities, targeting GVN officials for assassination, undermining the GVN and the RVNAF military units, and gaining popular support for the Communist insurgency in the South. Enemy military units in the South were dependent for their survival upon the support of the VCI and of Local Force units.²⁶⁶ In addition to above functions, the VCI served as guides to military units. One NVA PW said that "Without the Local Force (LF) units in SVN the NVA is useless."²⁶⁷

(C) COSVN planned for a possible cease fire as well as for prolonged war in 1969. NVA General Le Trung Tin, Commanding General of the MR TTH had been told in Hanoi in May that he should plan ahead in case a cease fire was signed by the end of the year. VC plans for that eventuality included plans for heightened political activity plus the continued use of military tactics. One plan included the formation of a police force which was to serve the function of protecting VC cadre and also was to fulfill some of the traditional functions (secret police functions) of the VC/NVA security sections.²⁶⁸

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(C) One significant VCI tactic which would be relevant if the war continued or if there was a cease fire was the attempt to get the cadre to obtain legal status. This would provide the cadre with legal cover and would preserve the infrastructure in the major urban centers. 269

Morale

Introduction

(C) Perhaps the most important concerns of the VCI in 1969 came in the area of morale. The overall developments in the war in 1969 adversely affected the morale of the VC cadre and VC/NVA soldiers and COSVN Resolution 9 launched an all out effort to bolster cadre and overall morale. Allied military pressure on the VC/NVA, high numbers of casualties, food, and other shortages caused by Allied pressure, the loss of population support caused by a number of factors including a reaction against harsher VC/NVA tactics, increased extortion, and higher taxation rates adopted because of shortages of supplies and food, Ho Chi Minh's death, the increasing "credibility gap" between what infiltrating troops were told about conditions in RVN by political officers who said that they would receive warm greetings from the people in RVN and who minimized the danger and the extraordinary hardships which existed for the VC/NVA soldiers in RVN, the fear of death, the longing for home, and the desire for peace all contributed to a weakening of morale. 270 From the VCI's standpoint, one of the worst manifestations of the declined morale was the soaring Chieu Hoi rate. Hoi Chanh often endangered the security of VC/NVA units and they often led Allied units to caches of sorely needed supplies.

Desertion

(C) Enemy documents distinguished between simple desertion and defection. According to enemy terminology, a deserter left his unit, but a defector changed allegiance. It was noted that many deserters did not rally to the GVN, but returned to their home areas or sometimes joined another unit.

(C) The majority of NVA desertions occurred prior to arrival in RVN. Approximately 7 percent of all infiltrating troops deserted before arriving in RVN and the total attrition rate was 15 percent including death, disease, and returning cadres as well as desertions. The NVA desertion rate in RVN was almost certainly lower although information was sketchy. Desertion generally occurred only among the lower EM (PVT, PFC). Desertion occurred usually in the training area and while the unit was en route to RVN through NVN. The rate appeared to drop to about 2-3 percent in an infantry unit that infiltrated as a unit. A returnee commented that VC were more likely to desert or rally than NVA in RVN because home was so far away for the NVA soldier, and if he deserted or rallied the chances of ever being able to return home were slim. 271

(C) In the past, deserters who returned or who were picked up usually had not been punished for the first offense and had been returned to their units. Punishment might follow a second or third offense. However, there were indications that more stringent policies were being followed in 1969. One rallier stated that 10 men who had attempted to desert had been shot. A guerrilla who rallied said he had seen the bodies of two men who had been shot when they had been captured after deserting and had refused to return to their unit. 272

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Efforts to Improve Morale

(C) Since the decline in VC/NVA morale was caused primarily by the results of Allied Military operations and the US/GVN pacification program, in one sense, the central facets of VC/NVA military strategy, with its increasing focus on the pacification and Vietnamization programs, were designed to improve VC/NVA morale. The GVN Chieu Hoi program had been a cause of VC/NVA morale problems. To combat it, the Communists made attempts to infiltrate the Chieu Hoi Program. One basic response of the Party to morale problems was to intensify indoctrination campaigns. The prescription for the party itself and for the cadre was a tightening up of control and reindoctrination. There were reports of cadre purges in I CTZ. Cadre requiring "purification" included those who questioned PRP policy, those who had a history of GVN association or had relatives working for the GVN, and those who had a high level of education or were from the middle or upper classes. In Quang Ngai Province, 13 VC political officers were purged and converted to regular military status. In Quang Nam Province, three cadre were reported to have been executed and 20 more arrested and taken to the mountains on 12 Aug. It was hypothesized that as the VCI approached a possible phase of intense political activity, "doubtters" were being removed from the organization. 273 However, rather than cadre purges, intensive propaganda sessions were the norm. Efforts were also made to stop cadre and soldiers from listening to Saigon radio programs and to the BBC. The reading of Chieu Hoi leaflets was strictly forbidden. 274

Assessment

(C) MACJ2 assessed the significance of lessened popular support for the VC:

Despite these indications that the population is giving less support to the VC movement, it must not be assumed that the Viet Cong are defeated or are about to be defeated. The VC still have substantial numbers of people who actively and voluntarily support them. It also cannot be assumed that the people have shifted their support in favor of the GVN. The GVN has made promises of reform programs in the past, but it has done little to implement these programs. As a result, many people have little more confidence in the GVN than they do in the Viet Cong. These people appear to have adopted a "wait and see" attitude and seem to have withheld support from either side, remaining uncommitted until one side or the other demonstrates the capability of providing for their welfare. 275

(S) The enemy was fully aware of his morale problem and adopted corrective measures that were, at least in part, successful. His success in solving this problem was best exemplified by the fact that he continued to field forces composed of highly motivated, well indoctrinated, courageous (although sometimes ill-trained) soldiers. 276 There were indications in 1969, however, that morale problems and the cycle of factors which produced them were more serious than ever before and that combat effectiveness was lessened in some instances.

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Recruitment

Introduction

(S) The VC/NVA faced severe manpower problems in 1969. In part at least, they were responsible for one of the most significant developments of the year, the movement of larger numbers of NVA fillers into the Delta and the movement of the first wholly NVA units into the Delta. A rallier provided insight into these recruiting problems when he said that VC recruitment had failed because eligible personnel had been moved into GVN-secure areas and that the enemy had unable to force youths to join the VC. Of those who did join, many subsequently deserted because of the hardships. Thus the VC came to rely on NVA replacements in a region in which they earlier had been able to fill VC units and send recruits to III CTZ. 277

Recruitment Figures

(S) In-country recruitment and conscription were estimated to have averaged 7,000 personnel per month for 1966 and 3,500 personnel per month for 1967. During 1968, in-country recruitment averaged more than 5,700 per month for a total of 68,900 for the year. Estimated recruitment during the first 9 months of 1969 steadily decreased from the high of 7,400 reported in February to less than 4,000 in September. The recruitment and conscription figure in RVN during the fourth quarter was estimated at 9,800. 278 As of August, MACV estimated that recruiting within RVN was approximately 5,500 per month (50 percent IV CTZ, 25 percent I CTZ, 15 percent II CTZ, 10 percent III CTZ). 279 A year-end estimate was that approximately 57,300 individuals had been recruited by the VC in RVN in 1969. 280 One assessment concluded that of the troops recruited by the VC in 1968, between 20,000 and 25,000 had been youths between the ages of 13 and 17. 281

Organization of Recruitment

(C) The Civilian Propaganda and Training Section and the Civilian Proselyting Section played major roles in recruiting youths for VC military units. These sections recruited either on an individual basis, making protracted efforts to convince the youth and his family of the advantages of his becoming a soldier or guerrilla, or by holding mass meetings, as an attempt to propagandize and recruit all eligible personnel in an entire village. Recruitment of soldiers was so important that it was closely supervised by the Party Executive Committee at each political echelon. The Party Executive Committee directed the recruiting effort and, as events dictated, shifted the burden of responsibility from agency to agency within the Party Government. Civilian proselyting sections recruited by levying quotas on the Front associations they controlled. Increasingly, the District Party Executive Committees had to draft people in order to meet quotas levied by the Provincial Executive Committee. As drafting led to the frequent use of force, security cadre and sometimes guerrilla or Local Force units were employed as "press gangs."

(C) Special mobilization committees were formed to meet immediate recruiting requirements. These committees were jointly staffed by propaganda, forward supply, civilian proselyting, and commo-liaison cadre, so that mobilization and processing of recruits could be accomplished as fast as possible. Such committees were headed by a member of the Party Executive Committee. Appeals were made through the VCI or through the recruits' families. In particular, hamlet and village youth associations encouraged and motivated youths to join the military

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units. Mothers attending Party Women's Association meetings were urged to ask their sons to help liberate their country from the "American invaders" and the "cruel tyrants" or "GVN puppets". Often the VC warned that those who did not join would be drafted by the GVN and would be forced to fight against their own countrymen and thus betray the NFLSVN. Personal reasons, such as protection of the family from VC pressure, hatred of the GVN, avoidance of the GVN draft, revengs, and promises of financial betterment appeared to be the primary motivation of "volunteers."²⁸² In 1969, there was probably greater use of force in recruitment because there were fewer men in the manpower pool.

Recruitment of Youth and Women in 1969

(C) There was evidence in 1969 that the VC began to recruit and train females for VC military and VCI functions where they were previously infrequently found, particularly as members of main force VC units and as sapper cadre. By the end of the year, a great deal of emphasis had also been placed on recruiting youths, most notably in IV CTZ. Although the use of youths was not a new phenomenon, there was increasing evidence by the end of the year that children between the ages of 10 and 14 were being trained to function as VCI cadre. These youths were reported to receive intensive military and political training. The age limit for the particular training had apparently been set at 14 because the GVN required all people over 16 to carry an ID Card. It was conjectured that as the use of new ID cards, which were extremely hard to forge, became more widespread, the importance of recruiting and training youth would probably increase.²⁸³ In addition, there were a number of reports of young children and teenagers, often the sons and daughters of VC cadre, being sent from the RVN to NVN to be educated in preparation for their return to RVN as members of the VCI.²⁸⁴

VC/NVA Strength and Dispositions

Introduction

(C) Like other insurgent organizations, the VC/NVA military organization was closely related to the political structure. Prior to 1965, VC units generally had been no larger than battalions, and only those units designated as "Main Force" (MF) had operated in areas as large as provinces. With the introduction of NVA divisions into the conflict, the VC formations likewise had increased to division size; the VC also had reorganized their local and main force battalions into regimental structures.

(C) While the enemy units were organized along lines similar to US unit structure -- companies, battalions, etc. -- it must be recognized that the strengths of these organizations were not comparable to US units. Combat losses, disease, and infiltration difficulties played heavily upon the enemy's capability to maintain standard troop unit strengths.²⁸⁵

Strength

(S) Overall enemy strength declined in 1969. Enemy strength declined from 267,000 on 1 Jan to approximately 226,000 by year's end. The VC/NVA sustained approximately 172,000 KIA by year's end. A total of 47,023 Hoi Chanh rallied in 1969, including 28,405 military personnel. Enemy infiltration during the year was approximately 103,000.²⁸⁶ Recruitment added to infiltration was not sufficient to balance VC/NVA losses in 1969. It was estimated as of July that the NVA troops were 69 percent of the VC/NVA strength. This contrasted with 31 percent

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as of January 1966.²⁸⁷ An estimate was made that approximately 90 percent of the troops in I CTZ were NVA.²⁸⁸

Strength and Disposition Tables and Figures

(C) Tables III-7 and III-8 are recapitulations of VC/NVA strength as of 31 Dec 69.²⁸⁹ These figures represent troops within the territorial borders of RVN and those in the contiguous areas of Laos, Cambodia, the DMZ, and immediately north of the DMZ. See Figures III-7 through III-12 for the VC/NVA in-country order of battle and disposition by CTZ's.²⁹⁰

NVA Units Move to the Delta

(S) The most significant shift in enemy dispositions in 1969 began in May when NVA troops began infiltrating into the Delta for the first time on a broad scale. Prior to that time, the Delta had been largely a VC area of operations. However, the pacification program, VC losses and recruitment difficulties apparently precipitated the movement of entire NVA units into the Delta.²⁹¹ II FFORCEV indicated how these movements were confirmed:

Although the 9th VC Division was operating in a split configuration during July and August, it seemed likely, that since the 271st and 272d Regiments had assumed an increased tactical posture in War Zone C, the 88th Regiment would also participate in this increased level of activity regardless of location. However, the 88th Regiment did not join the 271st and 272d Regiments in Binh Long (P). Instead, the 88th followed a pattern similar to that of the 273d Regiment before the regiment relocated to IV CTZ. First, the 88th Regiment dropped out of sight; it was not identified for a three month period. Second, the 88th Regiment, like the 273d Regiment, was last identified in the vicinity of the Straight Edge Woods, a traditional, safe staging area for enemy units. In summary, the proximity of the 95C Regiment to the other 9th VC Division subordinates and the three month inactivity of the 88th Regiment suggested that the 88th Regiment had been redeployed to IV CTZ and the 95C Regiment had become the new subordinate regiment. Later, on 3 December, the 88th Regiment was identified in a contact against Long Khot (H), vicinity of WT920073. This was the first solid indication that the 88th Regiment had relocated in IV CTZ.²⁹²

(C) The movement of NVA troops in large numbers into the Delta provoked conflicts between NVA and VC troops. Reports of VC/NVA rivalry were also received from other areas of RVN. The conflicts in the Delta stemmed basically from the NVA moving into a VC preserve. Apparently VC reacted unfavorably to being placed under NVA officers and vice versa. Conflicts also reflected cultural differences between the North and South Vietnamese.²⁹³ In addition, the NVN troops were unfamiliar with the Delta environs whereas the VC know the region thoroughly.

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VC/NVA Personnel Strength as of 31 December 1969

<u>Area</u>	<u>Maneuver</u>	<u>Combat Support</u>	<u>Combat Strength</u>	<u>Admin Service</u>	<u>Guerrilla</u>	<u>Total</u>
I CTZ	41,120 *(32,645)	9,290 (8,565)	50,410 (41,210)	13,995 (7,545)	12,500	76,905 (48,755)
II CTZ	23,020 (10,385)	1,810 (1,750)	24,830 (12,135)	5,245 (1,740)	10,500	40,575 (13,875)
III CTZ	33,295 (15,065)	8,790 (5,175)	42,085 (20,240)	26,995	4,400	73,480 (20,240)
IV CTZ	18,330 (1,570)	1,250	19,580 (1,570)	7,550	19,600	46,730 (1,570)
RVN	115,765 (56,665)	21,140 (15,490)	136,905 (75,155)	53,785 (9,285)	47,000	237,690 **(84,440)

*NVA Strength shown in parentheses.

**In addition to those NVA in NVA units there are approximately 17-19,000 NVA in VC units in SVN.

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TABLE III-7

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COMBAT UNIT STRENGTH

Area	Maneuver**					Combat Support***					
	Front	Div	Regt	Bn	Sep Co	Sep Plt	Div	Regt	Bn	Sep Co	Sep Plt
RVN	4(4)*	6(4)	54(39)	280(145)	302	78	1	6(6)	71(54)	13	4
I CTZ	3(3)	2(2)	22(21)	95(71)	45	3	-	2(2)	29(27)	3	1
II CTZ	1(1)	-	6(6)	48(27)	98	39	-	1(1)	5(5)	1	1
III CTZ	-	4(2)	19(11)	94(43)	60	27	1	3(3)	33(22)	1	2
IV CTZ	-	-	7(1)	43(4)	99	9	-	-	4-	8	-

* NVA units shown in parentheses

** Maneuver units - Armor, Recon, Sniper, Sapper/Swimmer, and Scty

*** Combat Support units - Fire Support, Air Defense, and Tech Svc units at Bn level and not classified as Admin Svc

TABLE III-8

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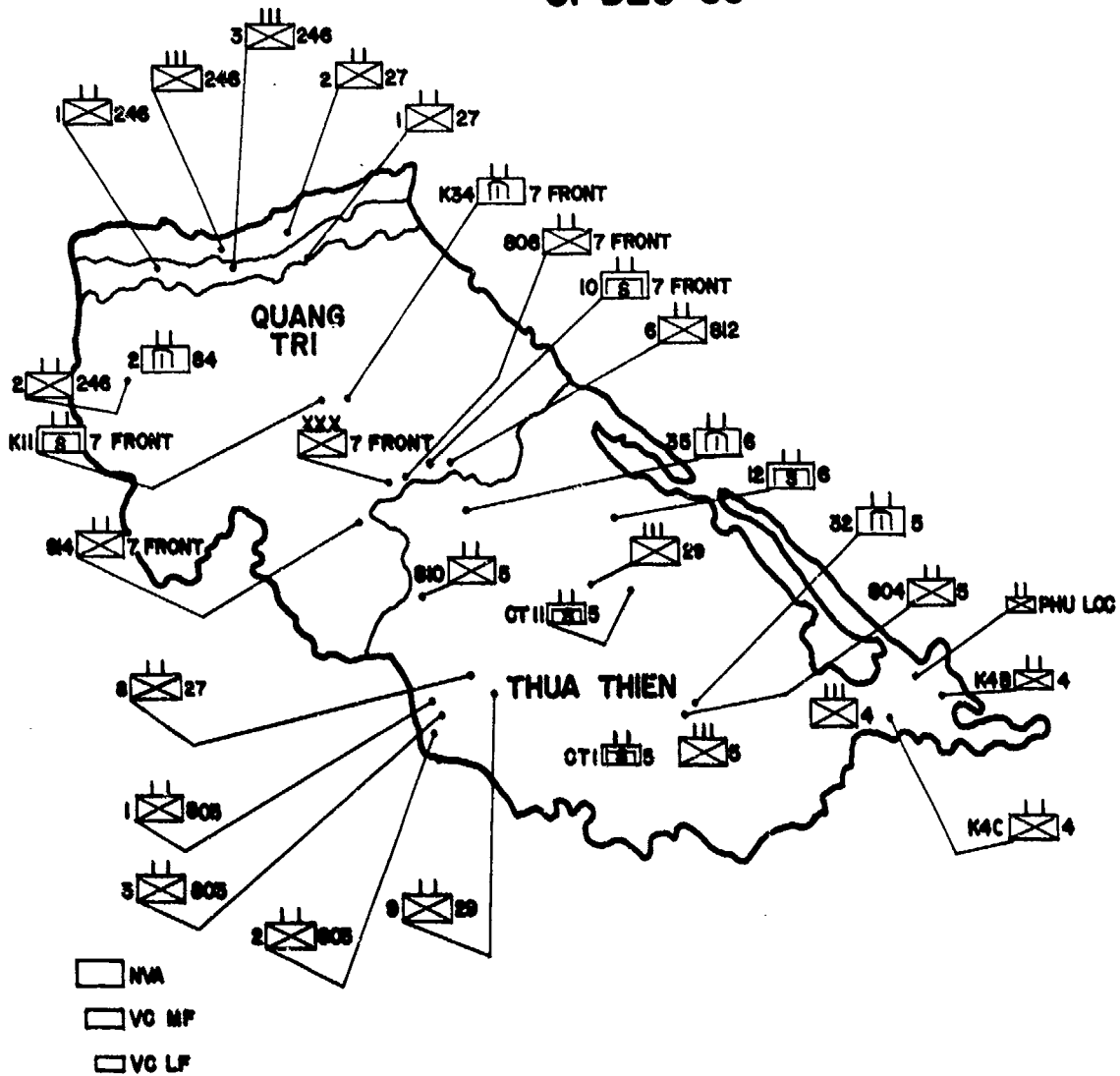
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UNLOCATED UNITS

- XXX DMZ FRONT
- 803(-)
- 84(-)
- 270
- 164
- 27(-)
- 31
- 9
- 33
- 812
- 36
- 325
- 248 304
- 6(-)
- 126 20
- 304

**MACV I CTZ
ORDER OF BATTLE
NORTHERN HALF
31 DEC 69**



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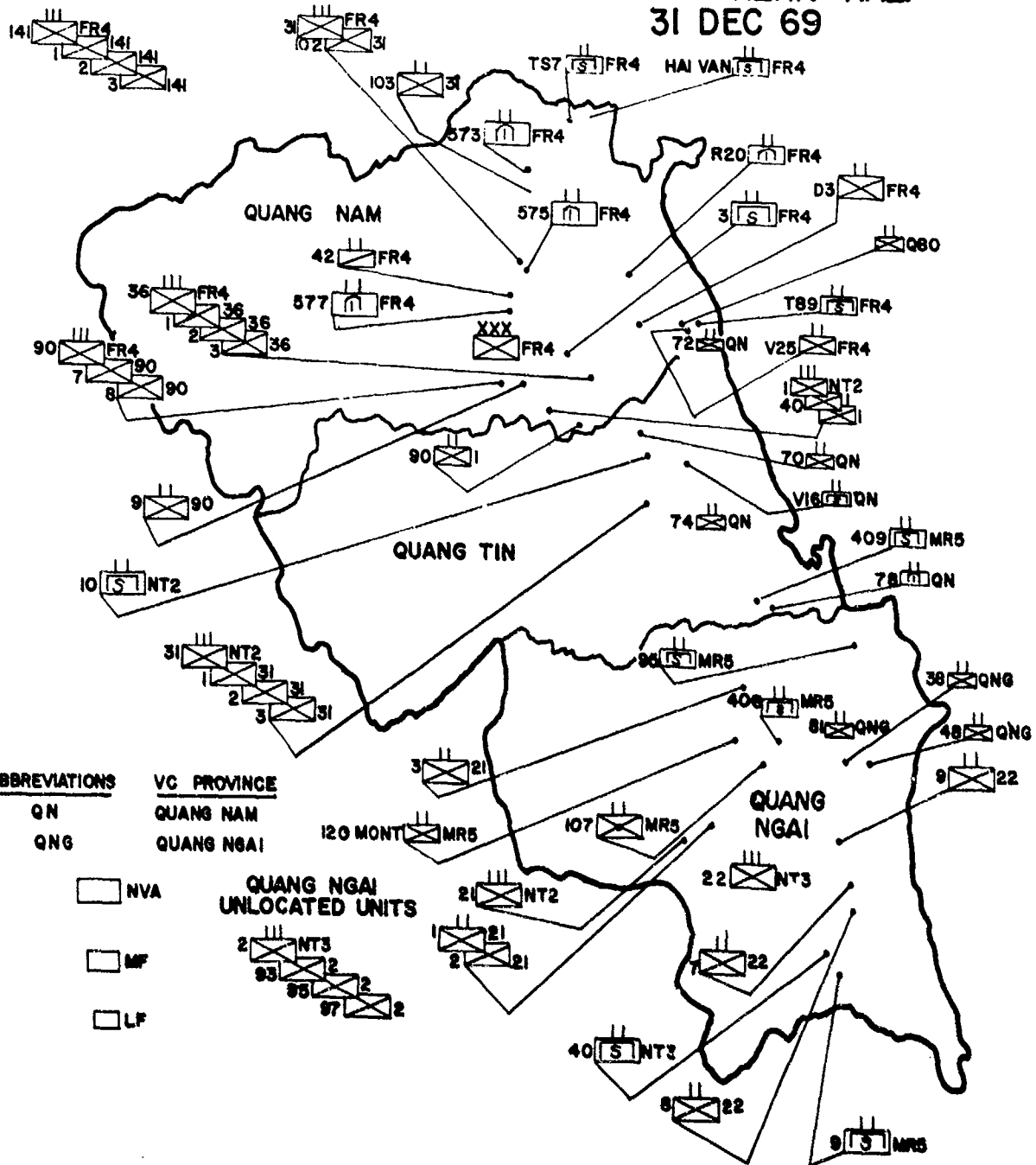
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FIGURE III-7

MACV I CTZ
ORDER OF BATTLE
SOUTHERN HALF
31 DEC 69

UNLOCATED UNITS



ABBREVIATIONS
QN
QNG

NVA
MF
LF

VC PROVINCE
QUANG NAM
QUANG NGAI

QUANG NGAI
UNLOCATED UNITS

2
93
85
97








FIGURE III-8
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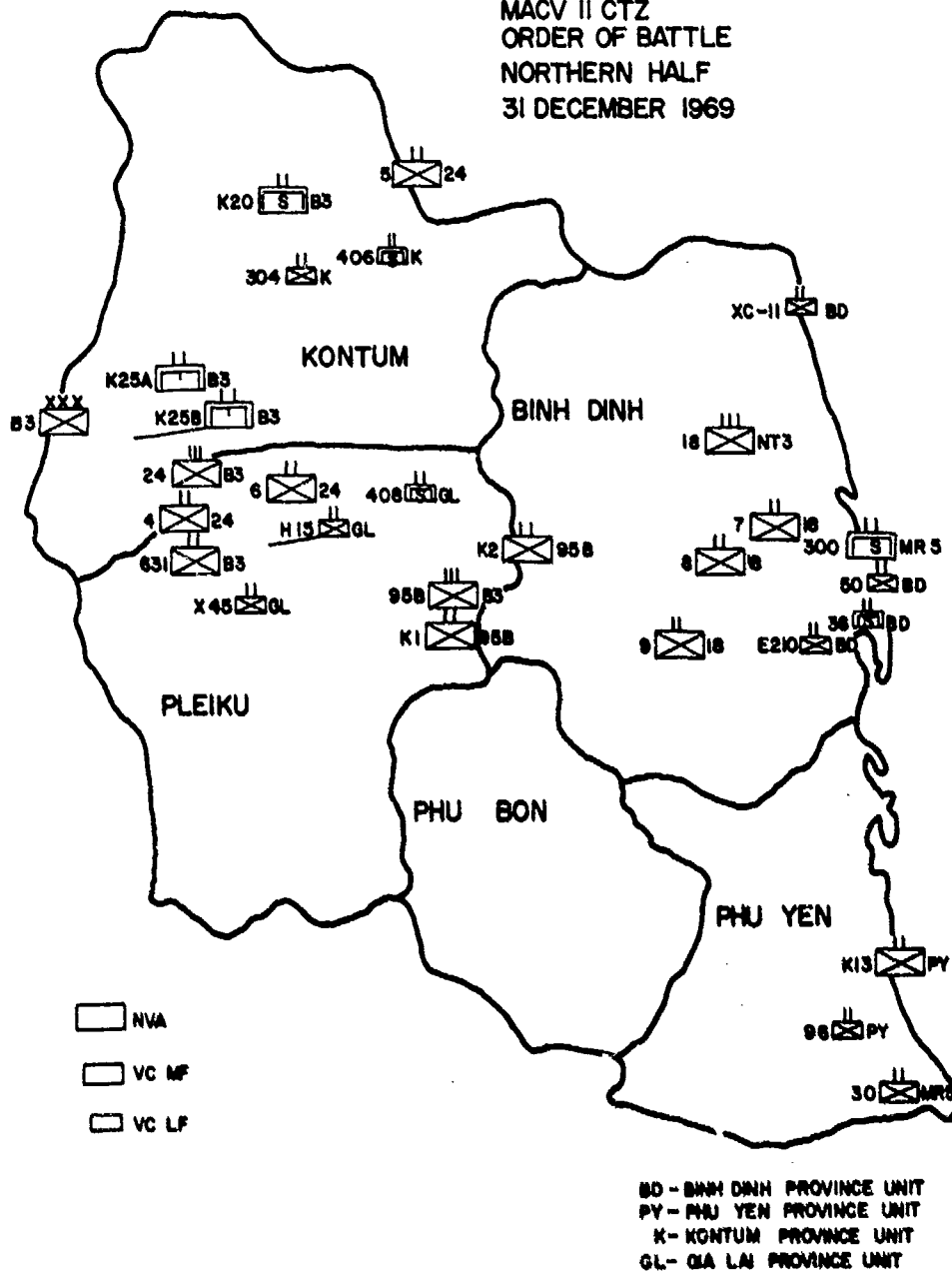
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UNLOCATED UNITS

40  83	2  NT3
K30  40	93  2
D 246  240	95  2
	97  2

MACV II CTZ
ORDER OF BATTLE
NORTHERN HALF
31 DECEMBER 1969



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FIGURE III-9

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UNLOCATED UNITS

- K32 ● 40
- K33 ● 40
- 130 ● MR 6

MACV II CTZ
ORDER OF BATTLE
SOUTHERN HALF
31 DECEMBER 1969

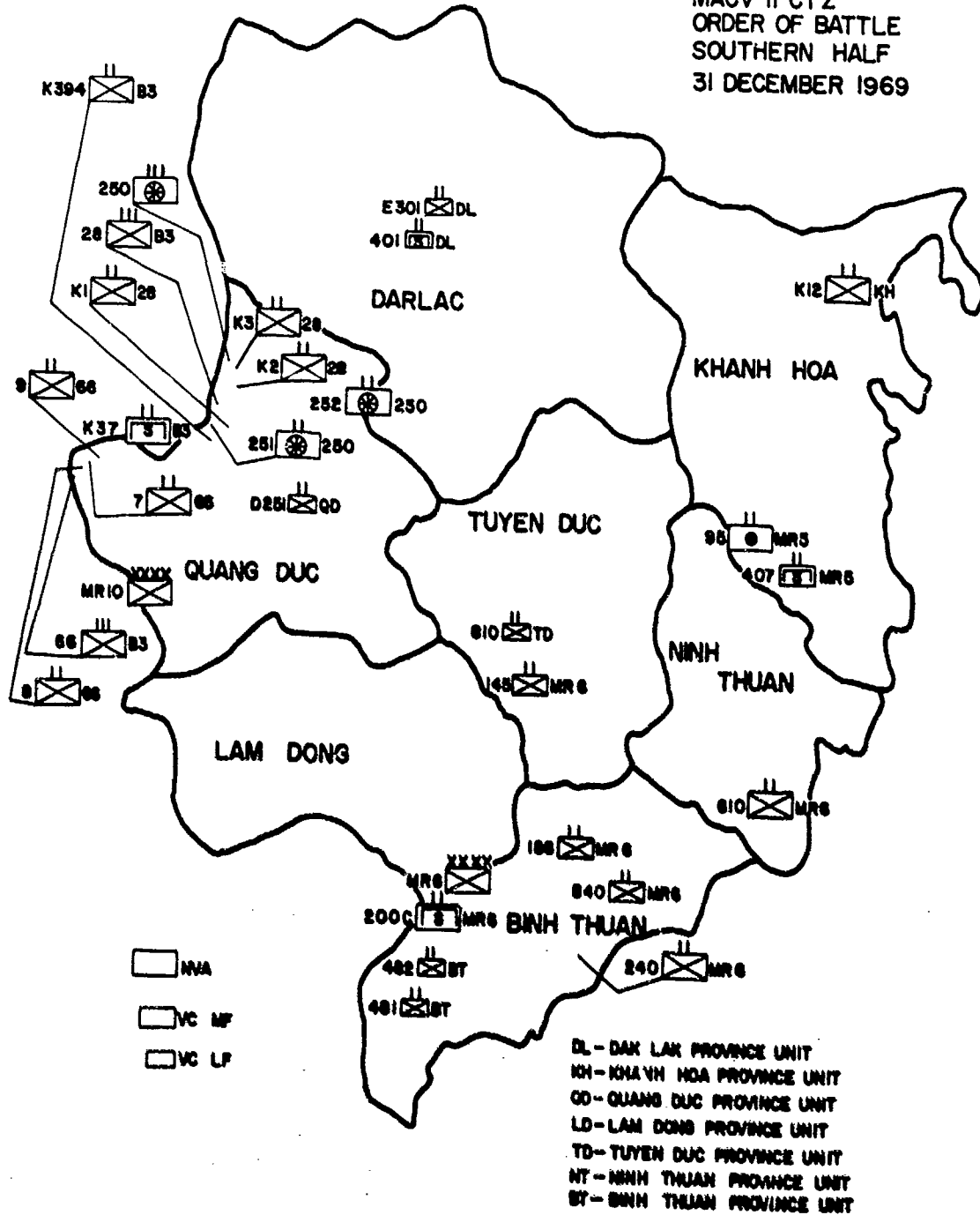


FIGURE III-10

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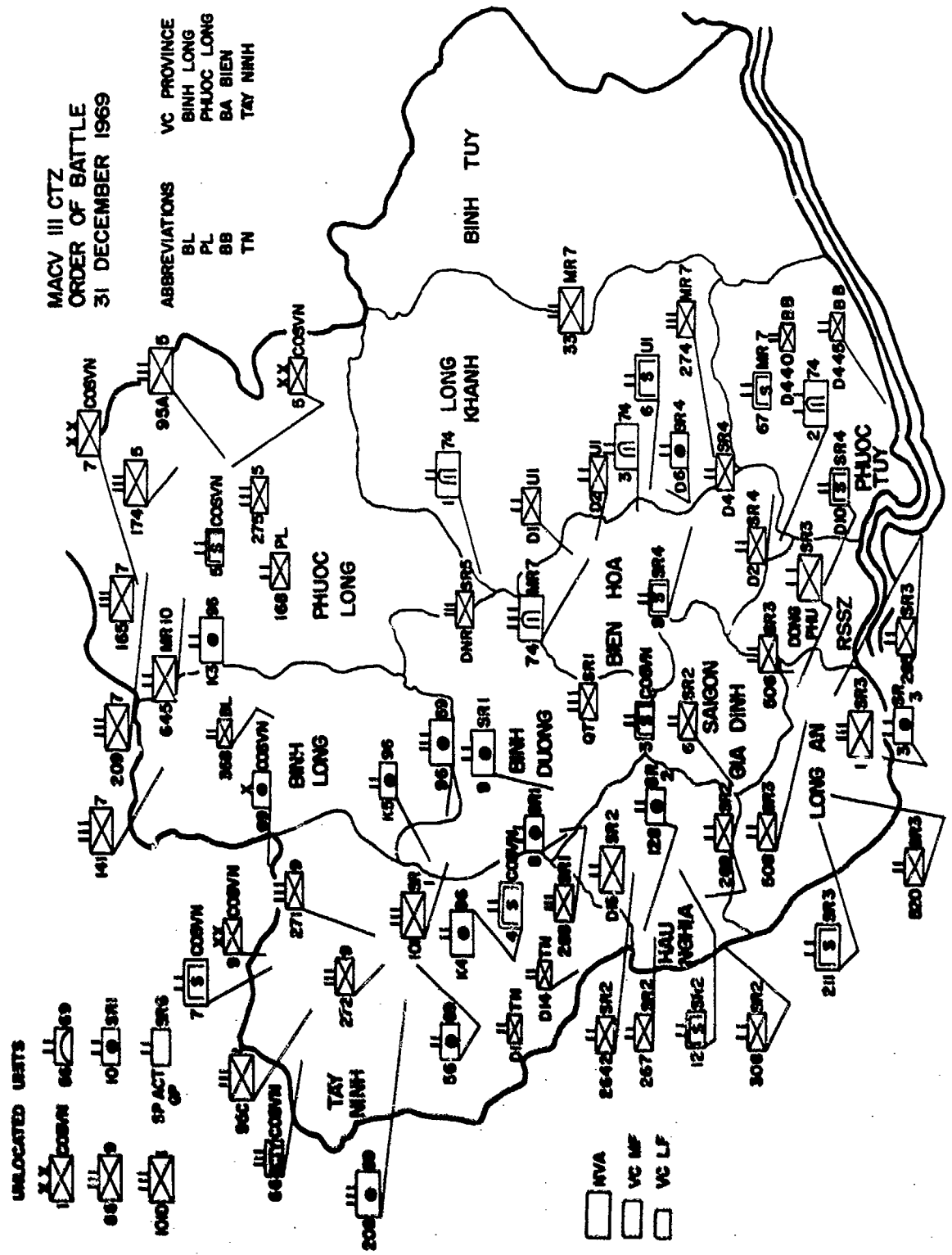
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MACV III CTZ
ORDER OF BATTLE
31 DECEMBER 1969

ABBREVIATIONS
BL
PL
BB
TN

VC PROVINCE
BINH LONG
PHUOC LONG
BA BIEN
TAY NINH



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FIGURE III-11

MACV IV CTZ
ORDER OF BATTLE
31 DECEMBER 69

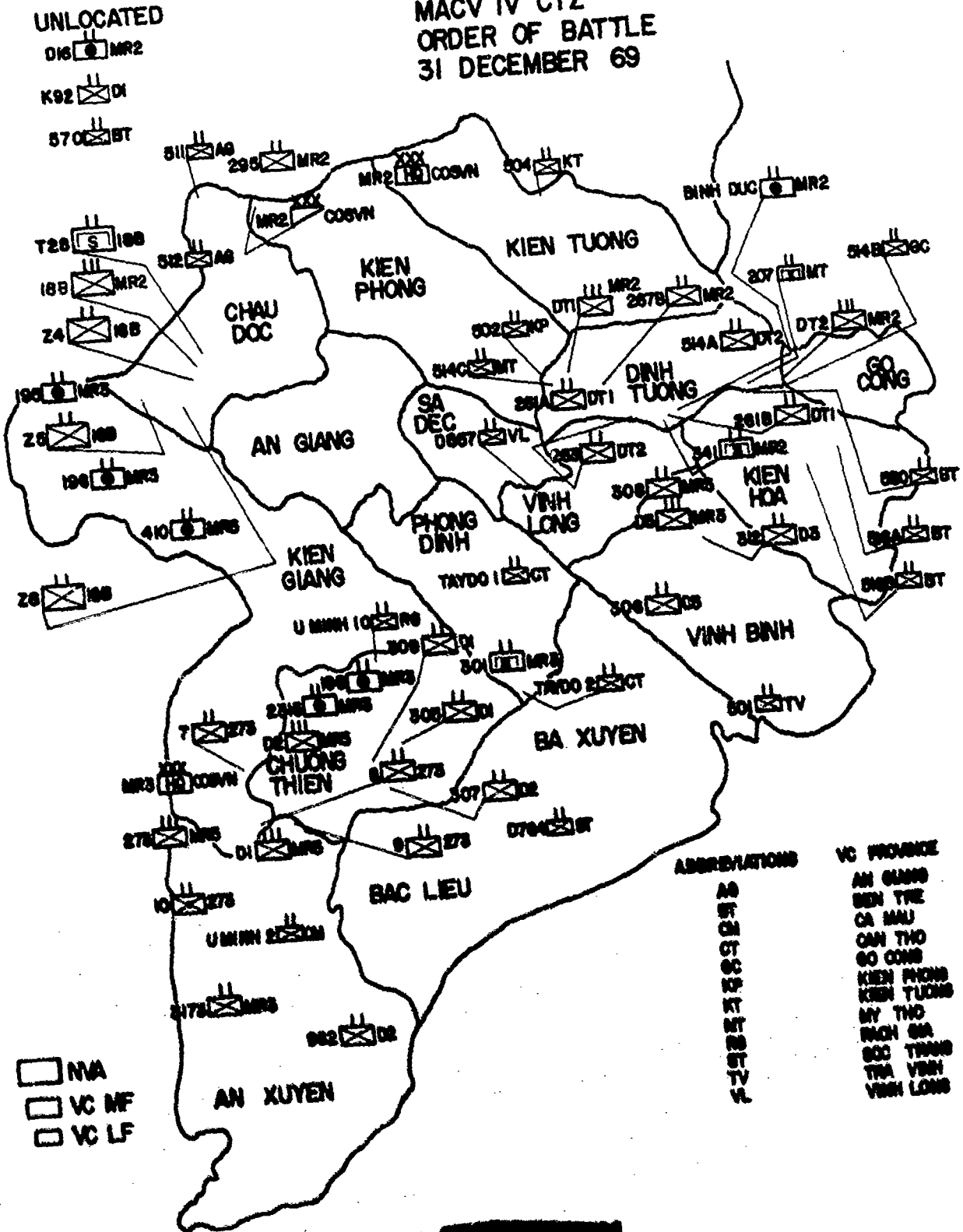


FIGURE III-12
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Reasons For NVA Movement Into IV CTZ

(S) The precise reasons why COSVN and the NVN leadership decided to send NVA troops into the Delta can only be conjectured. Perhaps the facts that 34 percent of the population of the RVN resides in IV CTZ and that it is the country's rice bowl were reasons enough.²⁹⁴ The Embassy suggested:

...Several possibilities come to mind. They may be intended to engage ARVN units and territorial security forces units in order to take some of the pressure off the guerrillas, who have been increasingly pressed by friendly troops since the 1968 APC. They may be trying to re-secure base areas (like the U Minh forest in the An Xuyen Province and the Seven Mountains areas in Chau Doc) which have been the object of GVN operations in recent months. Some unconfirmed intelligence reports even suggest that the role of these troops will be to stiffen the Viet Cong organization for the coming political struggle...²⁹⁵

(S) By early in the new year, it was thought that the enemy had moved five regiments into the Delta. It was also learned that the three sapper battalions which were regarded as COSVN's strongest sapper units had either moved into the Delta or were on the way at the end of 1969.²⁹⁶

VC/NVA Organizational Structure

Introduction

(S) Changes in VC/NVA Organizational Structure in 1969 reflected some of the basic changes in the course of the war. The developments reflected the losses suffered in 1968 and 1969, and the decisions of Hanoi's leaders to attempt to limit their casualties in the future. Many of the units that had carried out the Tet offensive of 1968 had been local force units except in northern I CTZ. More main force units had been thrown into later offensives, however the local force units had taken severe losses in the first offensive. Guerrilla strengths had fallen and continued to fall in 1969.²⁹⁷ In 1969, the NVA moved to preserve their forces in general and particularly the VC forces. Changes also reflected preparations for a possible cease fire and a heightened period of political warfare.

Reduction in Unit Size

(C) Numerous documents reported the breakdown of larger units, particularly sapper units. The aim was to establish smaller units which could still inflict heavy casualties while being less vulnerable to US bombing and fire power.²⁹⁸ The tactic was a natural one for units which were already understrength. In addition, guidance was forwarded to develop guerrilla units. A document from I CTZ advocated that secret guerrillas be developed in RVN-controlled areas such that they would amount to 2 percent of the population.²⁹⁹

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(S) In contrast to the decline in VC/NVA strength, the number of enemy maneuver and combat support battalions increased by 66 during 1969. Sapper/Recon battalions increased from 22 to 51 during the same period. 300

The Combination of VC and NVA Units

(C) A Hoi Chanh stated that the combination of VC and NVA units was taking place in Phu Yen VC Province and elsewhere. He added that provinces were in the process throughout RVN of taking command of all combat troops in their areas. The Hoi Chanh asserted that the goal was to give the impression that no NVA combat units were operating in RVN, to acquaint NVA troops with the local terrain and conditions so that they could serve as guides for other NVA units should the occasion arise, and to release as many high ranking officers from field commands as possible for the planning of further large scale battles. 301

Regional Organization

(S) A source in Paris said that the NVA would attempt to put Mao's theory of "The countryside encircles the cities" into effect. NVA troops would be redistributed into regional concentrations each having for its center of gravity an important city (Qui Nhon, Danang, Nha Trang, Dalat, Loc Ninh, Tay Ninh, Bien Hoa, Saigon, etc.). The regional arrangement was to shorten the LOCs which had been virtually destroyed by B-52s. The NVA units were to maintain their cohesion but would integrate themselves into the region and regain control of the population. The goal would be to encircle, attack, withdraw, attack again, and hold temporarily (3-5 days) the key points or certain sections of the city. 302

(C) Documents captured in the fall of 1969, two of which were dated May 1969 and Nov 68 indicated a strength reduction of 23.4 percent for the VC battalion and 36.1 percent for the NVA battalion. Fire power appeared to be substantially reduced at the battalion level. However, this may not have been an accurate indication of an actual reduction in fire power. Data provided in the cited documents showed a heavy concentration of automatic weapons at the squad and platoon level. Analysis of available information indicated a probable intent to decrease the TOE of infantry battalions as a result of conditions prevailing in local areas. Due to strength levels of enemy units in the RVN it would be logical to conclude that a decrease in TOE could have been implemented. However, no evidence was received which indicated countr-wide implementation of the decrease in TOE mentioned in the captured documents. 303

Efforts to Preserve the VC

(C) A rallier stated that on 22 Aug he was briefed by his unit commander on a new regulation which was to have been placed into effect immediately. The VC District MF units were to be permitted to attack only GVN Regional and Popular Forces and RD teams. Provincial MR units were to be allowed to attack ARVN forces, however, only NVA units were to be allowed to attack US forces. Guerrilla units were restricted to the same targets as district MF units. The reason for the new regulation was to prevent the smaller units from suffering heavy casualties from air and artillery support available to US and ARVN units. 304

VC/NVA Base Areas

We shall have to extend guerrilla warfare all over this vast enemy-occupied area, make a front out

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of the enemy's rear, and force him to fight ceaselessly throughout the territory he occupies... With ruthlessness... added to protractedness, it will be impossible to sustain guerrilla warfare behind the enemy lines without base areas.

The advantage of setting up base areas in mountainous regions is obvious... They are all places where... guerrilla warfare can be maintained for the longest time and are important strongholds for the War of Resistance.

In order to confine the enemy invaders to a few strongholds, that is, to the big cities and along the main communication lines, the guerrillas must do all they can to extend guerrilla warfare from their base areas... 305

Mao Tse-Tung, May 1938

General

(C) As indicated by the above quotation, taken from Mao Tse-Tung's writings on China's insurgency directed against the Japanese, the Communist ideology had long considered the "base area" (BA) to be an integral part of revolutionary warfare. A VC/NVA base area was defined as a section of terrain that contained installations, defensive positions, or other facilities used by the enemy to support and control elements as well as to conduct training, staging, logistic, or combat operations.³⁰⁶ Natural terrain was conducive for defensive operations and the enemy considered base areas to be practically inviolable. The enemy maintained base areas in all CTZs as well as in the border areas of Laos and Cambodia (See Figures III-13-16).

(C) With the knowledge of the location of enemy base areas, an obvious assumption would be that such base areas could have been easily overrun or denied to the enemy; such was not the case. For example, during the first quarter of 1969, although BAs 356 and 357 were penetrated over 3,000 times (By the close of 1969, BA 356 and BA 357 had been combined to BA 356, therefore BA 357 is not shown on Figure III-15), the enemy continued to use the area.³⁰⁷ The major reason for such an outcome was simple, the enemy selected his base areas because the terrain was favorable for guerrilla operations. However, base areas throughout RVN were extensively penetrated in 1969. A brief description of BA 609 has been included to illustrate the physical conditions existing in and around an enemy base areas.

Base Area 609

(C) Base Area 609, extended over parts of northwest Kontum Province, southern Laos, and northern Cambodia (See Figure III-17). The majority of the area was rugged and heavily forested. Mountains were found throughout the area, with elevation reaching a maximum of 1,043 meters. The dense vegetation provided excellent concealment from aerial observation and impeded movement by large units, especially mechanized forces. Movement by conventional forces was canalized to existing trails and this gave guerrilla forces a great advantage. Light

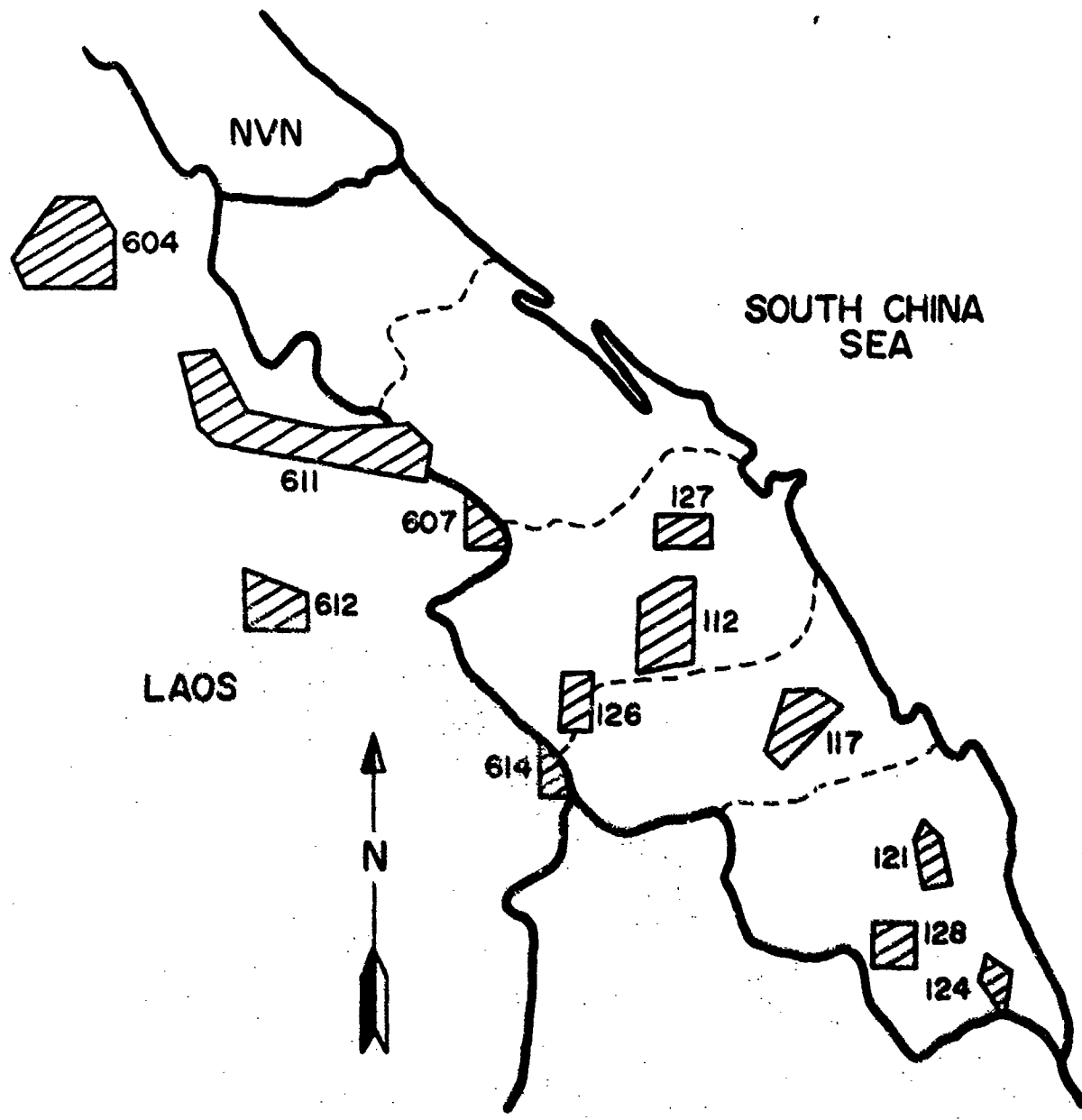
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I CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 1 JANUARY 1970



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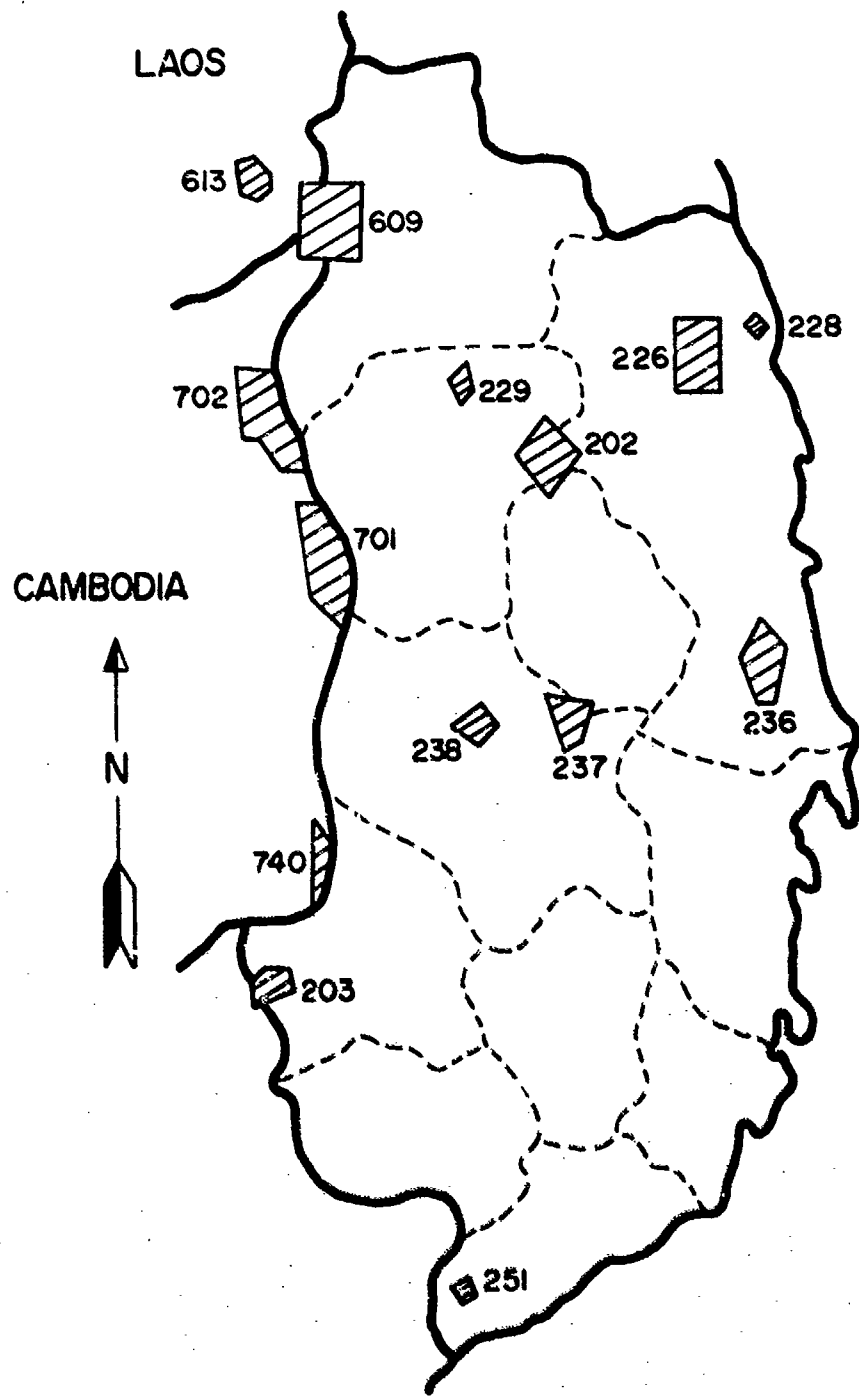
FIGURE III-13
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II CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 1 JANUARY 1970



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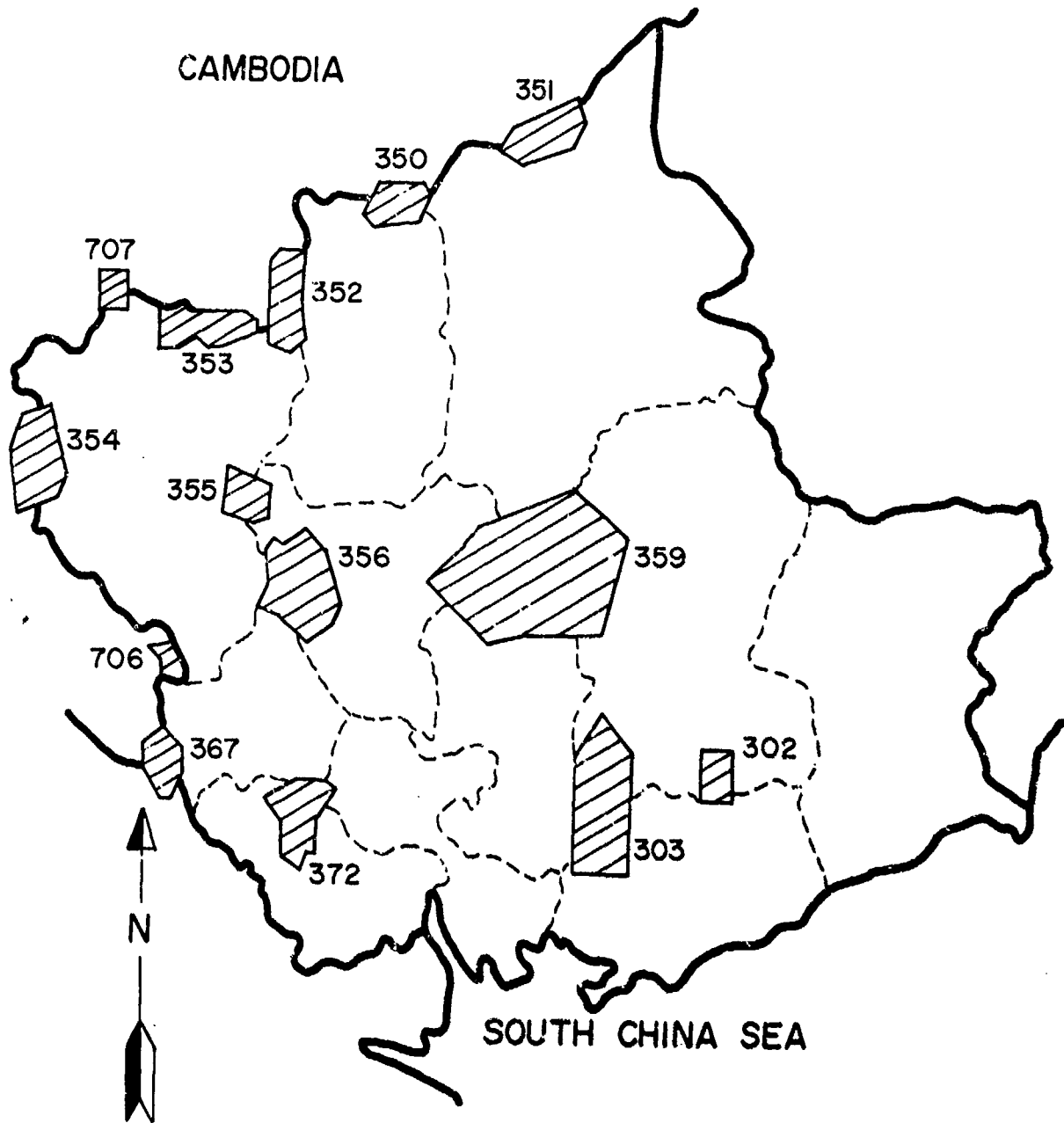
FIGURE III-14

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III CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 1 JANUARY 1970



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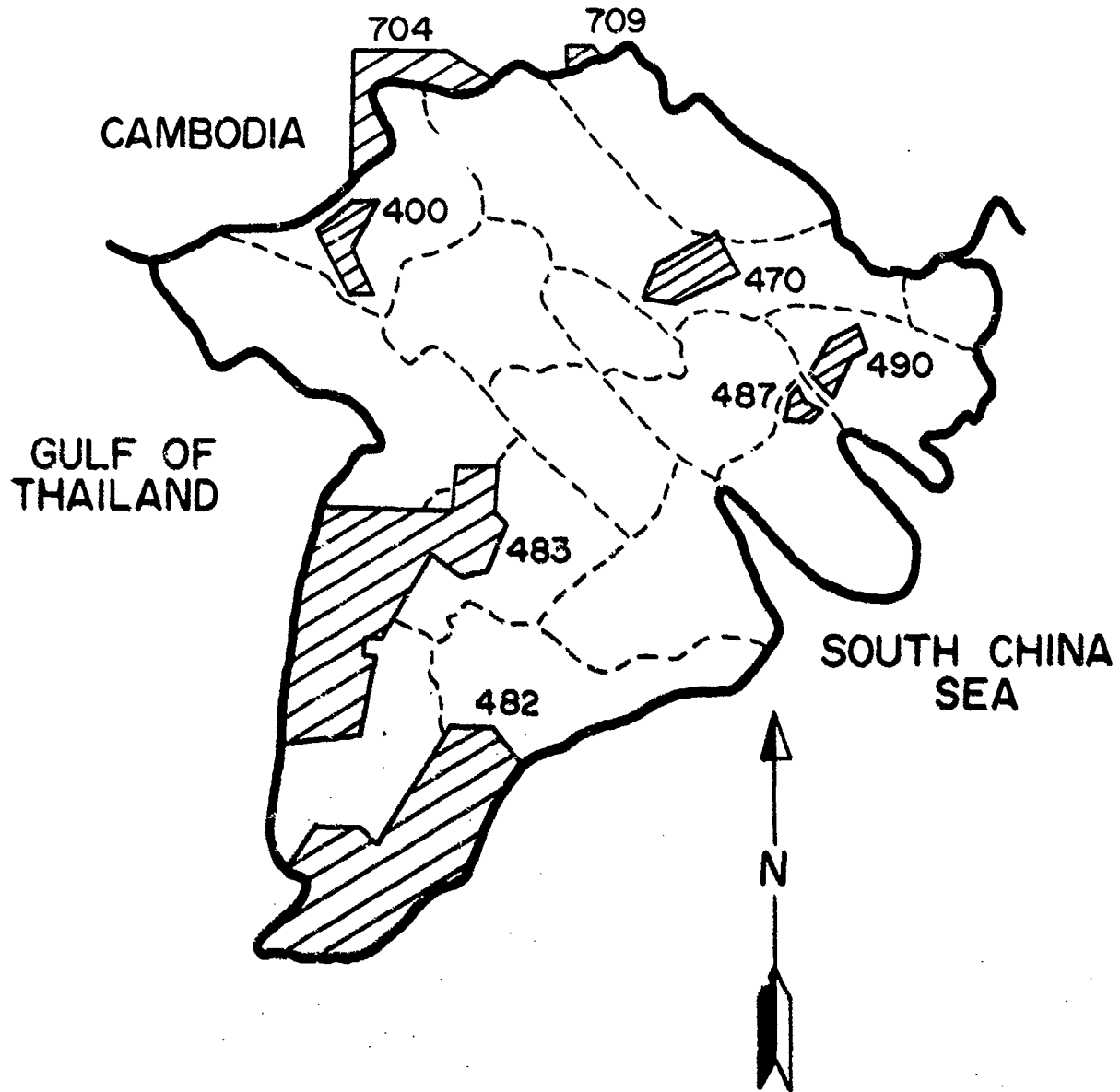
FIGURE III-15

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**IV CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS
AS OF JANUARY 1970**



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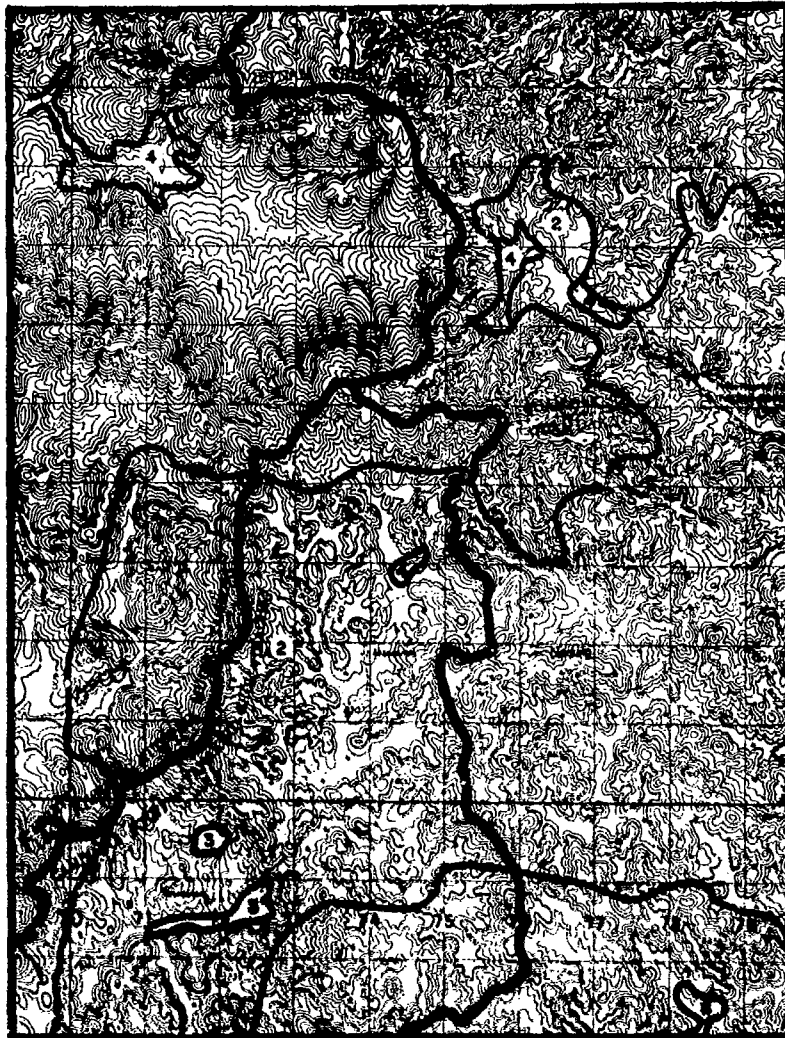
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FIGURE III-10

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TRI-BORDER
VC/NVA BASE AREA 609



1. MULTI-CANOPIED DENSE UNDERGROWTH FOREST
2. MULTI-CANOPIED DENSE UNDERGROWTH FOREST
W/BAMBOO
3. SINGLE CANOPY LIGHT UNDERGROWTH FOREST,
RUBBER AND PALM PLANTATIONS
4. BRUSHWOODS, COFFEE AND TEA PLANTATIONS

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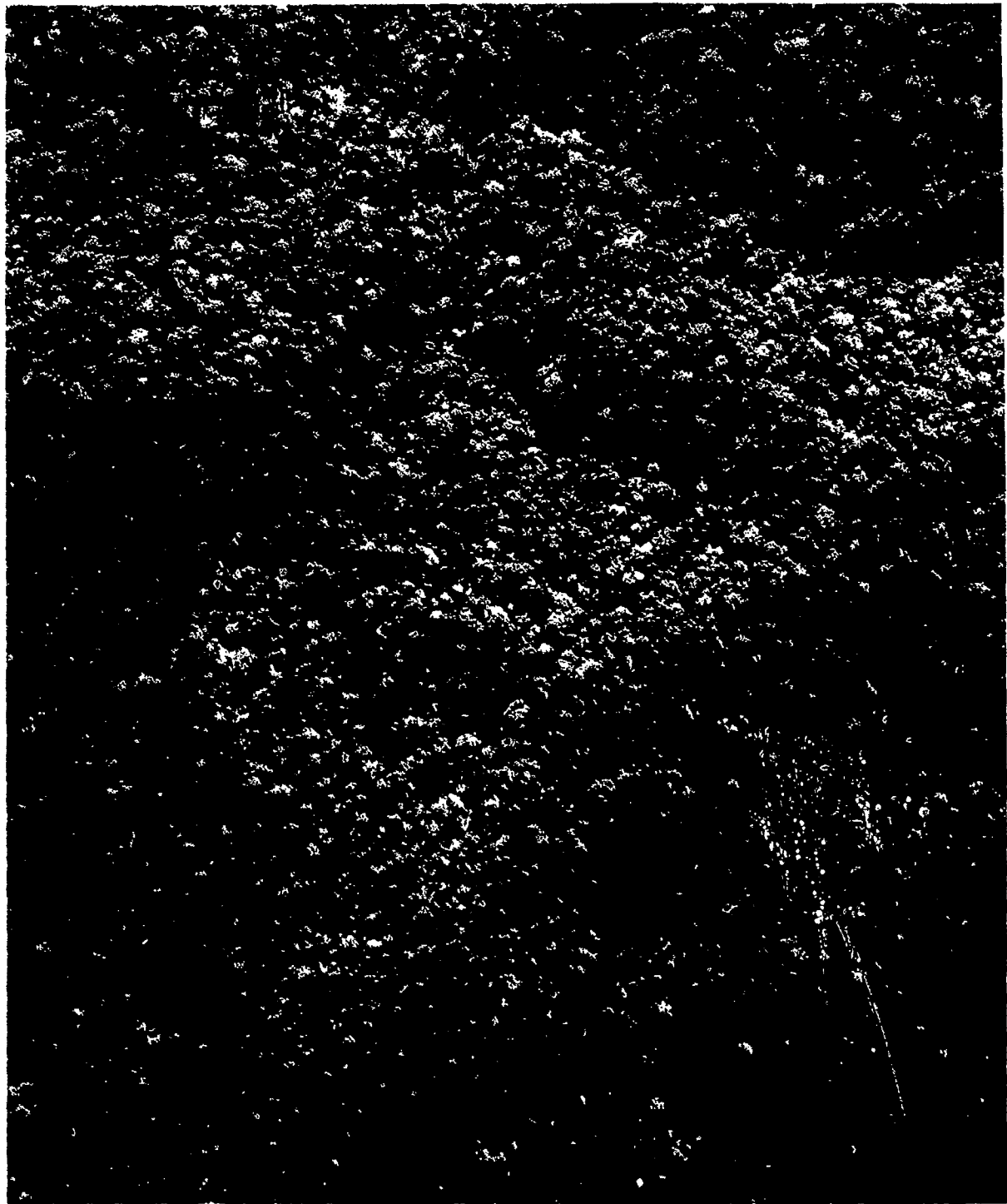
FIGURE III-17

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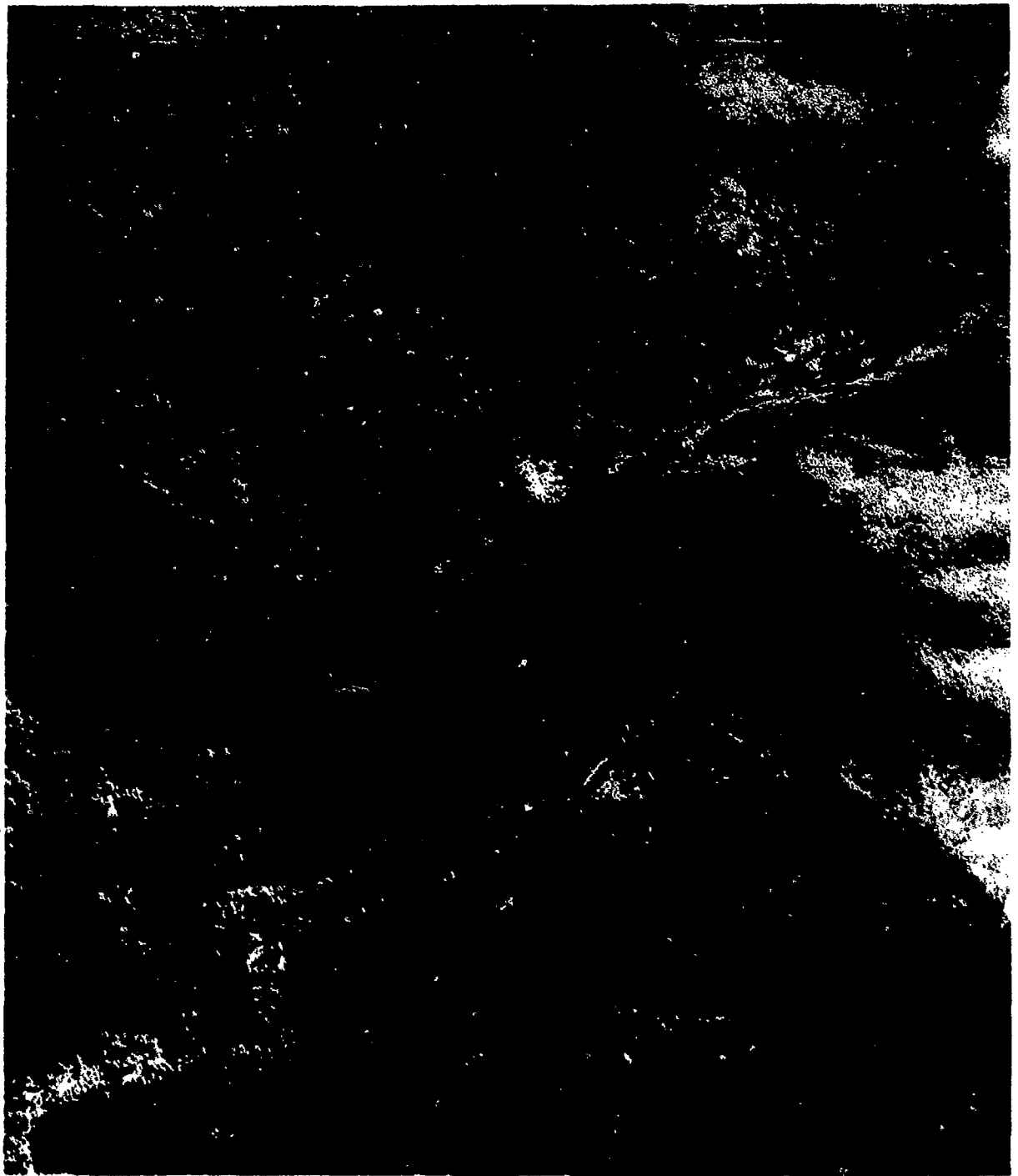


Triple Canopy Jungle

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Triple Canopy Jungle and clearing

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infantry was employable in the area; however, two distinct disadvantages were present: the physical location of the triborder area with its attendant political complications, and the lack of adequate landing zones which made them vulnerable to ambush. Trafficability and visibility were affected by adverse weather conditions in the area; during the southwest monsoon season, early morning cloudiness, ground fog, low ceilings, and precipitation presented a serious hazard to air navigation. Annual rainfall averaged 100 inches and daily rainfall amounted to an excess of one inch per day on an average of three to five days a week from May to September.

(C) The majority of the area was covered by mountains which were thoroughly dissected by numerous streams and ravines and covered with multi-canopy dense undergrowth forests and bamboo. Slopes in these areas were generally over 30 percent. Throughout the year, such terrain was impassable for all types of wheeled or tracked vehicles. Foot movement conditions were poor in all seasons; in some areas it was only possible to travel an average of 700 meters per day.

(C) Multi-canopy dense undergrowth forests were characterized by a thick multi-layered canopy, mixed species, with dense undergrowth. The number of crown canopies was variable, but there were normally two distinct continuous canopies of crown strata, and occasionally a third indistinct canopy. The height of the uppermost canopy averaged between 30 and 40 meters. Below the crown canopies there was a strata of undergrowth (shrubs, vines, epiphytes, etc.).

(C) Multi-canopy dense undergrowth forests with bamboo were the same as the multi-canopy dense undergrowth areas except that significant areas of bamboo occurred. The bamboo tended to grow in clumps, which varied from one to four meters or more in diameter; series of clumps formed bamboo thickets or brakes. Individual bamboo stems ranged from 2-15 cm in diameter and from 3-15 meters in height. Areas dominated by either type of forest offered extremely limited observation and fields of fire but provided excellent cover and concealment. Even in areas of single canopy coverage and light undergrowth, observation and fields of fire were limited to 30 meters. 308

Base Areas Status 1969

(C) On 1 Jan 69, 37 VC/NVA base areas were identified as being active in RVN. During the first quarter of 1969, all base areas in I CTZ were active with BA 112 the most active; it served as a command and control center for operations in the Danang and Hoi An regions. In II CTZ, BA 236 had twice as many intelligence reports of enemy activity as any other. This base was used by elements of the 95th NVA Regt and the 85th Bn. Base areas 356 and 357 in III CTZ reportedly had five enemy regiments operating in and around the area (By the close of 1969, BA 357 and BA 356 had been combined as BA 356, thus Figure III-15 fails to show BA 357). Base Areas in III CTZ were penetrated over 8,000 times during the Quarter. In IV CTZ, BA 470 was the most active. BA 482 and BA 483 continued as the safest havens for the enemy. 309

(C) During the second quarter, BA 112 continued to be the most active in I CTZ and BA 236 remained one of the most active in II CTZ. Base Areas in III CTZ were penetrated over 11,700 times. Enemy activity increased in BAs 303, 354, 355, and 356. However, BA 353, a headquarters complex and a base of operations for units operating in the VC War Zone "C", remained the most active. The base areas in IV CTZ were penetrated over 2,000 times, a substantial increase over the first quarter. The most active area in IV CTZ was BA 470, the supply area for VC MR2. 310

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(C) All base areas of I CTZ were penetrated during the third quarter. There were over 650 penetrations of base areas in II CTZ during the quarter. Enemy activity increased in BA 226. Despite over 11,400 penetrations of base areas in III CTZ, 13 base areas continued to be active. BA 352 and BA 353 remained the most active. In IV CTZ, base areas were penetrated over 2,000 times. Enemy activity in BA 400 increased. The 8th, 9th, and 10th Bns/273d VC Regt, composed of NVA troops, moved out of BA 400 in July and were replaced by elements of the 18B Regt/1st NVA Div. In August, the elements of the 273d Regt which departed BA 400 moved into BA 483 and operated in and around the U Minh Forest for the remainder of the quarter.³¹¹

(C) At the close of 1969, 41 base areas (including base areas considered to be active, inactive, and neutralized) were identified. Nine base areas were considered to have been inactive or neutralized. In I CTZ, BA 124, BA 126, and BA 127 were newly identified as active base areas during October and BA 112 continued to be the most active base area. BA 202 in II CTZ, from which the 95B NVA Regt operated, revealed an increase of activity. Thirteen base areas remained active in III CTZ in spite of continued Allied efforts to deny their use to the VC/NVA. Base areas in IV CTZ were penetrated more than 2,000 times during the quarter. Enemy activity remained high in BA 400. The 18th NVA Regt, composed of NVA troops, remained in BA 400, and elements of the 101st NVA Regt also infiltrated into that base area. In addition, elements of the 88th NVA Regt continued attempts to infiltrate into BA 470 from the north.³¹²

ENEMY SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Logistics

General

(C) The VC supply system was a complex system composed of three major parts: the Finance and Economy Section, the Rear Service Section, and the Forward Supply Councils (See pp. 96, 104, 105, 1968 MACV Command History for detailed discussion).

1. Finance and Economy Sections. The Finance and Economy (F&E) Sections controlled the expenditures of all military units and political agencies (infrastructure elements) throughout the VC military and political structure. The F&E Sections organized revenue collection efforts, determined food allowances, issued production plans, and conducted other similar economic activities. Revenue and food was obtained primarily through extortion and taxation from the populace. They were responsible for the over-all control and financing of the enemy's production effort.

2. Rear Service Section. Rear Service Sections had the mission of production, storage, transportation, and issue of ordnance, clothing, equipment, medicine, food, and other supplies within the VC military-political organization. At MR and province levels the Rear Services Section managed the operation of production sites.

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3. Forward Supply Councils. The Forward Supply Council coordinated logistic activity and assisted F&E Sections and Rear Services Sections by providing civilian labor to military units and by transporting supplies to the front line military units and by transporting supplies to the front line military units unable to resupply themselves from rear service facilities. Forward supply Council had little to do with VC production efforts.³¹³

Infiltration of Supplies

(C) In order to meet his logistical requirements, the enemy infiltrated supplies from NVN, Laos, and Cambodia; he was also quite adept at producing certain items necessary for his prosecution of the war in RVN. (See sections of this chapter concerned with infiltration through Laos and Cambodia for a discussion of VC/NVA logistics movements in Laos and Cambodia). As of 30 Sep, CINCPAC estimated that the VC/NVA were able to procure about 74 percent of their minimum daily supply requirement from within RVN. One factor that contributed to VC/NVA supply difficulties in 1969 was the continued high level of cache discoveries by US/GVN forces. A difference between the caches discovered in 1968 and those discovered in 1969 was that the 1968 caches had been larger and fewer in number whereas this year's were smaller and more numerous suggesting that the VC/NVA were dispersing their supplies more in the face of Allied military pressure.³¹⁴ The total number of caches discovered in RVN in 1969 was 2,905. The following gives the number of caches uncovered each month in 1969.

Caches Discovered in RVN in 1969

January	310	July	197
February	214	August	189
March	307	September	274
April	333	October	190
May	204	November	237
June	216	December	234

4,553 tons of rice and 1,328,073 pounds of salt were captured in caches in 1969.³¹⁵

Production

(C) The VC had conducted food production programs since the beginning of the insurgency, but after 1965 they placed increasing emphasis on these programs. With the widening of the Vietnamese conflict, the increase in friendly military operations, and the advent of crop destruction, the possibility arose that VC/NVA operations might be hampered in certain areas by food shortages. Reflecting concern over this eventuality, COSVN issued a directive in December 1966 which examined previous difficulties that reduced food production, stressed the importance of self-sufficiency, and outlined specific production technique for subordinate agencies, especially for rice production. Consequently, the VC emphasized three food production programs. The first was self-sufficiency, a program which required that military units and political agencies devote part of their time to farming and at least partially meet food needs. The second was the operation of food production sites which produced not only rice but many other cereals and meat products for units in their areas. The third was the encouragement and assistance of civilian farmers in VC controlled areas to produce food which the VC could later buy or confiscate by extortion.

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(C) Although not as important as food production, the production of munitions was a significant support activity of the VC insurgency in RVN. Ordnance, weapons, and munitions were generally supplied from outside of RVN with only a small amount produced in-country. The reliance which the VC placed on country-wide self-production denied appraisal, but munitions production in certain areas or for certain units may have been an important means of supply. Enemy munitions factories usually produced explosive devices, small arms, and ammunition, as well as some mortars for local needs. Most ordnance production facilities were administered by Rear Service Sections and organized according to tasks with the number of personnel varying from a few to several hundred. Some foreign technicians reportedly worked in enemy munitions sites. Munitions production sites were generally located in areas not accessible to Allied troops and were well guarded. They obtained supplies on local markets, but most of their raw material was gathered from the battlefield. Various methods of product distribution were reported. Although there was evidence of impressive production capabilities at some sites, VC munitions production was significantly disrupted by Allied military operations.

(C) The VC produced miscellaneous items such as textiles, shoes, and medicine, and they also repaired signal equipment. Miscellaneous production sites of varied sizes were discovered in all four CTZs in RVN. They were normally designed to meet specific needs of their respective localities. 316

Logistical Shortages in 1969

(S) Significant logistical shortages and particularly a severe food shortage developed in 1969. There were indications that the food shortage hindered VC/NVA military activity in some instances. 317

The Food Crisis

(S) Perhaps the primary sources of the logistics difficulties faced by the VC/NVA were US and RVNAF military pressure plus the pacification program which combined to produce a decline in the area and population held by the VC/NVA. A sign of how serious the problem had become for the VC appeared in a document which asserted that near An Hoa in Quang Nam Province, the population in the VC-controlled area took advantage of the VC/NVA Christmas 1969 cease fire to flee to government controlled areas. The document added that the people who fled came back to encourage others to join them. The document concluded that efforts would be made at all echelons to retain control of the local population at any cost. 318 The loss of population initiated a vicious cycle for the VC. With a smaller population base, the VC still had the same needs for finances, food, and supplies. Enemy methods for extracting support from the population became more harsh and their demands became greater. The VC tax rates rose and the use of coercion increased. The people in turn reacted negatively to the extra pressure and the higher taxes and became disenchanted with the Communist cause. Some people responded by resettling in GVN territory, thereby further lowering the VC population base. 319

Responses to the Food Crisis

(C) The VC attempted to convince the people to remain in VC areas or to return to them. The VC/NVA urged their units to attempt to achieve self-sufficiency. 320 There were reports of military units turning away from combat towards food gathering.

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(C) The VC/NVA land reform policy revealed the impact of the pressures of 1969. There were indications that in some instances land owners were offered inducements to return to their land. The VC had instituted land reforms in earlier years which had given land to poorer peasants. There were indications that the VC wanted to match GVN land reform in 1969. However, the majority of VC tax revenues came from agricultural production taxes.³²¹ Therefore, the VC recognized their need to have people tilling the land in areas which they controlled. They also wished to encourage production. Thus the VC attempted in some instances to appeal to the landowners and told some wealthy landowners that they would force the farmers to pay rent if the wealthy landowners would return. The VC were caught between their ideology and their pragmatism.

Economic Warfare

(C) Documents mentioned the VC/NVA desire to wreck the RVN economy. There were reports of VC/NVA use of counterfeit money. However, there were no signs that the economic difficulties facing the GVN were due to VC/NVA economic warfare tactics.

Weapons

Many inventors are devising new weapons for guerrilla warfare... which can, at a time, exterminate dozens of enemy or annihilate entire US-Puppet companies or battalions. ... As modern weapons are not numerous, guerrillas still use a great amount of crude weapons. But through logical organization of their units and rational use of weapons in guerrilla warfare, the efficiency of modern weapons has greatly increased.

Hanoi Domestic-Vietnamese Radio ³²²

VC/NVA Weapons Captured

(S) During 1969, the total number of enemy weapons captured in caches and on the battlefield were 62,651 individual and 8,855 crew served weapons.³²³ Thus, from 1967 through 1969, the trend in FWMAF/Enemy weapons captured to weapons lost ratio continued to improve. There was considerable evidence indicating that the favorable increase was due in part to changes in the availability of enemy weapons resources. The enemy greatly expanded the shipment of Communist Bloc Manufactured weapons into RVN. Also, the enemy discontinued his policy of complete battlefield policing; therefore, more weapons were left at the scene of battle when he withdrew.

Soviet and CHICOM Weapons in RVN

(S) The enemy continued to infiltrate large numbers of Soviet and CHICOM weapons into RVN. Significant small arms included the SKS semi-automatic carbine, AK-47 assault rifle and RPD light machine gun. Some PMK grenade launchers also were found. Light recoilless weapons, the B-40, and B-41 were supplies to most small units, down to district units in IV CTZ. The VC/NVA continued to employ 60mm, 82mm and 120mm mortars supplied by Communist China both as a mobile base of fire and also in attacks-by-fire. He also continued to use recoilless rifles and guns--57mm, 75mm, and 82mm--in attacks-by-fire and for fire support to

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maneuver elements. The enemy continued to augment his mortar and recoilless rifle base of fire with 107mm and 122mm rockets. There was evidence that the Soviet Union supplied increased amounts of 122mm rockets to the VC/NVA in 1969. Both tactical packaging of TNT and Plastic TNT manufactured in the Soviet Union was captured.³²⁵ The Communists introduced small numbers of tube artillery into RVN. Twelve Soviet 122mm field guns, D74, were captured or destroyed in I CTZ in February. A few Soviet 85mm divisional guns, D44, were put in action at Ben Het and in the A Shau Valley in the summer. The VC/NVA also employed at least one US 105mm howitzer M2A1, firing CHICOM ammunition, at the siege of Ben Het in March 1969. The enemy introduced into RVN two significant types of anti-aircraft guns: the 23mm automatic AA gun ZU-23, twin-barrel, machine cannon and the 37mm automatic AA gun M1939. During the spring fighting at Ben Het the enemy employed several PT-76 amphibious tanks, for the second time in RVN. This tank attack failed. Reports persisted that the enemy had moved T-34 tanks into RVN but these reports remained unconfirmed.

(S) The VC/NVA had much better resources. He had more improved Soviet tactical radios. His conventional units were equipped with AK-47 and SKS rifles.³²⁶

Weapons Examined at CMEC

(C) The US element of the Combined Materiel Exploitation Center (CMEC) was the J2 element responsible for the conduct and coordination of the MACV captured enemy materiel exploitation program. During the year, almost 200,000 pounds of enemy equipment were received at CMEC. Included were materially significant items captured in all CTZs.

(C) Among the most significant items captured were:

1. The Soviet 122mm field gun: This weapon, recovered by the 9th Marines in Quang Tri Province, in February, was the first large caliber artillery piece captured in RVN. Initially exploited by CMEC personnel, the gun was evacuated to CONUS in March, for further evaluation. Final results were expected to yield valuable technical data as to Soviet manufacturing techniques and maintenance procedures.

2. 107mm and 122mm rockets: On 10 Feb 69, near Tay Ninh City, both 107mm and 122mm over-caliber rockets were recovered by elements of the Vietnamese 3d Marine Bn. These weapons, locally modified, represented a major structural change from previously captured rockets. The homemade warheads, while reducing effective range, gave the enemy rockets a large destructive capability. CMEC testing provided lethality data and effective ranges to field units.

3. Modified 107mm Over-caliber Rocket: A Modified 107mm over-caliber rocket was captured near the Bu Dop Special Forces Camp on 6 Sep by elements of the 1st Bn, 7th Cav. The weapon indicated a major change in the destructive power of the 107mm rocket. The change consisted of the addition of a 15 pound shaped charge warhead which greatly increased its penetrating capability.

4. Soviet Periscopic Camera Set: Also in September 1969, elements of the Kien Hoa Regional Forces captured a cache containing a Soviet periscopic camera set. This capture provided data previously unknown to the intelligence community and gave a clear indication of the enemy capability for tactical long range observation and photography.

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(C) CMEC tested numerous weapons and filmed some of the test for distribution in RVN. Among the most significant CMEC products were the following:

1. As a result of the receipt of damaged enemy weapons, CMEC published a study depicting this damage, and in cooperation with MACOI entered a program designed to alert personnel to the hazards involved when using captured materiel.

2. Films were made of the firing of captured RPG-2 and RPG-7 anti-tank grenade launchers. The collapse of a 6-foot thick bunker wall by the rocket was contrasted with the detonation of the rocket when it contacted a wire mesh stand off.

3. In November 1969, available automatic weapons and anti-aircraft artillery weapons used by enemy forces were fired to obtain photographic signature data of the weapons muzzle flashes and projectile bursts. Ground and aerial film clips were taken both at night and during the day. The automatic weapons fired were the 12.7 and 14.5mm heavy machine guns, and the 23, 37, and 57mm anti-aircraft guns. ³²⁷

Chemical Warfare

(S) There were a number of incidents in which the VC/NVA used CS gas during 1969. Indications were that primary VC/NVA sources of CS were US canisters of CS which failed to detonate. ³²⁸ There was one instance of the possible use of poison gas. Two US marines died while clearing a tunnel in April 1969 and other men, without protective masks, were driven back from the mouth of the tunnel by unidentified fumes. The two dead men were removed from the area by a man wearing a mask. Incidents such as this were infrequent. It could reflect the use of poison gas. On the other hand, there could have been natural contamination in the underground areas. ³²⁹

Communication - Intelligence

Introduction

(C) Much of the enemy's communication equipment came from Communist China and the Soviet Union; however, VC/NVA forces also used equipment from Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and several other Communist nations. Some of the most common items included the CHICOM-63 radio, the CHICOM 102E radio, the CHICOM 71B radio, and 0745 CHICOM telephone, and the CHICOM 252B switchboard. In addition to the standard Communist-manufactured items, the VC/NVA manufactured many simple, homemade varieties of receivers and transmitters. The enemy also used all types of captured US equipment. ³³⁰

Communications Exploitation

(C) As in previous years, the enemy continued his exploitation of US/PWMAF/RVNAF voice communications (See pp 119-122, 1966 MACV Command History).

(C) Prior to and throughout 1965, the enemy had concentrated his intercept activities on VNAF and GVN civil communications. Concurrent with the US build-up the enemy instituted an intensive training program designed to produce the required number of English linguists necessary to successfully exploit US communications. As a result, linguists became integral to many VC/NVA combat units. Through interrogation reports and the analysis of captured enemy

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documents, analysts knew that the VC/NVA were primarily interested in plain language and brevity-coded voice communications. Many of the captured documents revealed that the enemy intercept effort was directed at US forward air controller, artillery and artillery spotter, and press communications. The VC/NVA were also known to engage in cryptanalysis of low level codes -- both authorized and unauthorized -- and demonstrated a respectable degree of success in imitative communications deception, jamming of communications, and activities in traffic analysis. Although analysts had known of the VC/NVA COMINT effort, they had gained only light feel for its scope and intensity because of the limited amount of information available. In 1969 concrete evidence of the depth of the enemy COMINT effort and of their success in exploiting US and Allied communications became known. 331

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(C) In a series of interrogations in April 1969, a former radio intercept operator of the Tech Recon Unit, HQ, T-7, illustrated the significance of intercepted voice communications to the success of VC defensive tactics and offensive operations. The report implied an indictment of Allied forces for their continued indifference to communications security practices.

(C) The mission of his element was to gather intelligence concerning enemy activity, particularly of impending air and artillery strikes by intercepting Allied voice radio transmissions, and to relay this information to HQ, T-7, for appropriate action. The unit used four PRC-25 radios, with six English linguists and eight nonlinguists working in shifts. English linguists were to pay particular attention to abbreviations (e.g., "Alpha Sierra", for airstrike), and any corresponding coordinates in intercepted transmissions. Such messages might contain a request for an air or artillery strike in an area where a VC unit was known to be operating. Often, urgent handling of these messages would allow sufficient time to notify units, thereby giving time to evacuate the targeted area.

(C) Occasionally, intercept teams were attached to a VC unit for an operation. During such an operation the teams set up within the CP area, normally 4 or 5 km from the objective. Operators maintained communications with the attacking units so that any important information intercepted could be acted upon immediately. Besides information of immediate value, future plans, aerial observations, movements and casualty reports were considered important. Information on B-52 strikes was considered very important.

(C) The six English linguists were considered very adept, being able to understand from 60 to 100 percent of the traffic they intercepted. The source believed that his element was very useful to T-7 because their intercepted transmissions reduced the effectiveness of air and artillery strikes. 332

(C) On 20 Dec, 4 km north of Ben Sue (KT 591 372) in III CTZ, elements of the 1st Inf Div (2d Bn/2n Inf and 2d Bn/28th Inf, 1st Bde) conducted an operation in response to the previous day's intelligence on suspected locations of VC units. At 1150 hours the Kit Carson Scout leading the assault force noticed a whip antenna affixed to a small bush with a wire leading down into a spider hole a short distance away. This was the initial phase of what is now called Project TOUCHDOWN. The Kit Carson Scout killed one man who had thrown a hand grenade, and then talked the remaining 12 enemy personnel into surrendering. Assorted documents and communications equipment were found in the spider hole. Interrogation of the PWs and analysis of the equipment and documents revealed that the personnel constituted a radio intercept unit known to the VC/NVA as a technical reconnaissance unit. This unit, designated Alpha J was subordinate to the military intelligence section, military affairs branch, SR 1, and comprised 15 to 18 personnel. While individuals and separate pieces of equipment had been captured in the past, this

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was the first time that a virtually complete unit with all of its equipment was captured. The mission of this unit was to intercept the voice and CW communications of US and Allied units in the area. Of the 12 personnel captured, preliminary interrogation indicated that one was the platoon leader; two were US voice intercept operators; five were ARVN voice intercept operators; two were analysts; and there was one cook and a nurse. The one man killed was believed to have been the senior analyst for the unit. Documents captured included over 2,100 hand-copied voice transmissions intercepted from 1st Inf Div nets; two booklets containing biographical data on unit personnel; booklets containing sample frequency and call sign allocations with unit identifications; and various booklets containing instructions on methods of intercept and exploitable weakness in US and Allied communications. The initial exploitation for communications security (COMSEC) purposes was carried out by the Technical Research Unit (MACV J2 Exploitation). The 101st Radio Research Company developed a briefing, which this discussion is based on and which was delivered to major units in RVN.

(C) The following equipment was captured: Two AN/PRC-25's and one PRC-77, one CHICOM R-139 receiver, one homemade receiver and transmitter, and seven Sony transistor radios and one Panasonic receiver. The PRC-25 and 77 receiver gave the team the capability of intercepting the FM radios used by US tactical units. The CHICOM R-139 receiver was capable of intercepting the GRC series of US radios. The homemade receiver and transmitter, while compatible with some US equipment, was probably used by the unit for internal communications.

(C) Also captured were several bags of antenna parts including long wire antennas cut to specific frequencies to increase sensitivity. Power was obtained through commercial batteries wired in parallel and series to attain the desired voltages. All of the equipment was in excellent operating condition and the workmanship reflected in the homemade receiver and transmitter was of very high quality. With this equipment the unit had the capability of intercepting virtually all non-secure voice and manual Morse communications used by US and Allied tactical units.

(C) Among the documents captured were booklets containing extensive instructions on proper intercept techniques and a detailed analysis of the communications procedures of several Allied units including the 1st Inf Div, the 1st Cav Div (Airmobile), the 4th Inf Div, the 25th Inf Div, the 11th Arm Cav Regt, the ARVN 5th Div, and MACV advisory teams in general.

(C) These documents explained such things as the US procedures used in assigning callwords and suffixes and the importance of these items in maintaining order of battle information and continuity in their intercept effort. The enemy author pointed out that in many cases call signs and callwords never change, or that when callwords did change, suffixes and frequencies did not. There were numerous pages and diagrams listing past and present call signs and suffixes of US units. The enemy author also pointed out that US units habitually used point of origin codes and he gives instructions on methods to be used in breaking these codes including the techniques of correlating the traffic on various nets, such as command and "Dustoff" nets. Other documents contained detailed descriptions of authorized codes, such as the "Kac" Code, but significantly, no instructions on how to break them. Also included on other pages was a sample B-52 raid indication message and other information which would indicate a forthcoming attack.

(C) These documents represented a rather complete and comprehensive analysis of US communications procedures and pointed out specific areas of weakness that could be exploited. From the captured documents and the interrogations to date, were gained an idea as to the extent of the enemy COMINT effort. The captured unit commander stated that the unit worked against both US and ARVN communications and copied both voice and manual CW transmissions.

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The effort was targeted against those nets giving friendly locations and plans, particularly ambush plans. He stated that a normal day would yield about 10 significant intercepts, and that ambush locations were frequently compromised as much as 24 hours prior to positioning.

(C) One of the most striking observations made concerning the intercept logs was the fact that in nearly every instance where the unauthorized point of origin code was used, the plain text coordinates were placed immediately above the cipher version. The point of origin code clearly posed no significant problem to the enemy.

(C) Aircraft warning nets were particularly valuable sources of information to the enemy. It was apparent that the A3 Technical Reconnaissance unit was very successful in exploiting US communications. The captured unit was but one small enemy COMINT unit. There were many such units operating throughout RVN, down to and including district level. Each of these units probably had virtually the same training and professionalism. ³³³

Intelligence and Counterintelligence

(S) One of the most significant developments in VC intelligence was the major effort to infiltrate agents into the Chieu Hoi program. This reflected VC/NVA concern about the impact of the Chieu Hoi program. As in previous years, the VC attempted to infiltrate RVNAF, the GVN, the religious and ethnic groups in RVN, and US facilities. The penetration of RVNAF in order to provide vital intelligence to the VC posed serious security problems for RVNAF. For instance, in April, three VC sappers, who had served as VNAF enlisted men at three key USAF installations (Nha Trang, Bien Hoa, and Danang) were apprehended. Two of the men had worked as helicopter mechanics which had presented sabotage opportunities. All three had been in excellent positions to provide low-level intelligence information regarding the VNAF and USAF and also to observe other Vietnamese civilians and military personnel who might have been susceptible to VC recruitment. ³³⁴ An example of the infiltration of a US facility was the arrest of VC Special Action Platoon 2/R of the Saigon-Gia Dinh Security Section. Four of its members had been employed as drivers for MACV. ³³⁵ Agents continued to be used at US bases as artillery spotters. Women, children and old men were favored for low level observation missions. ³³⁶ There were indications that women and youths were being recruited more heavily than previously for various missions including intelligence gathering. A tactic used by the VC/NVA in various situations was the buying and wearing of ARVN uniforms. ³³⁷

(C) The VC also expressed deep concern for the security of their own regions and of their messages and correspondence. This reflected the increasing difficulty due to Allied military operations which faced ranking VCI as they moved from one region to another. It also reflected VC sensitivity to the loss of major documents such as COSVN Resolution 9. ³³⁸

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ENEMY OPERATIONS IN RVN

VC/NVA Strategy and Tactics

Introduction

(U) The Tet and post Tet Offensives of 1968 and the severe losses which had been suffered by the VC/NVA forced a reevaluation of the situation in 1969 by the enemy as well as by the US. VC/NVA strategy and tactics in 1969 shifted from an attempt to win an immediate victory through all-out offensives on the battlefields of RVN to an attempt to win a victory through prolonging the conflict. The VC/NVA shifted from attempting to implement Phase III of guerrilla war, attacks by large units functioning like conventional military units, to a strategy which combined Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III. Large unit attacks would be undertaken if the opportunities presented themselves; but small unit attacks, particularly sapper attacks, and guerrilla warfare would be used more extensively. The VC/NVA hoped to inflict losses on US troops which the US public would find prohibitive and defeat the pacification program while lessening their own losses and conserving their military strength.

Communist Strategy as Reflected in Lao Dong Party and COSVN Resolutions Prior to 1969

(C) Since 1959 the broad outlines and major shifts in VC/NVA strategy to reunify RVN under a Communist government had been contained in resolutions which had been issued by the Lao Dong (Communist) Party in Hanoi and the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) in the south. Lao Dong Party Resolution 15, which had been passed in 1959, had escalated the insurgency in the RVN into its military phase. Lao Dong Party Resolutions 12 and 13, which had been issued in 1965 and 1966, respectively, had outlined the strategy of matching the US troop buildup and defeating the Allied Forces on the battlefield, a strategy that had been followed until Tet of 1968. In the wake of the 1968 Tet offensive, COSVN Resolution 6 had called for a further offensive which had been designed to win a quick, total, military victory for the Communists. COSVN Resolution 7, which had been issued in the summer of 1968 after the failure of the May post-Tet offensive, had called for yet a third general offensive. In the fall of 1968, COSVN had passed Resolution 8. (For a more thorough discussion of the resolutions issued by the Lao Dong Party and by COSVN, see Annex E, a study by MACJ233 entitled "Communist Strategy as Reflected in Lao Dong Party and COSVN Resolutions.")³³⁹

First Quarter 1969

(S) Developments of the first quarter of 1969 suggested that the VC/NVA were continuing to attempt offensives similar to the offensive of 1968. Offensive operations were focused largely on Allied military installations, and the VC boasted in Paris and via radio that these were their primary targets. However, in terms of relative casualties, their approach was considerably more sound than during the 1968 Tet and post-Tet offensives. By launching such attacks, the Communists created an impression of continuing strength which they found highly desirable in Paris -- attacks on US bases always received high press play.³⁴⁰

The 1968-69 Winter/Spring Campaign

(C) The broad basis for enemy strategy during the 1968-69 Winter/Spring Campaign was

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contained in COSVN Resolution 8 which had been promulgated during 1968. Reflecting enemy military frustrations after the Tet offensive, although Resolution 8 had continued to call for an eventual decisive Communist military and political victory in the RVN and for major offensive activity, it had begun to call for a protracted struggle:

Our Party has clearly confirmed its determination to fight against the US aggressors and their henchmen under any circumstances. We should have faith in our ability to wage a protracted war, and should try to seize every opportunity to gain decisive victory in a relatively short time.

Presently, the strategic opportunity and practical conditions are favorable for us to rush forward to win decisive victory. The US Imperialists remain very stubborn and cunning, but it is obvious that they are in a defensive position, and are encountering great difficulties.

As a result, we should know how to grasp strategic opportunities, identify the characteristics of the General Offensive and General Uprising phases, heighten fighting spirit and gain, at any cost, the following strategic objectives which have been assigned by the Central Party Headquarters:

- Annihilate and disintegrate the Puppet Army
- Destroy the main elements of the US forces and a large portion of the American's war facilities, to prevent them from achieving their political and military ends in South Vietnam.
- By doing this, we should smash the US desire for aggression and force them to accept their failure in South Vietnam and stop their acts of war against North Vietnam. 341

(C) Resolution 8 stressed the defeat of the enemy (US/ARVN) on all battlefields, attacking the enemy at their strong points, and defeating the enemy on the political front in the US. In order to motivate the VC/NVA to accomplish these goals, Resolution 8 included an appeal made by COSVN in their "8th Conference" (date unknown):

Dear Comrades!

The new stage of our resistance against

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Americans for the salvation of our country
has developed under favorable conditions.

This is the fiercest and most complex phase
under which our armed forces and people
have had to deal with the enemy.

The Americans have sustained serious failures
but they still remained stubborn and cunning.
They have abandoned their vicious attempts to
subdue the southern part of our country.

The entire country is living and fighting in a
great historic moment. Although our resistance
against the Americans for national salvation
will have to overcome many difficulties and
trials, the enemy will suffer ten times
as much as we do.

With our victories in all fields of activity,
we will be able to surmount all difficulties.
On the other hand, the enemy has come to
a dead-end and he is unable to overcome it.

The most basic fact is that our people's
revolutionary task is in a better condition
than ever before.

The Central Office (of SVN) appeals to the
whole Party headquarters, and the entire
army and people, hoping that with their un-
swerving determination, their mighty power
and their confidence in the final victory, they
will take advantage of their victories to unan-
imously dash forward, continuously attack
the enemy, simultaneously rise up, be per-
sistent and step up the struggle against the
Americans to save our country and gain the
ultimate victory.

Let's bravely rush forward.
Final victory must be ours. 342

(C) Thus, the enemy had assessed the situation in RVN as follows: The Americans were heavily defeated in the war in RVN; they had changed their strategy from that of search and destroy to sweep and hold operations with the hope of pacifying rural areas and consolidating the GVN and RVNAF position. The VC believed that the US had been defeated politically and that the Communists had gained in their diplomatic endeavors. Due to these "failures," the VC felt that the American aggressive spirit had been shaken. In order to capitalize on the situation, the Communists were determined to end the war by withdrawal of US and Allied forces

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from RVN; this goal was clearly reflected in a document which contained a summary of the 1969 Spring Offensive:

We did not conduct any phase from September to February 1969. This made Nixon think that we lost the initiative and that he can hold a firmer, stronger position at the negotiation table. The success of the 1969 Spring Offensive upset Nixon's plan because U.S. forces were heavily hit, and their weakening puppet army could no longer provide support for the implementation of neocolonialism. The anti-war movement in the U.S. flared up again, strongly demanding withdrawal of U.S. troops. In short, the 1969 Spring Offensive forced Nixon to adopt a clearer policy for Vietnam and to end the war in our favor. ³⁴³

(S) To accomplish their missions of a troop withdrawal and strengthening of their position at the Paris talks, the Communists launched their Spring Offensive on the night of 22-23 Feb. The Communist strategy included "attacking and annihilating" the enemy (FWMAF/RVNAF) by making "deep and strong" thrusts into towns and cities. Also, this strategy called for cutting of communications leading to towns and cities; major attacks on rear services, base camps, and storage areas were also on the enemy's priority list. ³⁴⁴

(S) Enemy guidance for the Spring Offensive also stressed the importance of inflicting heavy US casualties. The US portion of the Allied combat deaths from action clearly initiated by the enemy increased steadily from 11 percent in 1966 to 49 percent during the first quarter of 1968. Attacks-by-fire accounted for most US deaths in contrast to 1968 when ground assaults consistently accounted for the majority of US deaths. ³⁴⁵ Emphasis on US losses was evident throughout a major COSVN document which assessed the Spring Offensive:

Available information indicates that friendly forces in the southern part of South Vietnam (Military Regions 1, 2, 3, and 6) killed 45,000 enemy soldiers (half of them Americans); heavily damaged 11 battalions (including seven U.S. companies), 67 companies (including 30 U.S. companies); depleted six battalions and 68 companies; and destroyed 545 aircraft, 165 boats, and 281 artillery pieces.

In short, during the 1969 Spring Offensive, we killed many Americans. The most significant success of the 1969 Spring Offensive was that it boosted the anti-war movement in the U.S., which seriously affected the American plan of aggression. It is evident that the enemy has suffered a strategic setback. We disrupted his "Clear and Hold" strategy. We ran over his positions and broke his security belt protecting Saigon. We forced him to set up small bases to protect his main bases and drove him more and more into the defensive. ³⁴⁶

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The Fall/Summer Offensive

(S) The Summer Offensive of the Vietnamese Communists was based on a plan of combined military and political action. Scheduled from May until July, the offensive plan called for a continuing emphasis on economy of force tactics. Described by prisoners and documents as Directives 81 and 88, they emphasized the need to inflict greater casualties on US forces by increasing harassment and attacks. Simultaneously, the program called for "urgent" political activity in the rural areas in preparation for the emergence of a coalition government. The idea of military victory, held possible in previous COSVN resolutions, had finally been discarded. The overriding conclusion to emerge from the new scheme was that the Communists were extemporizing as far as military strategy was concerned. In fact, the directives seemed to reflect a temporary uncertainty about which future courses to follow after the offensives of 1968 had failed to achieve the VC/NVA's maximum aims. They were concentrating on the short-term objective of effecting a withdrawal of US troops and were allocating only a minimum of their military resources to the longer term objectives of taking over the RVN and joining it with NVN. The Summer Offensive was to have high points of activity during each month; through such tactics, the Communists desired to improve their bargaining position in Paris and counter US and GVN claims that the Communist forces were declining in effectiveness. The high points were to consist of attacks-by-fire coupled with sapper and terrorist actions against all major GVN-controlled population centers and support facilities; main and local forces were to attack ARVN and Allied field positions. The directives made specific reference to the killing of many more US troops in support of the immediate objective of forcing the US to withdraw. It also expressed the long term aim of destroying the ARVN and wiping out the pacification program, but these were of lower priority.

(S) The new directives placed extraordinary emphasis on preparing for the political struggle and stressed the establishment of district and province level revolutionary administrations. The ultimate aim of these administrations was the undermining of any coalition government. "Coalition will exist at central and regional levels only. We will have to control the provinces, the districts, the villages. Only when we cannot do otherwise, shall we agree to coalition in certain provinces." 347

(S) Directives 81 and 88 provided the first acknowledgment that a military victory was not possible and that the Communists were seeking a favorable political settlement through combined military and political efforts. The emphasis was on limited military objectives that could be pursued until the political aims were met. The aims were the withdrawal of US forces and the establishment of a coalition government in which the Communists would dominate the political power base. "If we cannot achieve this goal in the summer phase, we will get it in the autumn." These directives were expected to resolve some of the problems common in VC ranks following the 1967-68 Winter Campaign when most internal documents spoke of imminent military victory. The apparent decision to forego any large scale attempt at changing the military balance in RVN and the stated desire of keeping US fatalities high underscored the short-term perspective of the Communist leaders in the RVN. 348

(C) COSVN Guidance on the VC 1969 Summer Campaign follows:

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Characteristics and Principles of the General
Offensive and General Uprising:

The General Offensive and general uprising is a campaign or a chain of actions in which offensive actions are conducted on a continuing basis with maximum coordination, between many phases and between regular activities and climaxing activities, in order to insure that the subsequent phases are stronger and more decisive than the previous ones. It is also a course of action through which we repulse the enemy one step at a time and attain piecemeal victory. Why is this so? This is because the enemy still has more than 1,000,000 troops and it is just impossible for us to destroy or to wipe out 1,000,000 men. The enemy is still capable of acquiring replacements. His oppressive administration machinery at village levels has been damaged but not totally neutralized. He still has a large psywar machinery. Therefore, the general offensive and general uprising is a hard and difficult campaign, full of rigors, sacrifices and hardships.

We do not intend to attain the victory overnight or in a single phase, nor do we plan to obtain the victory in any predetermined phase after conducting many phases. The victory will not come to us in such an easy way, but it will come in a difficult and complicated way. It will be a limited victory and not a clear-cut, complete victory. In the course of a general offensive and general uprising, a subjective effort will cause decisive effects. Consequently, the amount of effort we invest in the conduct of the general offensive and general uprising will cause decisive effects. It will extend or curtail the duration. It will augment or reduce our victory or our difficulties.

Our subjective effort must be the concentration of efforts by the entire revolution forces, by each individual and by every unit and locality. We must, therefore, get rid of the tendency to wait and see, or to rely (sic). This subjective effort must be continued and increased day after day. We must get rid of impatience, relaxation and demoralization. The policy guidelines... proved to be totally correct throughout the four phases. The situation has developed exactly as... anticipated. TW (the politburo) also anticipated that we would achieve the decisive

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victory during the 1969 Winter-Spring. If each individual, each unit, and each locality makes a subjective effort, no one can deny that we are capable of achieving the decisive victory during the Winter-Spring.

Significance of 1969, especially the significance of the 1969 Summer:

After being attacked for one full year, the enemy suffered heavy losses in personnel. His will for aggression has been shaken. He now realizes that he can not win militarily. He must now make a decision: to end the war or to expand it. The "honeymoon" period for the Nixon administration is over. The Democratic Party gave this period of time to the Republicans for thinking.

----Time cannot be extended forever.

----Republican administration - Democratic Congress.

Nixon must make such a decision which will enable him to gain success in the 1970 Congressional election...

The reason which caused the U. S. to seek settlement to the war in a short period of time also constitutes a motive for us to develop our already scored successes and conduct a continuous offensive. Great victories have been scored after a year of offensive activities. We must, however, gain greater victories at a faster tempo to such an extent as to change the situation in a decisive manner. Example: We should continuously heat the 70 or 80 degree water to bring its temperature to 100 degrees so it can boil. While the enemy is making calculations and weighing the pros and cons, we should attack him to drive him into a deadlock and compel him to adopt a settlement for the war in our favor.

What we should do: For each additional day's stay they must sustain more casualties. For each additional day's stay they must spend more money and lose more equipment. Each additional day's stay the American people will adopt a stronger anti-war attitude while there is no hope to consolidate the puppet administration and Army...

The importance of the summer should be clearly pointed out. It is a very important phase intended to compel the enemy to adopt a policy, to accept serious negotiation with us, to withdraw troops, to recognize the Front, and to accept a coalition government.

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--Consequently, the summer phase can in no way be considered as a decisive phase. It should be regarded as a phase of special significance, aimed at forcing the Americans to adopt a policy "in our direction."

Missions for the Summer: Must be higher, stronger, and more painful than the Spring. It must succeed in destroying, wearing down, and disintegrating more U.S. potential, more main force puppet personnel, and, especially, more administrative personnel at the village and hamlet levels. It must succeed in destroying large amounts of equipment and logistic facilities. It must include strong attacks on rear bases. Conduct stronger attacks on communication axes. Provide support to the population in their uprising; destroy the enemy's control; seize hamlets and wards; and liberate hamlets and wards when the situation is favorable.

Therefore, friendly forces are required to: (a) promote a firm standpoint; (b) strengthen their determination to fight; and (c) conduct aggressive and continuous attacks. They have to combat sluggishness, demoralization, over-simplification, illusions of peace, wait and see attitudes, escapism, and rightism. 349

(S) The enemy desired that his summer campaign extend from May through July with high points occurring each month. The first phase came on 11-12 May, and the second was apparently launched on 5-6 June. The Communists launched a countrywide series of attacks-by-fire and limited ground attacks in RVN on 11-12 May. Hue, Danang, and Saigon were all hit by small scale attacks-by-fire coordinated with increased terrorism, particularly in Saigon. The remaining attacks were apparently directed almost exclusively against military installations and focused against American positions. Once again the attacks emphasized the Communist dictum of subordinating military actions to political goals. There was little doubt that the attacks were directly related to the issuance of the 10 Point proposal published by the NFLSVN in Paris on 8 May (See the VCI, Leadership). By mounting the attacks on the heels of the "new" proposal, the Communists apparently desired to seize the initiative at the Peace Talks, underscore their military determination, and project a continuing image of undiminished strength. Although the attacks were small scale, the Communists apparently counted on convincing world opinion that their strength and capabilities were larger than they were. By emphasizing action against US bases and installations, the Communists were obviously trying to create domestic pressure on President Nixon to negotiate an early end to the war.

(S) The second high point of the Summer Offensive occurred on 5-6 June when approximately 200 shellings were scattered throughout the southern half of RVN. Activity increased slightly in I and II CTZs. The Communists relied heavily on standoff attacks-by-fire and launched very

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few ground assaults. Shellings were generally of low intensity and enemy losses in ground actions were heavy. As with the 11-12 May Communist high point, the 5-6 June attacks were closely related to the Communist activity on the political front; the NFLSVN announced the creation of the PRG on 10 June. ³⁵⁰

(S) By 28 June, there was a noticeable decline in the fighting in RVN, with enemy ground, ambush, and indirect fire attacks averaging 66 per week through 19 July, compared with 123 per week during the two weeks before the lull; between 22 June and 30 July, the average dropped to about 42, which was one third of the weekly average of the preceding six week period of offensive action. Communist main force units were conspicuously avoiding any major contact, and many of them were deployed in border or base areas where they were presumably regrouping and refitting. This contention was supported by the fact that there were no battalion size or larger attacks during the lull. With the exception of IV CTZ, this period of major offensive inactivity was lower than any previous lull since late 1968; however, the weekly average of harassment remained higher than during most previous lulls. ³⁵¹

(S) While I, II and III CTZs were experiencing decreased enemy activity, such activity increased in IV CTZ; average attacks increased to 14 per week as compared to 10 per week before the lull in the other three CTZs. Thus, it appeared that the enemy had initially reacted to the US 9th Div troop withdrawal announcement by deciding to maintain his attack level in IV CTZ, particularly by indirect fire. ³⁵²

The 1969-70 Winter/Spring Campaign

(C) Introduction. Directives 81 and 88 had marked the start of a shift towards protracted war theories. A resolution of the Binh Dinh Province Committee, MR 5, of May 1969 also revealed a move away from strategy followed in the offensives of 1968. It also reflected themes which were to become COSVN policy later in the year. ³⁵³ However, the full content of the new Lao Dong-COSVN strategy only became known after documents embodying COSVN Resolution 9's policy had been captured in the late summer and a copy of COSVN 9 itself had been captured in October. On 5 Sep a collection of enemy documents was captured by soldiers of the 1st Inf Div in III CTZ. One of the documents, classified "Absolute Secret," was a detailed lesson plan intended to acquaint VC/NVA cadre with COSVN policy and the objectives of the 1969-70 Winter-Spring Campaign. Three other documents in the same group made reference to the need for studying Resolution 9. The fact that these three other documents had been produced on the same typewriter as the detailed lesson plan concerning current COSVN policy, combined with the fact that the lesson plan closely resembled the general format of COSVN resolutions, led to the conclusion that the teaching plan itself was based on the long-awaited COSVN Resolution 9. Another document captured on 29 Aug by the US Navy in III CTZ provided similar indications concerning COSVN Resolution 9.

(C) Analysis of the document captured by the Navy indicated that COSVN would continue to pursue the objectives which were not accomplished during the 1969 Summer Campaign. These goals were aimed at attaining a limited victory by compelling the US to withdraw completely its combat troops from the RVN and to accept a coalition government with VC participation in the RVN:

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Immediate Missions

Our General Offensives and Uprisings conducted during the past years recorded very important successes. Consequently, we are now in a favorable position to move forward to speed up our continuous and overall attacks, and make a new step forward in countering every attempt of aggression by the US imperialists. We should prosecute the war until the complete withdrawal of the US troops and the toppling of the Puppet (RVN) Army and Government is accomplished. Thus we dispute the enemy (US/GVN) plans for ending the war in a strong position and foil his de-Americanization policy in order to gain a decisive victory, paving the way for the realization of an independent, democratic, peaceful, and neutral SVN.

The fundamental core of our decisive victory would be as follows: The US forces must withdraw from SVN and our military and political forces must be stronger than those of the Puppet (RVNAF) and be able to control a large part of the rural areas, important strategic areas, and city outskirts. Our forces should also strive to control a part of the urban areas and move forward to achieve immediate objectives assigned by the SVN Resolution.

The strategic objectives designed to achieve the decisive victory are as follows:

- a. Conduct violent attacks on the US troops to inflict heavy casualties on them; make them incapable of implementing their "clear-and-hold" strategy; make them incapable of de-escalating the Vietnam war with deliberations, and unsuccessful in prolonging this war to acquire a superiority in forces.
- b. Deal deadly blows on the Puppet (RVNAF) to annihilate the most stubborn elements of the Puppet Government and Army, paralyze or disintegrate the remaining elements, and render them incapable of replacing the US forces.
- c. Strive to develop our military and political forces, thus creating a strategic offensive position. We must also control a great part of the rural areas, important strategic jungle and mountain area, strategic

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communication routes, and city outskirts.

d. Continue to weaken or topple the Puppet administrative machinery at all levels, and particularly, wipe out major parts of the Puppet administrative organizations and its oppressive machinery established in the rural areas.

e. On this basis, disrupt the American imperialists' attempt of aggression, force them to give up their intention of ending the war in the strong position, and force them to promptly end the war and pull out from SVN. Under such circumstances, the Puppet Army and Government would be incapable of implementing the American plans. They would reluctantly accept a political solution which recognizes SVN as an independent, democratic, peaceful and neutral country having a coalition government formed to pave the way for the reunification of the country. ³⁵⁴

(C) The theme of extended warfare leading to ultimate political victory was restated in the COSVN lesson plan. The plan cited very exaggerated losses inflicted on the US/GVN. COSVN re-emphasized that the VC/NVA were capable of achieving the badly needed limited victory if they succeed in inflicting heavier losses on US and RVN military forces, which in turn would increase anti-war sentiment in the US and compel President Nixon to withdraw troops and accept a coalition government which soon would be dominated by the Communists. Heavy RVN losses would further support VC/NVA strategic objectives by preventing the RVNAF from benefiting from a military superiority in a post war struggle.

(C) The document emphasized the seizure of strategically important areas, particularly in the Mekong Delta in IV CTZ and the Highlands in III CTZ. In contrast to previously captured documents, it did not insist upon conventional offensives against the cities. It indicated that terrorist and sabotage activities in city areas were desirable, and it called upon the VC to hold strategic locations in jungle and mountain areas, as well as in city outskirts. However, the document appeared to appraise VC strength and potential more realistically and did not call for an all out, climaxing offensive of the kind attempted during Tet of 1968. The Communists believed that they held the initiative in the war: "The development of the war will depend exclusively on our (offensive) capabilities, especially our military and political capabilities, and also on the difficulties that the Americans will encounter in South Vietnam, in the United States, and in the world, in the military, political, and economic fields." ³⁵⁵ The new COSVN plan further called for renewed efforts to accelerate the expansion of the VCI in conjunction with an attempt to destroy GVN agencies. Particular emphasis was also placed upon propaganda activities against the population, especially city dwellers.

(C) The new document described President Nixon's program of Vietnamization of the war as an insidious attempt to minimize public opposition to the war by slowly withdrawing US combat troops while strengthening the RVNAF and providing continuing air and artillery as well as economic support with an eye to sustaining the GVN administration in power indefinitely. The Communist strategy to foil US plans for Vietnamization was based on a continued effort to

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inflict large numbers of US and RVN casualties, thereby bringing US anti-war pressure to such a pitch that President Nixon would be forced to withdraw all US troops and accept an ostensibly neutralist, but actually pro-Communist, coalition government in the RVN. 356

(C) On 9 Oct, COSVN Resolution 9 itself was captured. The document was captured by an element of the 199th Lt Inf Bde during an ambush in which a ranking VC cadre was possibly killed. The document was received at the Combined Document Exploitation Center (CDEC) on 15 Oct. 357

(C) COSVN Resolution 9 was formulated and disseminated in compliance with Lao Dong Party Resolution "C" promulgated in April in Hanoi. 358 Resolution 9 reviewed the situation existing after the 1968 offensives, after the Tet offensive of 1969, and after the US had adopted the policy of Vietnamization and troop redeployment. It assessed penetratingly and thoroughly VC/NVA and US/RVN strengths and weaknesses. The apparent uncertainty which seemed to have gripped VC/NVA leaders in the winter and early spring was over. What must have been a difficult policy reassessment had been completed. Reflecting the military and political realities in RVN, COSVN Resolution 9 established the new policy and events during the latter months of 1969 indicated that the VC/NVA were following it closely.

(C) Resolution 9 recognized that the VC/NVA were incapable of a military victory in the short run so it attempted to establish a policy which would lead to an eventual military-political victory. Instead of "total victory," COSVN spoke of "decisive victory." 359 Although the Resolution cited victories, COSVN exhorted its followers to overcome numerous obstacles, and these obstacles revealed difficulties faced by the VC/NVA after the developments of 1968. COSVN urged its forces to combat the US/GVN pacification program and the US plan to Vietnamize the war. Resolution 9 emphasized the importance of securing control of the rural lowlands, particularly the Mekong Delta, and of jungle and mountain base areas. In order to force the US to withdraw greater numbers of troops from RVN, the resolution advocated inflicting high casualties on US forces. However, tactics were to utilize the principle of winning major victories with smaller sized forces.

(U) COSVN Resolution 9 consisted of four major sections:

1. The first part of Resolution 9 consisted of an "Evaluation of the Situation." COSVN asserted that the General Offensive and Uprising had scored two major victories, the withdrawal of 25,000 US troops and the halt of bombing over North Vietnam. Further, COSVN claimed that they had greatly contributed to defeating the US "clear and hold" strategy described as the "initial step... of de-Americanizing the war" and had forced the US to adopt a strategy of passive defense. Resolution 9 stated that their tactics had caused very heavy losses to the enemy at very light cost to themselves. These alleged successes were ascribed to improvement in the leadership of the Party and to "a more thorough understanding of the Central Committee's lines, policies, and resolutions..." The improvement was to enable their forces to win greater military and political victories "... under extremely fierce and complicated (fighting) conditions..." However, major obstacles in such areas as military proselytizing, guerrilla warfare, recruiting, and building political associations existed. Shortcomings were ascribed to the fact that many leaders at various echelons "... did not thoroughly comprehend the basic problems of the General Offensive and uprising..." and failed to implement policy adequately. Resolution 9 continued accusing "a few of our cadres and Party members..." of being "... usually superficial and narrow-minded in assessing our strength and the enemy's: ... they overestimate the

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enemy and underestimate the capacities of the masses; therefore when faced with difficulties, they become skeptical and lack resolution vis-a-vis the Central Committee's strategic determination; and they lose interest in attacking, which is the highest principle of the General Offensive and Uprising." In addition, "... they usually have an erroneous conception of the transitional nature of the General Offensive and Uprising, now thinking it is a one-blow affair and consequently lacking vigilance against the enemy plots, now thinking it is a period of protracted struggle and consequently lacking boldness and sense of urgency; worse still, they become right-leaning and shrink back from action." COSVN urged flexibility and blamed their problems on failures of leadership and on inadequate organization of political mass associations.

2. Part II of Resolution 9 turned to "Future Enemy Schemes and Our Immediate Tasks." US policy was characterized as an effort "... to de-Americanize and de-escalate the war step by step, to preserve their manpower and material as they de-escalate, especially to preserve U.S. troops, and to compete with us (in territory and population control) so as they can end the war on a definite strong position." Resolution 9 went on to elaborate its vision of U.S. policy:

Specifically, they will strive to consolidate and strengthen the puppet army and administration, and as an immediate objective, they will maintain the U.S. troops at an essential level for an essential period of time; go on with their "clear and hold" strategy; reinforce their defense setup; strive to hold major strategic positions in South Viet-Nam; accelerate the pacification program in order to gain control of the people and territory; seek all means to weaken our military and political forces; cause difficulties for us; create conditions in which they could gradually withdraw American troops while keeping the puppet troops strong; and on this basis, find a political solution (which would allow them) to end the war while still maintaining neocolonialism in South Viet-Nam to a certain extent and under a certain form; to create a "neutral" South Viet-Nam whose real nature is pro-American and in which the U.S. lackeys still keep a strong force and hold advantageous positions (which enable them) to compete with us economically and politically after the war; to maintain by all means their position in Southeast Asia without affecting the U.S. influence and prestige over the world. (underlining was in original document)

"Two possible developments" in future US actions were foreseen: "Increasing losses" and "greater difficulties" might "force" the US "to seek an early end to the war through a political solution" which the US would have to accept. Even if this should occur, COSVN predicted that there would be a period of time after the agreement had been signed when some US troops would remain in RVN prior to complete withdrawal. In that period, the struggle would "... go on with extreme complexity." If VC/NVA attacks weren't sufficiently strong and if the US should solve

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some of its difficulties, then Resolution 9 expected the US to take the second possible direction which would be "to prolong the war... for a certain period of time." In that time, the US would "try to de-escalate from a strong position... and carry out the de-Americanization in prolonged war contest before they must admit defeat and accept a political solution."

(U) Either of these directions could entail US threats to broaden the war:

In both these eventualities, especially in the case of a prolonged de-escalation, the Americans may, in certain circumstances, put pressure on us by threatening to broaden the war through the resumption of bombing in North Viet-Nam within a definite scope and time limit, or the expansion of the war into Laos and Cambodia.

COSVN concluded that their own actions plus the impact of the war in the US would determine which direction the war took:

Whether the war will develop according to the first or second eventuality depends principally on the strength of our attacks in the military, political and diplomatic fields, especially our military and political attacks, and on the extent of military, political, economic and financial difficulties which the war causes to the Americans in Viet-Nam, in the U. S. A. itself, and over the world.

Resolution 9 anticipated that the US would "carry on the clear and hold strategy, and vigorously push forward the rural pacification program..." The US and GVN were expected to defend Saigon and the Saigon area, "to contest" for the Mekong Delta, and to try to hold positions in the jungle and mountain area. These were the three major areas under COSVN's jurisdiction. The Resolution anticipated political competition with the US/GVN "... particularly in Saigon and religious and ethnic minority areas..." "Espionage" and psychological warfare in the form of appeals "to rally and surrender" were expected US/GVN tactics.

(U) The US was pictured as caught in the grip of a serious "contradiction":

The situation is compelling the Americans to pull out troops as soon as possible in order to reduce casualties and war expenditures; however, in order for the puppet troops to grow stronger, the Americans have to prolong the war, and if the war is prolonged, U. S. war casualties and expenditures cannot be reduced, and the U. S. failures and difficulties will reach an unbearable level.

If the Americans cannot withdraw troops, internal conflicts between the U. S. rulers and between the American people and their rulers will increase. But if U. S. troops are pulled out, the puppet army

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and administration will face a greater danger of collapse and contradictions between the Americans and the puppets as well as internal contradictions among the puppets will become more acute.

COSVN foresaw the possibility of a sudden collapse of the GVN if the VC/NVA "know how to step up... military, political and proselyting activities." The Resolution asserted that if the US "... suffers heavy defeats and has no other way out, there is the possibility that he will be compelled to de-escalate by sudden leaps."

3. With this assessment of the US position as background, COSVN provided its cadres with missions which were aimed at winning "a decisive victory"; the essential prerequisite for "achievement of the revolution's objectives in South Vietnam." The missions were to implement the three pronged attack (military-political-proselyting) and diplomatic offensives, to increase the political and military forces, to combat US/GVN pacification, and to defeat American attempts "... to end the war in a strong position and... to de-Americanize the war." "The essence of... decisive victory" (following Instruction 11-68 which possibly had been issued in Nov 68 by C which was the Hanoi Lao Dong Central Party Committee) was defined:

that the Americans must withdraw all troops from South Viet-Nam, that our military and political forces must be stronger than the remaining forces of the puppet army and administration, that our military and political forces must be master of the major part of the rural area, the important strategic areas, the areas bordering the cities, and some parts of the cities, principally at the basic level, and that (we be in a position to) achieve the immediate objectives of the Revolution in the South.

Given the overall missions, COSVN next enunciated "strategic objectives" which included attacks on US troops primarily to inflict heavy casualties, attacks against the ARVN and GVN aimed at producing the collapse of ARVN and attempts to build up their own military and political forces. Repeatedly, emphasis was placed on the need to defeat the US/GVN pacification program. Concurrently, the cadre were urged to work towards building up their own infrastructure and to promote the role of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. Accomplishment of the strategic objectives aimed to force the US "... to end the war quickly and withdraw troops while the puppet army and administration are still too weak to take over the responsibility of the Americans; force the Americans to accept a political solution, and recognize an independent, democratic peaceful and neutral South Viet-Nam with a national, democratic coalition government working toward reunifying Viet-Nam." To achieve his ends, COSVN advocated improved leadership which would recognize that they "... must highly concentrate our efforts to win a decisive victory within a relatively short period of time" and also that they had to build their strength "to ensure that we are able to fight vigorously and for a sustained period of time, to become stronger as we fight and to win greater victories as we fight." So Resolution 9 remained flexible about achieving short run success, but advocated preparing for a long war. Victory was to be achieved by developing the strategic offensive step by step while being adept at "seizing, creating and taking advantage of opportunities in order to produce leaps forward."

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(U) COSVN advocated "outstanding efforts to bring to the highest point of development the combined strength of our three-pronged attack, coordinated with a diplomatic offensive. In the three strategic areas, including the cities, rural low lands and jungle-and-mountain areas." The resolution advocated striving to "develop the (political) offensive" from a "partial uprising in the cities and rural areas to the general uprising." The Saigon area remained for the VC/NVA the "major battlefield for the whole of South Viet-Nam." Attacks and sieges of Saigon and other major cities comprising the urban front were advocated. COSVN ordered its cadres to "prevent the enemy from breaking out of... encirclement." The rural area and particularly the Mekong Delta were described as "an extremely important strategic area at the present time and in the future," particularly because of pacification in those areas by the US/GVN. The jungle and mountain areas continued to be an important strategic region because it was a stable base connecting COSVN regions "to the great rear (i. e. North Vietnam)."

4. Having assessed the general situation, analyzed US policy alternatives, and provided missions to its cadres, COSVN then elaborated its major tasks. Resolution 9 again extensively exaggerated its victories prior to a discussion of defects, which included the failure to coordinate offensives on all fronts adequately, failure to adequately develop guerrilla warfare, and the failure to launch a "continuous, strong and incisive" offensive. Strategy was to include the deployment of the three kinds of forces (main force, regional force, and guerrillas) such that Allied units would be tied down in the cities and stretched thin in the rural and mountainous areas. At the same time, VC/NVA Forces were to be concentrated on the most advantageous battlefield in an attempt to defeat US/GVN troops after they had been drawn away from their base areas.

(U) Revealing a recognition of the difficulty of massing its troops, and in the attempt to develop economy of force tactics. Resolution 9 asserted that they "must... more properly apply the combat method which combines small-scale attack with medium-scale and large-scale attacks, including large-scale attacks conducted with small forces." The militia-guerrilla and the sappers, light mortar units, and army engineers specialized in attacking communication lines, the combat reconnaissance force and the communication-liaison units were to be developed. The military forces were to be an effective tool of the Party and indoctrination of the troops was to intensify. Proselyting of both the military and civilian populace was to be increased. This was one of COSVN's major prescriptions to overcome difficulties which it faced in 1969. Guerrilla warfare was to be "developed" in the cities. Guidance on the propaganda to be used stated:

The Central slogan at the present time is still geared toward demanding peace, independence, democracy and better living conditions. The transitional slogan at this time will specifically demand the restoration of peace, the overthrow of Thieu-Ky-Huong, the establishment of a peace cabinet. The use of this transitional slogan should be flexible, practical and properly adapted to each place, each time, each (social) class and each (political) circle. When the situation develops (as we wish) we will put forth another slogan of a higher (political) scope.

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(U) COSVN stated that the VC/NVA had to "have a foothold at any cost" in the areas bordering the cities. In those areas, both "overt" and "covert" organizations should exist. Inverting the usual meanings of the words "overt" and "covert," COSVN Resolution 9 stated that overt organizations would utilize "illegal methods" while covert organizations would know how to use "open and legal activities." Resolution 9 asserted that, "For a common task and common objective, we must build two separate forces with two separate methods of operations." It was emphasized that efforts should be made to build up the front organizations and that in doing so external forces should give support but not "come to control."

(U) COSVN admitted that the US/GVN controlled a number of densely populated rural areas and specifically mentioned areas with large numbers of religious and ethnic minorities and refugee areas. Resolution 9 advocated the formation of "many operation teams" and "armed propaganda teams" in those "contested areas." COSVN advocated focusing on the religious and ethnic minority areas, particularly in the Mekong Delta. It wanted to link the interests of these groups to class and national interests and to try to win over the progressive leaders of the religious and ethnic minorities. The Party also advocated the use of selective terror by stating that "The missions of eliminating the traitorous elements among the religious and ethnic groups must be carried out carefully and must have the support of the religious and ethnic masses; otherwise, they would produce adverse consequences..."

(U) Control over the liberated areas was to be consolidated. The peasants were to be initiated step by step into collective living.

(U) Resolution 9 cited the People's Revolutionary Committees and the Provisional Revolutionary Government as keystones to a "perfect system" of revolutionary administration. It stressed the need to develop administrative units from the local level on up in order to win "the coming struggle between the revolutionary administration and the counter-revolutionary administration" which would be "fierce and complicated."

(U) An area of great concern to COSVN was security. VC/NVA security personnel had the dual missions of counterintelligence and of killing opponent leaders. Resolution 9 stated:

The immediate mission of the security work is to:
'Continue to motivate a broad and deep movement to guard against spies and protect secrets within the Party, within the revolutionary associations, and among the masses; defeat all of the enemy's plans and activities regarding espionage, infiltrated agents, and psywar surrender appeals; positively preserve internal security within the Party, the administration and the revolutionary associations; maintain order and security for the people; protect transportation corridors; serve the combat of the troops and the political struggle of the masses; contribute positively to overthrowing the puppet administrative system; and endeavor to prepare forces and conditions for advancing to the smashing of all the enemy's long-range plots and acts against the revolution.'

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The functions of the Security Branch were close to those of a secret police.

(U) COSVN advocated the "comprehensive development of the economic-financial front." The US/GVN was portrayed as "encircling and destroying the economy of our base areas." The long range motto was self-reliance and the Resolution stressed the need for fighting while protecting production. It was in its economic potential that Resolution 9 particularly emphasized the importance of the Mekong Delta and stated that "all economic and financial activities are presently centered on the production of food and food products." COSVN also valued labor highly stating:

In the Eastern Nam Bo and the jungle-and-mountain areas we must make full use of all labor sources, resolutely struggle against the enemy, destroy all concentration camps, demand the return of the people to their former fields and gardens where they can make a living, and strive by all means to step up the production of food and food products in order to ensure self-sufficiency and high quality on-the-spot rear services.

The theme in the field of production was to be, "the fields and gardens are battlefields; hoes and plows are weapons; farmers are combatants; the rear area is emulating the front line." The aim was to get food and material to the organs and army units that needed them and "concurrently, to satisfactorily organize the circulation of goods within the liberated area as well as between our (liberated) area and the area under temporary enemy control in order to ensure the people's livelihood." The self-sufficiency production movement plus opportune buying were essential to ensure the existence of enough necessary reserve stocks. (Outside) aid was to be used very thriftily. Finance was to be organized by the principle of centralized management of financial receipts and expenses. Thriftiness was to be the criterion of revolutionary ethics and waste and corruption were to be opposed. COSVN told its cadre to urge the populace "to cling to their fields, gardens and production work" in the face of US/GVN pacification. Infiltration in RVN was seen as offering the VC/NVA an opportunity to lead the people in the everyday struggle for their livelihood. Resolution 9 also advocated acting to destroy the GVN economy. Economic questions were seen as having political significance. For instance, the collection of financial resources in cities was seen as having great political significance.

(U) Resolution 9 advocated efforts to strengthen base areas such that areas controlled by the VC/NVA in the rural lowlands and in the jungle-and-mountain areas would be linked so that they could provide assistance to each other.

(U) Improvement of the party was another major task. Recruitment, particularly of young members, female members, and members in ethnic minority and religious areas and within the armed forces, particularly among the militia-guerrillas, was encouraged. Qualitative improvement of the cadre was also urged "in order to ensure the fulfillment of our mission under any circumstances." Much attention was paid in the latter portions of Resolution 9 to counteracting morale problems within the party and to counteracting US/GVN PSYOP operations. After praising the cadre for remaining loyal to the Party, COSVN stated that some cadre "have shrunk from duties, turned rightist, feared violent fighting, resented sacrifices, doubted the people's revolutionary capabilities, hung back, relied on others (for the pursuance of the Revolution) and entertained peace illusions." COSVN added that "in some very particular cases some members

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have surrendered to the enemy and perpetrated traitorous misdeeds which hurt the Party and the people." To overcome these problems, Resolution 9 directed the implementation of "a broad reindoctrination study phase in the whole Party, the whole army, and the whole people..." The ideological reindoctrination was, among other things, to combat the attitudes cited above, build up support of the revolution, oppose any inclinations to relax and to rest, build up "revolutionary virtues, which are industriousness, thriftiness, honesty, righteousness, justice, and impartiality," oppose any manifestation of individualism, build a high sense of organization and discipline, and to build a sense of urgency. Another antidote to morale problems suggested by Resolution 9 was to launch a nationalistic anti-American political campaign under the slogan "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom; fight until the Americans get out and the puppets fall."

(U) COSVN Resolution 9 closed with an appeal to the cadre summarizing the major themes of the campaign plan and overall program. The appeal reiterated the views that "the struggle... will be extremely violent and complicated," that the VC/NVA "advantages are very basic" and that the US/GVN "are meeting difficulties that cannot be overcome."³⁶⁰

Last Quarter - 1969

(S) Developments in the last quarter of 1969 followed COSVN Resolution 9 closely. A high point occurred early in October and the high point at the beginning of November initiated the first phase of the winter campaign. However, these high points were far less intense than the offensive activity after Tet. During 1969 there was a continual decline in the intensity of enemy activity. The enemy shifted from sustained country-wide offensives to country-wide high points, and finally to corps-wide surges in activity during the last three months of the year.³⁶¹ Attacks on population centers also declined during the year.³⁶²

(C) The major battle of the last quarter occurred around the Bu Prang and Duc Lap CIDG camps. The pattern of enemy attack was similar to the Ben Het battle earlier in the year. The VC/NVA strategy had been enunciated by General Giap and by COSVN Resolution 9: attempt to attack in an area in which the opponent will be drawn away from his base areas and where the VC/NVA advantages will be maximized. In addition, the focus of the attack was against ARVN troops. The attack failed, although some fire bases were abandoned at the beginning of the battle. Another objective of the attack probably was to inflict heavy casualties. A significant factor was that the NVA forces had delayed after arriving in the area for several months before initiating the attack at the end of October indicating that supply difficulties may have been encountered.³⁶³ Indications began to appear with some frequency that supply problems were beginning to affect combat operations during the last months of 1969.

(C) The first phase of the winter campaign stressed proselyting while attempts were made to build up logistically. Anticipated high points in the period from 19 Dec to 28 Dec failed to materialize and indications were that the VC/NVA concentrated on spreading propaganda during that period. The effort to bolster the morale of the cadre through reindoctrination was pursued. The VC/NVA attempted to exploit resentments or potential areas of resentment against the GVN. For instance a document stated:

.... we must struggle for (the realization of) political slogans demanding the abolition of all forms of oppression, abolition of irrational taxes, freedom of movement.

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freedom to go about one's business, decrease in the prices of rice and foodstuffs, opposing fines and extortion of money, conscriptions, and (forced enrollment in) civil self-defense organizations. The most important themes to be discussed at this time in cities are themes on ending the war, restoring peace, and repatriating U. S. and satellite troops. ³⁶⁴

The VC/NVA continued to follow developments in the US closely.

(C) The primary VC/NVA targets became pacification and vietnamization. ³⁶⁵ ARVN troops suffered greater numbers of casualties as they bore more of the brunt of the fighting and probably were targetted more by the enemy. Attacks were launched on ARVN training facilities. Although statistics didn't wholly bear out the fact that the VC/NVA were targetting the PSDF, both agent reports and captured documents led to the conclusion that the Viet Cong not only targetted this paramilitary element of the GVN Accelerated Pacification Campaign, but also that they would continue to do so in the future at an increased rate. ³⁶⁶

The VC/NVA reacted strongly to affirmations of Vietnamization by President Nixon and other officials in Washington.

(S) At the end of 1969, VC/NVA strategy was geared to fight a protracted war or else to move into a cease fire period which would be characterized in their eyes by intense political competition, which would include the use of force, and by continued attempts to gain political dominance and control in RVN. An agent reported that a decision had been reached by high ranking cadre who had attended a meeting in the Ba Thu area that the Communist offensives had failed in 1969 and that the COSVN plan for conventional warfare should be modified to guerrilla warfare. This would enable the VC/NVA to build up stores of supplies and to reinforce their units. Efforts would be turned toward propoganda and proselytizing. ³⁶⁷ Indications were that VC military strategy and tactics throughout RVN were designed to attempt to gain back territory and population lost in 1969. ³⁶⁸ NVA troops were moving into the Delta in large numbers. The VC/NVA were attempting to improve morale among their soldiers and cadre, however the shortages of food and Allied pressure led to continuing reports of low morale in some units. A large increase in the flow of supplies down the Ho Chi Minh trail also was evident.

(S) An intelligence estimate formulated early in 1970 assessed the VC/NVA position at the end of 1969:

The enemy retains a significant capability for initiating offensive activity on relatively short notice in selected areas, but he does not currently have the capability to sustain such attacks. However, all indications underscore the enemy's activity and his intentions to employ that option should he find it politically or militarily advantageous.

Present enemy strategy represents a blend of political and military activity calculated to achieve domestic anti-war pressure in the US leading to a rapid redeployment of US Forces, the collapse of the GVN and the creation of a coalition government in the RVN.

The enemy is expected to continue to rely primarily on attacks-by-fire, small unit ground attacks and sapper attacks designed to inflict maximum Allied casualties, disrupt RVNAF

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modernization and impede the pacification program at minimum cost to himself. This will be combined with terrorism proselyting, and propaganda designed to weaken the GVN and establish support for the PRG. 369

Tactics

(C) The most important tactical developments in 1969 were the declining frequency of major unit attacks as the year progressed and concurrently the emphasis placed on sapper training by the VC/NVA. Although there was no dramatic rise in the number of sapper attacks in 1969, prospects pointed towards increased use of the tactic by the VC/NVA in the future. 370

(C) Documents indicated that there was a Sapper Staff at COSVN level. This Sapper Staff was subordinate to the Military Staff Department of the Military Headquarters, COSVN. Plans for the establishment of this staff section, as well as similar staff sections at lower echelons, had been formulated as early as 1966. The earliest date of any document indicating implementation of these plans at COSVN was May 1968.

(C) The functions and mission of this staff section were to:

1. Draft plans organizing sappers throughout COSVN.
2. Develop sapper training plans.
3. Provide leadership for sapper units.
4. Develop sapper tactical concepts.
5. Research and develop information concerning sapper targets and objectives.

(C) The evolution of the Sapper Staff prior to 1968 was vague. However, its existence as an embryo sapper staff element was reported as early as 1966. This staff element had the cover designation of B18. During mid-1967, B18 was combined with COSVN's Armor Staff Element (also known as B16), which had operational control of two armor battalions. Control of the battalions was assumed by the combined Armor/Sapper Staff Element, which retained the cover designation B16. Prior to the Tet Offensive of 1968, operational control of these battalions was passed to lower echelons. Control of these units was never re-assumed by this staff, and the sapper element was separated from the Armor Staff to form a separate section. Further, there was no evidence that the Sapper Staff had control over any sapper field unit; command and control was exercised through the normal chain of command. However, it is probable that the COSVN Sapper Staff, due to the nature of its mission, had a certain influence over the targeting and employment of sapper units. The two armor battalions under B16 were given sapper training and sapper missions, but their continued subordination to B16 (Armor Section) was not confirmed. Regardless, the two battalions were known not to be subordinate to the Sapper Staff Section.

(C) Indications were that the development of the Sapper Staff in COSVN followed a similar reorganization in the NVA command and staff structure. Prior to 1967, NVA sapper policy had been administered from the NVA High Command. Documents referred to a sapper school directed by the NVA General Staff as early as 1963. The Naval Headquarters maintained its own sapper section. In late April or early May 1967, a Sapper Headquarters was established as a

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joint headquarters for ground and naval sappers. This headquarters was subordinate to the Sapper Department, Joint General Staff, NVN, and it continued to establish and direct sapper policy. In 1969, in NVN, sapper staff sections and/or sapper staff assistants were found throughout the command elements of the MRs, SR, provinces, districts and at division, regiment, and battalion staff levels. 371

(U) The Sapper. The sapper was a well trained, highly disciplined combat engineer. He was not a guerrilla and although frequently used in terrorist activities, he was not a terrorist per se. The term "sapper" or "pioneer" has traditionally been applied to the combat engineer. (The term originated in Europe in order to distinguish between the conventional military construction engineers and those engineers directly assigned to combat units.) The term "sapper" as used by the VC/NVA retained the combat engineer connotation; however, the VC/NVA sapper mission also encompassed those tasks normally assigned to units of the Commando-Raider-Ranger variety.

(C) The 1969 role of the sapper was best understood in the following context: He was not new to the battlefield; he was vulnerable; and he could influence the outcome of hostilities. Over the past seven years there had been little change in the mission, organization, disposition, tactics, and basic training of the sapper. However, there had been improvements and external influences which placed greater emphasis on the role of the sapper.

(C) The basic tactic employed by sappers was the raid. The basic unit was the cell (a team usually of two to five men), and the basic armament was the explosive charge.

(C) The raid was an operation involving a swift penetration into hostile territory to inflict maximum damage on preselected targets. It terminated with a planned withdrawal upon completion of the assigned mission. The raid historically had been used as an economy of force measure designed to minimize friendly losses while at the same time maximizing enemy losses. It was normally employed by a force which lacked the capability of decisively engaging an enemy force in a conventional manner.

(C) The raid was characterized by meticulous planning utilizing sand tables; mockups; rehearsals, careful reconnaissance, which sometimes lasted as much as one month or longer; secrecy, the prime element in any sapper attack; surprise, which was achieved by giving careful consideration to the three factors just mentioned; short duration (a sapper attack rarely lasted more than 10 minutes because of the lack of supporting weapons); and violence of action.

(C) Sapper techniques were specifically designed to eliminate the need for fire superiority in the attack. Stealth and secrecy substituted for fire superiority. If penetration was achieved, the sapper sought to counteract massive Allied defensive fires by thrusting deeply into defensive positions from different directions and hitting several targets simultaneously, causing confusion and limiting the effective use of allied fire power.

(C) Although sappers had been used for considerable time by the VC/NVA, there was evidence that only since mid-1968 had the enemy begun to appreciate the capabilities of the sapper.

(C) The increase in enemy sapper activity in RVN could be attributed to the severe losses suffered by the VC/NVA during 1968 when they attempted to engage Allied units in a conventional fashion in large scale operations. Since that time there had been a marked decrease in such

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enemy-initiated operations, due primarily to the inability of the VC/NVA to mount them.

(C) Thus, since mid-1968 the VC/NVA had adopted a strategy of economy of force and sappers had become essential to the enemy's dual program of conserving strength while maintaining military pressure. The sapper was well suited to the pursuit of this strategy. His compatibility with the objective of disrupting the economic and political stability of the GVN while combating military forces, combined with his economy of employment, made sapper operations one of the most lucrative enemy military undertakings. With minimum expenditures the sapper had the potential to inflict costly military and political damage. By effectively using sappers the VC/NVA apparently hoped to improve their military image.

(C) During the latter months of 1968 and the first five months of 1969, there was a marked increase in the effectiveness of sapper attacks against Allied field positions and fixed military installations such as storage depots, base camps, and airfields. The limited success of these attacks could be attributed to two reasons: first, over-confidence on the part of Allied defense forces; second, the defenders' unfamiliarity with sapper techniques. There was evidence that the VC/NVA were attempting to capitalize on what they considered their initial success by converting field units into sapper units and emphasizing sapper techniques at all echelons.

(C) Nonetheless, the effectiveness of sapper attacks against these types of targets sharply decreased after June though the frequency of such attacks increased. The reason for this decrease is simple: Allied leaders at all echelons re-emphasized the employment of proper defense measures.

(C) There was, however, an ominous sequel to the decrease in sapper effectiveness against Allied military installations. As standard defense techniques had been re-emphasized against sapper attacks directed against logistical and combat installations, it appeared that personnel in non-tactical areas were being targeted rather than just war materiel. A case in point was the sapper attack against the convalescent hospital at Cam Ranh Bay.

(C) Two sapper attacks which occurred in 1969 in RVN exemplified various aspects of sapper attacks.

(C) The first attack, which took place 7 July, was targeted against a tactical military installation, a small base camp located in southern II CTZ. The base camp was protected by a perimeter composed of three barbed wire and concertina fences. The perimeter also included a mine field. In addition, bunkers, medium tanks, and armored personnel carriers were placed at strategic positions along the perimeter. The camp was divided between elements of a US cavalry troop and a Vietnamese Regional Force company, with the US forces occupying the western portion of the installation and the Vietnamese occupying the eastern portion. The mission of the cavalry troop was to sweep the roads in its area of operations daily and ensure their security. Each night the troop returned to its base camp, where it was split: the first platoon and headquarters element occupied the base camp while the second and third platoons occupied a fire support base 1500 meters south-southwest of the camp. At 0130 hours, 7 July, the base camp came under a heavy mortar barrage. Personnel in the installation, deceived into believing that they were being subjected only to an attack-by-fire, deployed to the bunkers and vehicles to wait out the attack. Five minutes later sapper assault teams breached the perimeter in four locations, three in the US sector and one in the Vietnamese sector. After penetration each assault team broke up into a number of independent assault cells and proceeded to preselected

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targets, inflicting damage and casualties with explosive charges and small arms fire and causing confusion in the target area. The attack lasted approximately 30 minutes and was finally broken up when the troop commander ordered the second platoon to reinforce the base camp. The attack resulted in six US KIA and 21 US WIA. One ARVN soldier was also wounded in action. In addition, a number of tracked and wheeled vehicles were destroyed or damaged.

(C) Stealth, secrecy, and deception were substituted for fire superiority in the attack by the enemy sapper unit, and this proved to be the decisive ingredient in the success of the attack.

(C) The second attack was targeted against a non-tactical target, the RVNAF Language School in Cholon, and personnel, rather than war materiel, were the immediate targets. The attack took place on 7 Aug.

(C) The language school was located on Dong Khanh Street, a busy thoroughfare which linked Cholon with Saigon. The school, located on the corner of Bui Duy Than Street, was protected by a barrier consisting of gasoline drums filled with sand, concertina wire, and sandbags. Guards were stationed at the corners of the building and at the side and main entrances; across the street was the Dong Khanh Hotel. The school was flanked by Vietnamese dwellings and a medical supply company.

(C) The attack was planned and coordinated by a high VC/NVA echelon of command. Trained sappers of a special action unit targeted against Saigon were utilized. The special action unit was composed of both men and women (the leader was a woman). The unit was broken down into three teams or cells -- an assault cell, a fire support and security cell, and a rear services cell which in this instance, was also utilized as the command element. The assault cell was charged with launching the attack; the fire support and security cell was charged with the mission of providing security and keeping the escape route open; the command and rear services cell was responsible for providing over-all direction for the attack and transporting the explosive to the target area.

(C) The unit planned to gather in the objective area at 1510 hours and launch the attack at 1530, but one of the members of the assault cell was delayed approximately 35 minutes due to an accident. At 1520 the members of the fire support and security cell took up their predesignated positions, one at the head of Dong Khanh Street, one in the Dong Khanh Hotel, and one in the restaurant. Finally, at 1530 the third member of the assault cell arrived, but at that moment a police car arrived, further delaying the attack. Members from the rear services and command cell determined that the police in the car, which was parked in front of the restaurant, did not constitute a threat to the attack and preparations for the attack continued. One of the members of the rear services and command cell moved the vehicle containing the main explosive to the side entrance of the school.

(C) At that moment security guards at the school became suspicious and raised their rifles, but members of the assault cell attacked throwing grenades and forcing the security guards to withdraw. After the detonation of the main explosive, the entire unit withdrew in the direction of An Binh Street with the fire support and security cell providing cover by throwing additional grenades. The attack resulted in three RVNAF and nine civilian KIA in addition to a large number of WIA. The high percentage of civilian KIA and WIA resulted from the callous decision of the VC/NVA to place the main charge at the side entrance of the language school near a number of occupied Vietnamese dwellings. After the attack EOD personnel discovered and disarmed an

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explosive charge placed in the gas tank of a motor bike located across the street from the school. Presumably this charge was left behind to inflict additional casualties on personnel reinforcing the area and any curious civilians who might congregate in the area after the attack.

(C) Conclusion. As a result of the re-emphasis on standard defensive measures, the success of sapper attacks directed against war materiel located at tactical military installations appeared to be on the decrease, through the frequency of these attacks was rising. Non-tactical installations were attacked where personnel rather than materiel were the principal targets. These attacks were probably being used as a means of maintaining a high casualty rate, as well as indiscriminately spreading terror among the population. ³⁷²

Terrorism

(U) The value of terror as a guerrilla war tactic was recognized by NVN's Minister of National Defense, General Giap, when he stated that the "correct path" for people to follow in order to liberate themselves was "revolutionary violence." Terror was the traditional weapon of the insurgent in the RVN.

(U) The objectives of VC terrorists were to reduce GVN influence by disrupting its civil administration, shake the people's confidence in the ability of the GVN to protect them through pacification, and tighten VC control of the general populace. Targets included GVN officials, cadres, and sympathizers, village and hamlet leaders, National Police, refugee and resettlement areas, Chieu Hai centers, RVNAF, and FWMF personnel.

(U) Techniques employed by the insurgents included selective assassination, abduction, and indiscriminate killing or wounding. These were accomplished by employing any method available, such as bombing, mining, boobytrapping, rocketing, mortaring, or door-to-door raiding.

(U) Public execution was a frequent terrorist activity, since they believed it set an explicit example to convince the people of the consequences of giving aid and comfort to the enemy of the VC. At times a death notice would be publicly read, before the assassination, and then placed on the body which was displayed for several days.

(U) Enemy terrorism showed utter disregard for the safety of civilians who lived, worked, and traveled in areas where terrorist devices were located. As a result, the group which statistically sustained the greatest number of terrorist casualties was made up of innocent RVN citizens who were victims of the random enemy violence.

(U) Although terrorism was extensively used by the VC throughout 1969, the enemy apparently recognized that its indiscriminate usage alienated the people from his cause. This perhaps aids in explaining the reasoning behind periods of laxity in terrorist incidents.

The Terrorist

(C) In his various missions to intimidate the people of RVN to rally to the VC, the terrorist frequently employed sapper methodology and was, in fact, a type of sapper. A study of friendly after action reports revealed that the sapper was essentially employed in four roles:

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with or without infantry in the combat assault, in water, and in city "special action" groups. The latter made up the ranks of the experienced terrorist. Special action groups were covert units designed specifically to fight in a hostile urban environment. Trained for actions of a unique and special nature unsuited to conventional units, these groups were trained to engage in terrorist and sabotage activities, disseminate propaganda, proselytize the population, and fight from house-to-house.

(C) The mission of the special action group was to maintain constant military pressure on the enemy in his secure areas; e. g., urban areas, through acts of sabotage and terrorism; and to coordinate with and assist larger tactical units attacking the towns and cities by attacking objectives from within and causing confusion in the objective area. Implied in both missions was the political task of winning the support of the population in the urban areas.

(C) City special action groups had no standard organization and differed from city to city. Generally, the special action units used the three-man cell concept, whereby two men carried out the assigned mission while the third provided cover for the team and took over the mission from either of the first two if one was rendered incapable of continuing. The basic tactic utilized by the cell was the raid. Armed with an explosive charge, and at times an AK-47 or side-arm, the cell disguised itself and launched a surprise attack against the "enemy" and then withdrew quickly. Usually the target of the special action unit was soft, e. g., personnel, theaters, restaurants, BOQs, and BEQs. Vehicles were often used by this unit to approach and withdraw from the target area. One member would scout the area and, if necessary, provide covering fire; the second would operate the vehicle; and the third would hit the target with explosives (See the Tactics Section of this chapter for a description of a sapper-terrorist attack in Saigon).

(C) Differing from sappers in the other three categories mentioned above, who were normally based outside cities and entered only to conduct operations, the special action sapper usually lived and operated entirely within the urban areas, relying heavily on the use of legal or forged documents to conceal his identity.

(C) The trained and experienced sapper was usually highly motivated and fully conversant with the tactical requirements of the sapper assault and with the personal and collective expertise required to accomplish a hazardous mission. He was also a raider; an individual who relied on secrecy and stealth; had a thorough knowledge of his objective and its avenues of approach; was familiar with the techniques to surmount natural and man-made obstacles; was an expert in the use of conventional weapons; and was fully knowledgeable in the uses of explosives.³⁷³

(C) Terrorists were not limited in composition to experienced, fully trained individuals. Throughout 1969, emphasis was placed on recruitment (often times by threat) and training (extensive or limited to a few minutes) of civilian women or children under the age of 15. The latter were used especially, since they were not required to have ID cards and therefore had unrestricted access to GVN-controlled areas. The increased use of women and children for terrorist activities allowed the VC to conduct frequent and more dangerous or suicidal missions without risking valuable cadre.

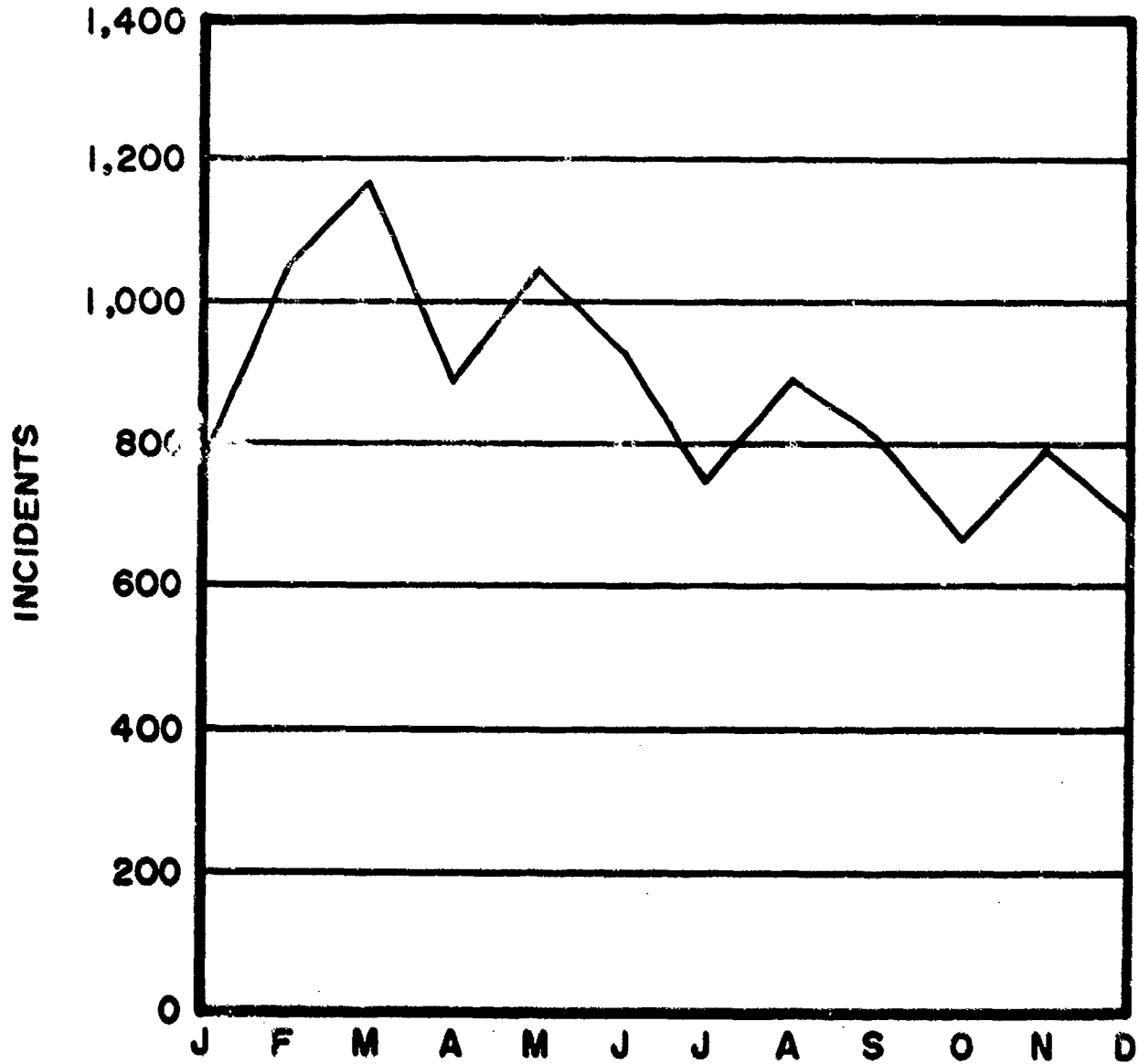
(U) A chart depicting the trend of terrorist incidents in 1969 is located at Figure III-18. Tables III-9 and III-10 list the categories of terrorist victims for 1969.³⁷⁴

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VC TERRORIST TRENDS



TOTAL 1969 INCIDENTS - 10,523

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FIGURE III-18

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VC TERRORISM STATISTICS

Jan - Dec 1969*

	<u>Assassinated</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Abducted</u>	<u>Incidents</u>
January	395	1,006	1,431	791
February	767	1,848	525	1,059
March	798	1,924	1,249	1,179
April	538	1,411	521	885
May	596	1,549	415	1,049
June	558	1,360	385	936
July	406	1,103	273	765
August	545	1,510	387	894
September	407	857	313	806
October	306	695	177	667
November	430	948	278	798
December	<u>340</u>	<u>841</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>703</u>
TOTAL	6,086	15,052	6,095	10,523

*Data source - National Police plus CICV.

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TABLE III-9

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TERRORIST VICTIMS
STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Year to Date
31 Dec 69

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>KILLED</u>	<u>WOUNDED</u>	<u>ABDUCTED</u>
VILLAGE CHIEFS	23	14	3
VILLAGE OFFICIALS	6	44	8
HAMLET CHIEFS	126	47	32
HAMLET OFFICIALS	114	50	69
NATIONAL POLICE	116	383	2
NPPF	69	61	
RD CADRE	253	496	22
PCDF	645	1,073	1,035
REFUGEE	229	551	353
HOI CHANH	94	114	30
GENERAL POPULACE	<u>4,350</u>	<u>12,219</u>	<u>4,541</u>
TOTALS	6,086	15,052	6,095

SELECTIVE ASSASSINATIONS: 1,271

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TABLE III-10

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January

(C) Based on the preceding month (December 1968), terrorist activity decreased during January. All sources indicated increased acts of assassination and sabotage for the enemy winter-spring campaign. Primary targets were Vietnamese civilians employed by US installations and agencies, GVN officials at hamlet and village levels, and RVNAF personnel and their families. Enemy forces actively infiltrated cities in an attempt to intimidate the people to demonstrate in support of their occupation. During the latter months of 1968, the enemy had concentrated on GVN officials with moderate success; in January evidence indicated a definite effort directed against US personnel also. VC terrorists threw several grenades into the entrances of two US military billets in Saigon. US military personnel provided occasional targets of opportunity for terrorists by congregating at bus stops or insecure areas and additionally by allowing vehicles to go unwatched when parked on public streets. In the latter event, a grenade with a rubber band holding the spoon would be dropped into the gas tank, thus providing several minutes "get away" time for the terrorist before the detonation. 375

February

(C) The Tet period brought about dramatic increases in enemy terrorist attacks throughout RVN, with 1,059 incidents, compared to 791 for January. The most significant shift in targeting took place in the Capitol Military District (CMD). In one incident, two terrorists on a motorcycle placed a homemade explosive device between the sedan of MG Kiem, Chief of GVN Military Cabinet, and an escorting jeep while the vehicles were stopped at a traffic light. The device exploded destroying the sedan and the jeep. An M-26 grenade was also thrown at the sedan. MG Kiem received a broken leg and five individuals were wounded; the sedan and two jeeps were destroyed. The terrorists escaped. 376 Repeated sabotage attempts were directed against US personnel also as evidenced from the following terrorist activity. On 8 Feb, nine US civilian technical representatives with the 210th Aviation Company riding in a 1/4-ton truck, an automobile, and three motorcycles received RPG fire. The truck took a direct hit which wounded its three occupants. Two individuals in fatigues then shot the two men in the front seat. 377 On 22 Feb, the special branch of the National Police apprehended 15 terrorists including a VC major and captain. Interrogation of these individuals revealed that their orders were to initiate terrorist attacks against US personnel in the Saigon area. They did not have specific targets, but were to select individual Americans for assassination.

March

(C) A definite increase in enemy-initiated acts of terrorism occurred in March. In the past, VC/NVA sapper/terrorist attacks had been considered a relatively economical means of maintaining the enemy's presence without his having to commit large numbers of combat troops. Unlike past periods of increased terrorism, however, this one was concurrently marked by extensive VC/NVA field activity. This was perhaps an indication that the enemy's prime motivation for his acts of terrorism had changed. During this period, attacks appeared to be non-selective and designed to instill fear among the populace with the probable aim of undermining GVN influence by convincing the people the government was totally incapable of protecting them. The most significant incident noted during the month was the 5 Mar attempt to assassinate Prime Minister Huong. The attack occurred two blocks from the American Embassy in Saigon as the Prime Minister was riding home. Small arms fire was exchanged but no casualties resulted; six enemy were captured, five of whom were in ARVN uniforms. A cyclo at the location had a

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claymore mine and three pounds of plastic explosive rigged to detonate. The Prime Minister was not harmed. 378

April

(C) During April there was a peaking and subsequent leveling off of enemy acts of terrorism. The enemy directed many of his terrorist operations against suspected agents of the GVN and there were cases, when, unable to capture the subject himself, the enemy took custody of the suspect's parents. If the parents were unable to convince the suspect to surrender to the VC, they were killed instead of the suspect. "Blood debt" assassinations of this type reflected a sharp increase over the past several months and had a serious impact on the RVN populace. A captured enemy document directed units to concentrate on forcing FWMAF/RVNAF from rural areas through the institution of a four step program, the basis of which was terrorism:

1. Annihilate (GVN) administrative, intelligence, and pacification personnel.
2. Disintegrate (GVN) People's Self-defense Force organizations (PSDF).
3. Promote mass uprisings.
4. Turn selected hamlets, objectives of the GVN accelerated pacification program, into VC combat hamlets.

A report received in April stated that two VC sapper platoons had infiltrated Saigon with the mission of assassinating RVN policemen and Hoi Chanh. This document held that the death of a policeman or a Hoi Chanh was equal in value to the assassination of seven Americans. The trend indicated that terrorist activities would be selective in nature with GVN prestige as the primary target. On 16 Apr, the VC burned 150 homes in a resettlement center in Phu Cat District. At the end of April, reports indicated COSVN was becoming increasingly alarmed at the effectiveness of PSDF personnel. The VC believed these forces to be instrumental in the success of the GVN pacification campaign and accordingly targeted them for elimination. Also in April the terrorists employed indiscriminate attacks-by-fire on population centers, to include Chieu Hoi centers. On 11 Apr, the Vinh Long City market place received 25 rounds of 60mm mortar fire. Civilian casualties were 21 killed and 87 wounded. On 21 Apr, the Ca Mau Chieu Hoi center was attacked with RPG fire and 25 launch bombs. Eight Hoi Chanh were killed and 60 wounded. On 22 Apr, Soc Trang in Ba Xuyen Province received six rounds of 82mm mortar fire. There were 20 casualties and 20 homes destroyed. These attacks apparently reflected VC steps to reduce the Chieu Hoi rate and intimidate the civilian population living in GVN-controlled areas.

May

(C) During May there was a rise in enemy acts of terrorism. The majority of incidents reported indicated the targeting to be those of opportunity, rather than preselected or planned objectives. The most significant incident noted was the capture of the chief of enemy sapper and terrorist activists in Saigon's Fifth Precinct by the National Police. Interruption of this leader led to the apprehension of 80 suspects who were allegedly associated with VC sapper cells in the CMD. Throughout this period, reports were received of terrorist cadre in Saigon being trained to ride Hondas for use in terrorism. In addition, a whispering campaign was

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conducted to warn small vendors not to hold market before 0600 hours in order to miss terrorist activity directed against ARVN and GVN personnel.

June

(C) A sharp rise in enemy terrorist activity during the first week of June was followed by a decline the remainder of the month. The enemy continued in his efforts to force people away from GVN-controlled areas and to neutralize the effectiveness of Allied pacification efforts. Hamlet and village-level GVN officials were primary targets of terrorism, while substantial numbers of RD and pacification cadre and National Police were also objects of VC terrorist acts. Evident during the month was a lack of professionalism on the part of CMD terrorists in accomplishing their missions. One incident which occurred in Saigon involved an explosion which destroyed a Lambretta and caused the three 107mm rockets it was carrying to fall into the street. In another CMD incident, a charge exploded as the terrorist attempted to affix it to a tree. It was deemed possible that the arrest of the terrorist leader in Saigon's Fifth Precinct in May, could have left a "professional gap" in the ranks of the sappers operating within the CMD.

July

(C) Terrorist activity declined in all CTZs with the exception of IV CTZ. Speculation was that the low level of activity could have stemmed from VC sensitivity to Allied claims of indiscriminate terrorism at the Paris talks. A lack of security discipline appeared within the sapper elements of the CMD area. Terrorists captured during the month gave information freely during interrogation, resulting in the arrest of numerous sapper cadre within the Saigon area. A probable increase in swimmer-sapper activity was anticipated after the 6 July sinking of the merchant ship Welfare by a mine on the Nha Be River. Completed during the month was a study noting the most frequently used time for terrorist/sapper activities. It was determined the six-hour period between 2100 and 0300 hours evidenced the greatest number of attacks, while the low-point period was from 0900 to 1500 hours.

August

(C) Enemy terrorist activity fluctuated during August and peaked at the start of the enemy's Autumn Campaign. Most attacks were targeted against people in resettlement or refugee areas, in order to force them to return to VC-controlled areas. In a series of terrorist attacks on refugee camps in Quang Nam and Thua Thien Province on 12 Aug, three civilians were killed, 35 wounded, hundreds of families were left homeless, and many buildings were damaged and destroyed. On 25 Aug, a VC sapper platoon entered Phu Binh Village in Quang Ngai Province and burned 260 homes and one dispensary, while abducting 41 people. This brutal attack by the VC in an area which was generally considered to be under their control was evidence the enemy had not always been receiving cooperation from the populace in VC-controlled areas. In Binh Thuan Province, VC Action Arrow teams were instructed to follow GVN and ARVN personnel to ascertain their habits, residences, and places of employment. This information was to be reported to sapper units whose members would disguise themselves as civilians and assassinate these targeted personnel. Although the majority of incidents recorded during the month were nonselective, increased interest in military targets and JS personnel was evident. On 7 Aug, under cover of a rocket attack against a nearby USAF installation, sappers infiltrated the US installation at Cam Ranh Bay and attacked the 6th Convalescent Center with satchel charges.

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Friendly losses were two KIA, 98 WIA, three buildings destroyed and three buildings damaged. On 7 Aug, an estimated 60 pounds of explosives destroyed 30 percent of the RVNAF Language School in Cholon, killing 12 and wounding 62, including 23 US personnel (See the Tactics Section of this Chapter). While hamlet and village chiefs had been the principal targets of assassination and abduction in the past, the number of reports of VC attempts on GVN officials increased during August. The death or intimidation of these officials was expected to enhance the VC position by disrupting the GVN pacification program; a necessary step in the establishment of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. On 26 Aug, a 14-year old terrorist detonated four grenades during a meeting between rural development cadre and civilians near Phu Cat in Binh Dinh Province. In this incident 26 people were killed and 100 wounded.

September

(C) The number of terrorist incidents decreased about 10 percent during the month, compared to the one preceding. Selective assassinations, however, increased. Specifically targeted were CDF and RD cadre, and GVN officials and functionaries. In III CTZ primary targets were civilians accused of collaboration with the GVN or US. Significant in III CTZ was the care taken by the VC to point out that victims were being punished for collaboration. This technique had the psychological effect of setting aside government employees, collaborators, or sympathizers as a marked class, apart from the people. Sapper infiltration into cities and villages increased during the month. In Quang Nam Province, a source reported that the VC had organized a group of young boys and girls. Equipped with satchel charges and individual weapons, approximately 20 from the group infiltrated Danang City and another 20 in Cam Le Village. In Saigon, the Director General of the National Police reported about 300 sapper cadre had completed training in Ba Thu. These sappers were to be infiltrated in small groups into Saigon to take part in the second climaxing phase of the Fall Campaign.

October

(C) The year's lowest point in the level of sabotage and terrorist incidents occurred in Oct. Terrorist activity, although very low, was directed at refugee and resettlement areas. In Darlac and Khanh Hoa Provinces, reports revealed the enemy was conducting door-to-door surveys in hamlets and villages to determine the number of residents having relatives working for the GVN. On 19 Oct, a terrorist bomb detonated in a movie house in downtown Qui Nhon City, killing two civilians and wounding 35. The following information was received by the Naval Intelligence Liaison Office, Qui Nhon, from the National Police Special Branch which shed light on the thinking behind such VC terrorism. On 14 Oct, the Phuoc Long Village Secretary met with four agents of the Qui Nhon VC City Committee in Luat Le Hamlet. He ordered them to place mines in the Qui Nhon Cathedral and the Trung Vuong Theater, stating that the former was a place where tyrants met and the latter a luxury and a corrupted place where the "enemy" gathered merely for pleasures. On 28 Oct, one of six boys between the ages of 11-14, all armed with hand grenades, threw a grenade into the market place of Hoa Hoi Hamlet located west of Phu Cat. Eight civilians were killed and 43 wounded.

November

(S) Sabotage and terrorism increased throughout RVN during November, compared to the preceding month. Nonselective, hit-and-run attacks against individuals and groups were the rule. Sabotage attacks against roads, bridges, and railroads were primary. A gasoline tanker was sunk in Quang Tin Province, a USN dredge was sunk in Kien Hoa, and a medical building

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was destroyed in Quang Tin Province. Targets for terrorism were RD and pacification cadre, National Police, and GVN officials. In I CTZ, terrorism directed against resettlement areas significantly alienated the people regarding the VC and it was believed the result would be many neutralist elements rallying to the GVN. An unsuccessful attempt was made on the life of the GVN Chieu Hoi Minister on 7 November. 379

December

(C) Terrorist activity remained at a low level throughout the month, with 703 incidents recorded. In Quang Ngai Province, the VC published a plan in which VC cadre were to collect information on GVN officials, political party members, members of religious activities, and intelligence and security members; information reports were to be submitted to the Provincial Security Section by 14 Dec; all information would be forwarded to a court which had been elected and persons found guilty would be assassinated or sent to a "thought reform" camp. During this period, the VC sought to enhance their cause by opposing the recently instituted GVN tax measures. Reports indicated VC were considering targeting gasoline stations for terrorism as a protest against the unpopular new tax on luxury items. It was conjectured that VC use of terror as a symbol of opposition to government policy would mark a shift in policy. Overall, terrorist activity during the period appeared to be an attempt by the VC to impress the people with their capability to strike as targets were few and selective. Of significance was an incident on 23 Dec in Quang Nam Province where the VC command detonated a plastic device in the midst of a group of Catholic refugees watching a Christmas play. Two civilians were killed and 60 wounded.

Propaganda

General

(C) Although the NFLSVN had not been organized until December 1960, the propaganda phase of the VC General Offensive began in May 1959, when the Lao Dong Central Committee in Hanoi declared that the time had come to begin the struggle against the GVN. VC propaganda leavening, however, had been initiated prior to this. Following the 1954 Geneva Agreement, the Viet Minh had left numerous propaganda cadre in South Vietnam to carry out covert operations. The VC considered propaganda activity one of the key factors in their ultimate victory. The following extract from a captured VC document indicated the importance which the VC placed on propaganda:

Our revolution depends fundamentally on the consciousness of individual interest, class interest, people('s) interest, and the resentment of the people who are determined to stand up and fight the enemy.

Without wide and deep propaganda action, it is impossible to make the masses become conscious of the above interests and indignant, and turn their indignation into a powerful strength to defeat the enemy. Through the period of covert activity of the Party, nine years of resistance and seven years of political struggle in South

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Vietnam, propaganda always played a very important role in the awakening and motivation of the people in doing every mission and in thwarting every plan of controlling the people's ideology of the feudalists and imperialists. During many years of political struggle in SVN in particular, propaganda was almost the Party's only powerful weapon used to defeat the enemy and to uphold and develop the revolutionary movement every day among the population.

Today, in the decisive attack on the enemy to turn the balance of forces in our favor parallel with the two armed and political movements and the three-front attack (military, political, and military proselyting), propaganda constitutes a very important weapon of the Party in the movement. 380

VC Propaganda Techniques

(C) The VC/NVA divided their propaganda instruments into two broad categories, the face-to-face (interpersonal) instruments and mass media. Face-to-face propaganda facilities included entertainment teams, armed propaganda teams, and propaganda cadre. Some examples of mass media, designed to reach large numbers of people with relative ease, included Liberation and Hanoi Radios, Liberation Press, publications, and printing press facilities.

Target Groups

(C) Target groups established by VC propagandists were designed such that they could be effectively reached by a specific propaganda appeal. The following were some of the VC target groups: 381

1. Intellectuals
2. Village youth
3. Students
4. Farmers
5. ARVN soldiers
6. GVN employees
7. Vietnamese employees of US agencies
8. FWMAF personnel
9. Urban residents
10. Religious groups
11. Minority groups
12. Village women

(U) The enemy continued to conduct extensive propaganda or indoctrination classes among his own forces during 1969. This training was considered by VC/NVA cadre to be as important for their soldiers as instruction in the use of combat tactics and weapons (See COSVN Resolution 9 Section of this Chapter).

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(U) Throughout 1969, the following propaganda themes, in order of frequency, were the focal themes of VC/NVA press and radio media: 382

1. Praise and Emulation
2. VC/NVA Military Victories
3. RVN Internal Problems
4. International Support
5. Agriculture and Production
6. War Crimes
7. Peace Negotiations
8. Allied Aggression

January

(C) Enemy propaganda activity at the beginning of the year portrayed an optimistic view of the Communist efforts. "In 1969 our prospects are very bright and our future is very glorious. Never has our country begun a new year under such favorable revolutionary conditions" was the cry of Liberation Radio. 383 Frequent attacks were leveled at the "US aggressors" and their "lackeys" coupled with outbursts aimed at the "US imperialists' stubbornness" at the Paris talks. VC/NVA propaganda struck at the PHOENIX program by saying the "more defeated they become, the more insidious schemes and tricks they resort to in order to attack us. . . . Especially at the present time, they are intensifying their espionage war to the utmost." 384 The enemy never stopped in his attempt to lower morale of US fighting men and many leaflets were directed to him. Often, these leaflets were directed not at the US soldier in general, but at specific US soldiers in minority groups or as in the following example, to specific units. One leaflet was found addressed to 1st and 25th Infantrymen. It contained a message, supposedly written by a US prisoner, praising the N FLSVN and condemning the war in Vietnam being "waged by the Johnson Government." 385

(C) A frequent occurrence in VC-controlled areas was visits by North Vietnamese motion picture and propaganda teams. Operating on the province level, they traveled from village to village showing CHICOM, NVN, and Soviet propaganda films and giving speeches. Occasionally, VC district (party) committees, desiring visits of the team to various villages and hamlets within their district, would forward a request to the province committee. Subsequently the team would be assigned to the requested area. When the team arrived, loudspeakers would announce that movies would be shown that evening. Attendance was compulsory, however, many villagers did not attend because of fear of Allied air attacks. 386

February

(C) In February, the enemy broadened his propaganda themes on the pacification program. This apparently reflected his recognition of its success. VC/NVA media stated that the program received a "tragic setback" and in order to offset this so-called setback, the GVN had to institute a more accelerated program. Minor themes included "Americans have clearly lost the war" and the "Thieu-Ky-Huong Regime is slowly dying." 387

(C) During this month, the Communists also directed attention to the "unsuccessful" Allied sweep operations. It was experienced in the past, that this type of propaganda theme was staged 5-30 days before the enemy launched a major offensive. 388

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(C) On 18 Feb, a poster written in English, was turned in to the 198th Inf Bde at LZ BAYONNET by a young boy. He had found the poster in a tree. The theme of the poster's message was for US servicemen to "join their comrades who have already laid down their arms to oppose the war." Several leaflets with pictures and names of US servicemen were attached to the poster. 389

(S) North Vietnamese propaganda concerning President Nixon was very cautious and reserved during early February. The SECSTATE stated: "Hanoi's treatment of the President indicates that the North Vietnamese leadership is waiting for his moves before deciding the kind of image in which it wishes to cast him." 390

(U) VC/NVN media violently slashed at the "savage crimes" committed by the US and GVN "for terrorizing and massacring the people, for using B52 bombers, toxic chemicals and shells to devastate villages and herd the population into concentration camps... and for stifling of all democratic liberties." 391

March

(U) In March, there were no new themes in enemy propaganda. The Communists continued their attempts to discredit the GVN and undermine the Paris Talks.

(C) A US source received information during the month regarding an armed enemy propaganda team that was operating near Bien Hoa Air Base. The team consisted of several VC armed with two B-40 rocket launchers and individual weapons. This team boasted that in one week the NFLSVN would liberate all of Bien Hoa Province. Within 32 hours after their propaganda campaign, the VC opened their Winter-Spring Offensive and Bien Hoa Air Base was attacked. 392

April

(C) The dominant propaganda topics for April were anti-GVN, with specific attention given to the pacification program. Reports for the month indicated that practically all facets of VC/NVA propaganda were oriented toward political objectives.

(C) On 3 April, residents of Go Cat Hamlet, located southeast of Tan Son Nhut Air Base, said about 15 VC in the area were actively engaged in propaganda activity; the theme being support of a coalition government. 393

(C) On 5 April, the clandestine Liberation Radio urged the RVN populace to "... hold high the peace flag, gather various strata of urban compatriots and motivate them to hold public discussions and struggle for their practical interests against military conscription, civil defense, arrests, and pillage; and for the restoration of peace, the overthrow of the Thieu-Ky-Huong clique, and the formation of a peace cabinet to hold serious talks with the front; and smash the accelerated pacification plan, wipe out the civilian self-defense organization, etc." 394

May

(C) Major themes for May indicated the underlying agitation for a coalition government in the RVN. Dominating the propaganda media the first part of May was the unveiling of the

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NFLSVN's 10-point "overall solution" to the Vietnam situation. This plan was repeatedly praised and discussed by all four Vietnamese Communist media (Radio Hanoi, Hanoi VNA, Liberation Radio, and the Liberation Press Agency). 395

(C) The Communist media scornfully denounced President Nixon's speech of 15 May, which outlined the overall US stand on Vietnam. While only the section dealing with "mutual withdrawal" was flatly rejected by the enemy, the other points were attacked and belittled. 396

(C) In continued attempts to neutralize the pacification effort, enemy propaganda asserted that "the enemy's pacification efforts are aimed at forcing the people to their knees and dominating them." 397

(C) At the end of May, the enemy attempted to produce maximum propaganda value out of the battle for Hill 973 (Hamburger Hill). They praised Senator Kennedy's criticism repeatedly. One broadcast charged that "... to cover their defeats, the US commanders resorted to their favorite ploy of inventing imaginary victories, publishing casualty figures of the US much lower than the reality (and) even putting out a sensational report on the so-called capture of a headquarters of the Viet Cong on the peak of Ap Bia Mountain..." 398

June

(U) Enemy propaganda during June was dominated by broadcasts and articles related to the formal establishment of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG). The PRG was represented as the true representative government of the South Vietnamese people. 399

(U) Propaganda efforts also capitalized on the US withdrawal of 25,000 troops. This was designed to frighten the people into joining the VC because the Americans were leaving. One leaflet discovered in Long An Province stated: "GIs are going home; people join the VC." Other leaflets directed to RVNAF asserted that "the Americans are defeated and going home. How about you?" 400

(C) Preoccupied with selling coalition government, village revolutionary committees in Danang contacted men between the ages of 60 and 65, who had relatives working for the VC. These men were instructed to proceed from hamlet to hamlet advising the people that the American Administration has accepted the NFLSVN and would set up a coalition government that would include the NFLSVN. 401

(C) In propaganda attempts to enhance VC position and capabilities in the eyes of the RVN populace, VC forces around Phan Rang City abducted teenagers and told them during extensive propaganda sessions, that the VC had been weak before, but were now well prepared, trained, and equipped to resume operations. They also told the teenagers that peace would come immediately when the Americans left. 402

July

(C) The enemy relied more on intimidation than effective propaganda during July. Leaflets demanded food and supplies from the RVN populace and threatened death or punishment if people did not support the revolution. Propaganda warned that those who didn't support revolution or who worked for the GVN had better not live in VC-controlled areas. 403

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(C) The most significant development in Communist propaganda was a suddenly increased interest in US PWs. Official USG statements expressing concern over maltreatment of PWs in NVN were angrily denounced with unusual frequency and violence. Statements allegedly made by US PWs attesting to enemy "humanitarianism" became more frequent. (See Chapter X)

(C) Of note during July was the shift in emphasis in Communist propaganda against the pacification effort since the PRG had been officially proclaimed. Most of the propaganda no longer attempted quite as strenuously to link Allied pacification with "hideous crimes" against the people. The emphasis seemed to be on propagandizing the alleged advances made by the rival Revolutionary Administration and the benefits supposedly reaped by those lucky enough to be living in "liberated" areas. This development was more a shift of emphasis rather than a new trend, and probably reflected Communist preoccupation to prove to the Vietnamese, Americans, and "world opinion" that the PRG represented the true de facto government of the people of South Vietnam. 404

(C) The enemy used propaganda media to claim great military victories during July. Points made were that VC/NVA units had badly mauled US troops, lowered US troop morale, and constantly kept US troops under strength and disorganized. It was felt that this type propaganda, coupled with US troop withdrawals, which the VC exploited as a sign of weakness and defeat, could convince the population the VC were well on their way to winning the war. 405

(U) NVN propaganda broadcasts rejected President Thieu's "Six Principles of Free Elections" by stating the free election, as proposed by Thieu, was a "treacherous election scheme to be held by the bayonet point of US troops and the Puppet Army." 406

(C) Enemy propagandists always had their own terminology for what they considered to be the current Allied strategy at various junctures in the war. These included "special war," "local war," or "passive defensive strategy." Liberation Radio, on 30 July, unveiled a new US "tactic." It said that in attempting to comply with President Nixon's order to keep US casualties to a minimum, "... The US military experts have shown the US commanders in Saigon a new tactic which is called 'Swift Retreat.' If US troops are intercepted by Liberation troops, they will start a very swift retreat so that US aircraft can bomb the enemy... those with military knowledge can easily realize that this is a desperate US measure... The panic stricken US troops can never escape death, even if they had three heads and six arms. Shall they rely on aircraft? There is no hope..." 407

(C) President Nixon's Asian tour and his visit to RVN received wide and scornful coverage in the Communist media. It was said that the Asian visit was an attempt by Nixon to use the success of Apollo 11 to put on a "show of peace," and "attempt to realize his aggressive neo-colonialist design over Asia." Nixon's short visit to RVN was called "310 minutes of quiver." 408

August

(U) Efforts were directed at the threat of severe punishment for "those at the present time incapable of seeing the truth" when VC achieved final "victory." During August, ARVN personnel and their families, and civilian officials were targets for proselyting activities. Emphasis was placed on persuading families to appeal to sons and brothers to abandon posts and join the revolutionary government. Themes were that the government was sending servicemen to the battlefield to die for US troops and to urge Allied troops to demand quick withdrawal. 409

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(C) Communist propaganda broadcasts of 22 Aug labeled the resignation of Prime Minister Huong as resulting from an order by the US and as being an attempt by President Thieu to find a scapegoat for the "current price hike and economic crises in Saigon." 410

(C) On 7 Aug, Liberation Radio gave the following account of the terrorist incident at the 6th Convalescent Center at Cam Ranh Bay:

Before dawn on 7 Aug 69, the Khan Hoa PLAF launched a bold and marvelous attack on the Cam Ranh Bay Military Base, the largest and most closely defended base in South Vietnam. According to first reports, the enemy admitted that this was a lightning and terrible attack which completely caught him by surprise and that our armed forces struck very accurately at the US BOQ (sic). He also reluctantly admitted that at least 100 men were killed or wounded and that our forces retreated safely taking no casualties.

No mention was made that the facility raided was a hospital; that most of the casualties were patients; that the VC/NVA "forces" consisted of a few sappers; or that the patients had no weapons with which to defend themselves. While reports of this nature were grossly exaggerated, their propaganda value could not be underestimated. Not only could they give enemy troops a ⁴¹¹ psychological lift, but they could also be used to discredit Allied and GVN military competence.

(C) Another major topic of enemy radio propaganda during the month of August, dealt with the series of enemy attacks which began on 11 Aug. The media announced a "vigorous new offensive." It featured attacks by infantry and artillery on more than 100 bases and said the offensive was aimed at crushing the propaganda allegation that the Liberation Forces have been weakened. 412

September

(U) September witnessed a sharp increase in the enemy's propaganda campaign. The dominant theme was the death of Ho Chi Minh. People were asked to carry out Ho's teachings by "turning their sorrow into revolutionary acts, strengthening unity, attacking continuously and vigorously at the accelerated pacification program, and resolving to fight until US troops are completely withdrawn from South Vietnam and the puppet army and administration collapse." The announcement that the RVNAF/FWMAF would not honor the cease fire in honor of Ho's death, met with "great indignation." 413

(C) The VC directed propaganda themes at the GVN soldier in an attempt to influence him into a "position of neutrality" by discrediting the initiative and intentions of US forces in RVN. Withdrawal of US forces was expounded upon. In the enemy's constant attempt to exploit any available instance of friction among the Allies, propaganda targeted on the murder of two US advisors at Tan An by a deranged ARVN guard. Liberation Radio claimed that such incidents were not isolated. Rather, "this is one of the widespread incidents which have occurred in the south between puppet and US troops." 414

(C) Since the beginning of the Paris Peace Talks, Communist propaganda placed increased emphasis upon political propaganda aimed at both national and international audiences. An

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integral part of their political propaganda was the theme of anti-Americanism. In 1961, the US was treated as only a minor foe who supported the Diem regime. In 1962, as the US increased its verbal and moral support of the Diem government, the VC launched a hate Americans campaign which branded the US as the principal VC enemy for having intervened in RVN. The shift to the US as the principal enemy of the NLF SVN appeared premature, in light of the small US commitment in 1962, and diminished until the large scale commitment of US forces in 1965. Thus, Communist propaganda went full swing from 1961, when the Diem regime was the main target of enemy propaganda, through 1969, when the GVN was merely depicted as a puppet administration with the US as the primary foe. In 1969, Communist propaganda labeled the war in the South as the "anti-US national salvation struggle" or the "war of resistance against US aggression." Reunification of North and South Vietnam was the primary goal of enemy strategy. In response to this end, Communist propaganda appealed to Vietnamese nationalism. It called upon the people to rise up and cast out the US "aggressors," as they did against the Japanese and the French. A speech delivered by Truong Chinh on 23 Sep to the NVN National Assembly was an example of anti-US propaganda:

... We deputies to the National Assembly will effectively join the entire people in consolidating North Vietnam so as to successfully build socialism in the North, to make all-out efforts together with our countrymen in the South to carry on perseveringly the war of resistance against US aggression for national salvation, to liberate the South, achieve the peaceful reunification of the country, build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic prosperous and strong Vietnam, in fulfillment of President Ho Chi Minh's wish. We must realize at all costs his will... No matter what difficulties and hardships may be ahead, our people are sure to win total victory. The US imperialists will have to pull out. Our fatherland will be liberated. 415

(S) An assessment of the effectiveness of the enemy's propaganda campaign in I CTZ was summed up in the following report:

Despite the enemy's intensive propaganda efforts, no discernible indications were visible that the enemy achieved any degree of success among the general population. By resorting to acts of terrorism, which increased slightly during the middle of the month (July) and then abated, the enemy indirectly acknowledged failure of his propaganda activity to achieve the desired objective of weakening and toppling the present GVN. Other indicators of apparent failure can be found among captured enemy documents, which contain comments of enemy propaganda being disdained by the populace and exhortations to strive for establishment of a "Peace Cabinet" and complete withdrawal of US forces. However, the most

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singular reason for the failure of enemy propa-
ganda to achieve any degree of success is the 416
lack of a recent and significant military victory.

October

(C) Enemy propaganda activities during October were aimed at the upcoming Moratorium Day in the US, families of ARVN or GVN employees, and villagers. The daily Hanoi newspaper, Nhan Dan, referred to the Moratorium Day as the "Current Fall Offensive of the American People Against the Nixon Administration." The Communists praised and thanked the US people for their struggle in support of the Vietnamese people's patriotic fight. Hanoi utilized the moratorium for propaganda purposes.

(C) Reports during October indicated the VC were trying to get families of ARVN personnel to urge their sons to desert and turn in their weapons to the VC. Report of a VC meeting held in Hoa Hai Village of Quang Nam Province, stated that the VC had initiated a control roster for all families with sons in ARVN or GVN. During the meeting, the VC said 100,000 piasters had been spent to print individual biographic data cards on the people. The card index would assist the VC in controlling the people during the coming election and aid the VC in identifying those individuals hostile to their cause. 417

(C) In I CTZ, southwest of Danang it was reported that 16 political cadre, supported by an NVA battalion, were conducting propaganda meetings in Hoa Van District. The meetings were used to indoctrinate the civilians in the area with the propaganda theme of US forces retreating from Vietnam, and to teach them how to select a temporary government. The same report stated that "Enemy propaganda activities appear to be intensifying. This increase is probably due to growing enemy hardships, principally due to food shortages, heavy rains, troop losses to FWMAF and recently an unusually high number of defectors to the Chieu Hoi program." 418

November

(C) During November, Communist propaganda media exploited the 15 Nov Moratorium Day in the US to the fullest. Termed by the enemy and Moratorium participants the March Against Death, the event was presented as a solemn protest of the US people against the USG's policies in Vietnam. The enemy proclaimed that this was how the majority of the people in the US felt. VC cadre were ordered to urge the Vietnamese people to support US anti-war protests. A COSVN directive stated:

According to (NVN) Politburo, we should immediately start preparations for broad movement among the masses aimed at supporting the American people's anti-war moratorium, as the latter is asking for a complete withdrawal of US troops from SVN. Elements to be motivated to take part in this campaign are youths, students, workers, Buddhists, and potential opponents of the Thieu-Ky-Khiem Government, such as Tran Ngoc Lieng (a well known lawyer in Saigon). Actions

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to be taken during this campaign are seminars, protest demonstrations, and sending petitions (to RVN authorities). In conjunction, US and puppet personnel should be instigated to ask for an end to the war and prompt withdrawal of US troops. The press (in Saigon) should also be urged to disseminate news and write articles favorable to US anti-war movements. 419

(C) The primary objectives of the enemy's October and November propaganda campaigns in an effort to exploit anti-war demonstrations in the US, were threefold. First, by claiming widespread disapproval among the US people concerning the commitment in RVN, the enemy hoped to precipitate further large scale US troop withdrawals. Additionally, they predicted that mounting disapproval of the war would soon compel President Nixon to disengage completely and "bring all US troops home." Second, by emphasizing anti-war demonstrations in the US, the Communists hoped to lower US troop morale while boosting the sagging morale of their own war weary people and armed forces, who had been led to believe that final victory was near. Third, the protest movement in the US presented enemy propaganda media and their delegations in Paris with an issue around which they expected to rally additional international support to further their military and political goals. 420

(C) The rise in taxes by the GVN was again seized upon by the Communists for exploitation. Reports indicated that the high cost of living in the cities would be one of the enemy's main propaganda targets during the Winter Campaign. 421

(C) In early November, enemy propagandists increased their efforts to discredit the GVN land reform program. On 4 Nov, Liberation Press Agency released an article which had previously appeared in Nong Nghiep, the Liberation Peasants' Association agricultural magazine. The VC program in "liberated areas" was said to have already distributed almost all ricefields which formerly belonged to wealthy French and Vietnamese landlords to the peasants who cultivate them. On the other hand, the GVN was accused of "stealing the ricefields which the revolution had allotted to the peasants and which belonged to the families of our cadres and combatants for distribution to the puppet traitors or their subordinates." 422

(C) Following the long delayed revelation of alleged war atrocities by US forces against Vietnamese civilians at Son My Village on 16 Mar 68, enemy propagandists immediately launched a concerted campaign attempting to propagandize this potentially exploitable situation. Reporting the incident in great detail, enemy propaganda claimed that over 500 villagers were brutally massacred. Attempting to counter the continuing discoveries of VC and NVA atrocities, especially those committed against the people of Hue during Tet of 1968, the enemy depicted the Son My incident as one of the innumerable crimes committed by US forces against the Vietnamese. 423

(U) In an attempt to raise the morale of enemy forces, Communist propaganda emphasized victories over allied forces during November. Liberation Radio broadcast an excerpt of the Quang Nam-Da Nang 6th Guerrilla Warfare Congress:

... despite the enemy's crafty war schemes, the
Quang Nam-Da Nang self-defense, guerrilla, and

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regional forces developed in every respect, contributing to the increasingly strong development of the guerrilla warfare movement and scoring many great achievements in the armed, political, and military proselyting struggles. Since the Mau Than spring days, the Quang Nam-Da Nang guerrilla forces annihilated 42,437 enemy troops, downed and destroyed 271 aircraft, shot to pieces 1,039 mechanized vehicles, 70 percent of which were armored cars, set afire 20 gasoline and ammunition depots, destroyed over 250 heavy guns, and seized over 800 weapons of various types. 424

December

(U) The end of the year revealed the Communist propaganda theme would be an attempt to continue undermining the GVN and build up support for the NFLSVN. In a news broadcast by the Tokyo General Overseas Services, monitored in Okinawa, it was reported that the NFLSVN in RVN had said:

Saigon government soldiers and policemen joining the NFLSVN in its anti-American battles will be paid remuneration. Officials who defect will be guaranteed the same position with the NFL that they held in the Saigon Government.

The broadcast also stated that those who brought weapons or those who offered secret documents to the NFLSVN and those who disobeyed orders from their superiors would be given monetary compensation. 425

Proselyting

(C) To proselyte means to make converts. Enemy proselyting was divided into two major categories: civilian and military. VC efforts to implement their politico-military strategy depended on their ability to organize a sympathetic population base. This was the mission of civilian proselyting. The military proselyting mission was basically one of creating disaffection among RVNAF personnel, thereby lessening the RVN military threat to VC politico-military objectives. 426

(C) Enemy proselyting incorporated basic Communist dogma and emphasized personal contact. Its overall goal was to implement political objectives. Whereas propaganda included proselyting activities, proselyting was the method whereby propaganda was disseminated and its themes explained in detail to the people at the rice-roots level.

(C) The four principal objectives of civilian proselyting were to:

1. Organize as many people as possible into mass organizations (e.g., Farmers', Women's, and Youth's Associations) and to control these groups for Party purposes.

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2. Motivate the populace to support the revolutionary movement.
 3. Help recruit people to fill VC military unit quotas and support local defense requirements.
 4. Convince the people of RVN that the VC cause was just and that the VC would win.

The six principal military proselyting objectives were to:

1. Motivate RVNAF and Allied troops to desert, defect, or, at a minimum, to lower their morale.
2. Place and monitor penetration agents in or near RVNAF and Allied units to collect intelligence.
3. Induce RVN youths to join VC units.
4. Prevent RVN youths from being conscripted into the RVNAF.
5. Indoctrinate, interrogate, and care for PWs and ralliers.
6. Promote the importance of the overall military proselyting mission among military personnel and the general populace. 427

(C) VC/NVA proselyting themes generally attempted to promote the national aspirations of the Vietnamese people, as defined by the PRP. They stressed the righteousness of NFISVN objectives, the treachery of GVN officials and RVNAF troops who supported the GVN, and the colonialistic intentions of the US. A captured document, outlining the enemy's military proselyting plan for Binh Dinh Province, stated that the general themes to be employed against ARVN troops were:

To let the puppet (ARVN) soldiers know that the American enemy and his henchmen destroy the puppet soldiers' country and massacre his people. Let them (ARVN) know that the US presence causes the rising prices of goods, changes their way of living, and creates misery for the city people as well as their own families. Let them know that the puppet armed forces owes independence to the US, that they are mercenaries of US imperialists and their henchmen, and that their lives are permanently threatened. 428

(C) Military proselyting cadre employed a number of PSYWAR techniques, coupled with force or intimidation, to achieve their objectives. These objectives were: undermining of popular faith and confidence in the GVN, creation of fear and distrust among individual soldiers and civilians, and gaining supporters with limited bloodshed. To gain the best psychological advantage, VC proselyting appeals often followed a period of intense military activity. For the individual soldier, separated from family and home, and threatened with injury or death, these appeals could have led to desertion, defection, or absence without leave. 429

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(C) The use of loudspeakers was one technique employed by proselyting cadre. It was most effective when RVN troops had established their night defensive positions. Covert agents planted within RVNAF units or proselyting cadre who had been drafted into the RVNAF also targeted individuals susceptible to proselyting appeals. Probably the most effective technique was to induce or force RVNAF dependents to appeal to their husbands, sons, or brothers to leave the army and return home. A good example of how local RVNAF dependents were forced to support VC/NVA proselyting cadre is contained in the following report:

With a few minor cadres and activists serving under them, the main assignments of the heads of village military proselyting sections are to find out the whereabouts of the (ARVN) soldiers manning nearby outposts. Once this is done, they have to call on their relatives--who, in many cases, live in Communist controlled areas--to undertake proselyting missions... Usually, the first step consisted of convincing the soldiers' relatives of the Front's "laudable objectives" and of its ultimate victory... The second step was to ask the soldiers' relatives to contact them and urge them to defect. If the soldier's relatives refused to do so, proselyting cadres would resort to threats and punishments, the most efficient of which was to place their targets under house-arrest and into isolation... To isolate the soldiers' relatives was simply to mobilize everyone in the village to cut off every communication with them, thus showing contempt and disgust toward them. Though this kind of treatment might seem innocent, it is in reality the most terrific mental torture which could be designed to subdue the toughest person. Usually, isolating and placing targets under house-arrest generally brought about very good results to proselyting cadres. At length, their targets had to agree to contact their kinsman soldiers to carry out what proselyting cadres wanted them to do... Too often, the poor soldiers gave in just because they could not stay indifferent to their parents' hardships. But when they agreed to defect, they were often asked to write a promise to stop harming the people's interests and the revolution's. With that proof of defection in hand, proselyting cadres then jumped into the third step which consisted of forcing proselyting soldier to betray his comrades-in-arms... Their refusal to betray would simply cause the cadres to send their written applications to switch sides right to the local military police unit. So, despite their reluctance, proselyted soldiers had to agree to let (VC) Front fighters sneak into his post when he was standing guard. One night... the outpost was overwhelmed. Subsequently, the Communist-controlled area was expanded, and the Front appeared to be stronger than before. 430

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In March, a technique was first discovered, whereby proselyting cadre provided RVNAF dependents with ready-made complaint forms listing hardships and loss of life and property at the hands of ARVN troops. These complaint forms were then to be sent to RVN officials or RVNAF unit commanders, probably to create the impression that a vast popular movement was rising in opposition to the GVN war effort. 431

(C) Occasionally, military proselyting cadre aimed at FWMAF personnel. On 24 Oct, a recording tape was captured which revealed that members of a North Korean military action group, after operating in Binh Dinh Province for approximately eight months, had returned to their home station on 10 Aug. Based upon the contents of the tape, this Korean group was probably stationed in NVN at the time of discovery. The tape, which was a letter of appreciation to the Current Affairs Committee of Binh Dinh Province, stated that a number of recorded tapes, documents, and propaganda leaflets would be sent to Binh Dinh Province for the proselyting of South Korean troops. 432

(C) A priority target for civilian proselyting cadre was the organization of a hamlet or village Farmer's, Youth's, or Women's Association. A Vietnamese villager saw nothing unusual about a new association being established since organizations, clubs, and associations were a traditional part of Vietnamese life. Initially, the civilian proselyting cadre generated interest in a new association by concentrating activities and propaganda on problems of immediate interest to the target groups. For example, a hamlet Farmer's Association would meet once a week to plan repairs on a canal or to discuss the market price of rice. Individuals who went to these meetings became involved in the association's activities because of its obvious concern with local and personal problems. As the farmers would become more involved, they identified themselves as members of the association. At this stage, the association was a viable and exploitable political entity. Proselyting cadre who retained leadership positions in the new association would begin weaving Party propaganda into association meetings. Newspapers or leaflets promoting Party lines would be circulated, and "political education" discussions were held. The traditional NFLSVN goals of ending corruption, replacing the GVN, driving out foreigners, and reuniting the country were propagated among the Farmer's Association members. Concurrent with or following the formation of the Farmer's Association, other mass associations were formed. Once the members of these associations became indoctrinated with VC precepts, a select group would be chosen by district Party cadre to join the Executive Committee of a village NFLSVN Committee, and the civilian proselyting task of organizing the local populace was completed. The NFLSVN Committee assumed responsibility for maintaining the daily operation of the Front association and, with the aid of local civilian proselyting cadre, sought new members for the various mass associations. This process of creating and then subverting mass associations was an essential element in the Communist campaign for population control in RVN. 433

(C) While organizing the rural populace into various associations to support the enemy's struggle, Communist proselyting also involved extensive targeting of ethnic and religious minority groups. According to the 13th Lao Dong Party Resolution:

With regard to the ethnic minorities (the Montagnards and Khmer), we must properly carry out the Party's ethnic policy, penetrate deeply into the masses, and through practical actions, unite with them, organize them, and... secure their practical interest... With regard to the Chinese residents, we must continue to

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penetrate their masses and motivate them to unite with our people and rise up against the acts of pillage and destruction perpetrated by the Americans and their henchmen. We must penetrate into the religious masses and motivate them, promote their nationalistic spirit, show respect for their freedom of faith, incorporate them into organizations which would fit them, prevent them from being fooled by reactionary elements disguised as religious leaders who try to introduce them into anti-revolutionary organizations, the puppet government and army. 434

(C) VC/NVA goals were the integration of members of minority groups into the VC military and political organization and reorientation of minority loyalties away from the local leaders of the GVN to the VC/NVA. To exploit the grievances which ethnic or religious groups held against the GVN, the enemy recruited individual members of the targeted group and employed them as proselyting agents. 435

(C) The principal minority group targeted by the VC/NVA was the Montagnards. While the Montagnards constituted only five percent of RVN's total population, they occupied approximately 60 percent of RVN's total land mass. Winning the support of the Montagnards was of strategic importance to the enemy. Because Montagnard leaders generally preferred autonomy rather than assimilation into the RVN, the VC military and civilian proselyting effort was based upon promising the Montagnards full autonomy in return for their support of the revolutionary movement. In 1969, enemy proselyting efforts against the Montagnards was blunted by a reconciliation between leading Montagnard officials, including leaders of the United Front for the Struggle of Oppressed Races (FULRO) and the GVN. 436

Conclusion

(C) Enemy proselyting efforts in 1969 were nullified by RVN/Allied forces. The major factors which accounted for this were:

1. The enemy sustained repeated military defeats.
2. The enemy lost numbers of experienced political and military cadre from battle-field attrition and the PHOENIX Program.
3. Increased VC extortion and conscription became a burden on the rural population, with a subsequent loss of support for the enemy.
4. An accelerated GVN pacification program and increased rural security removed larger numbers of the rural population from VC control or influence.
5. Rising confidence in their capabilities to successfully engage the enemy made ARVN troops less susceptible to enemy proselyting efforts.
6. Rising confidence among the population in the responsiveness and stability of the GVN denied the enemy suitable grounds for successfully promoting a mass, urban, political movement. 437

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The Future

(C) While enemy military and civilian proselyting efforts in 1969 failed to promote mass civil or military defections, the threat remained if VCI elements remained organized and the popular frustrations generated by the war were not resolved. With further withdrawal of US forces likely in the near future, the GVN, RVNAF, and people of the RVN would probably face renewed enemy pressures, testing their resolve and confidence. 438

VC/NVA Operations: 1st Quarter 1969

Introduction

(S) First quarter 1969 was highlighted by the VC/NVA post-Tet Offensive (See Chapter V, Ground Operations). The offensive was more limited in scope than were the 1968 Tet and May Offensives, and the activity indicators generally ranged between the 1967 and 1968 averages. The total VC/NVA attacks increased sharply in first quarter 1969 and slightly exceeded the quarterly average of 1968. Ground assaults and ambushes increased more than attacks-by-fire. Battalion size or larger assaults were 52 percent below the 1968 quarterly average. Harassment, propaganda, and antiaircraft fire were near or slightly below 1968 levels. 439 (Figures III-19-III-22 depict the location of enemy initiated incidents in 1969) The statistics of some categories of enemy initiated incidents during the first quarter follow below: 440

	<u>I CTZ</u>	<u>II CTZ</u>	<u>III CTZ</u>	<u>IV CTZ</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>January</u>					
Attacks	28	45	100	42	215
Harassments	332	202	367	297	1,198
<u>February</u>					
Attacks	65	75	113	72	325
Harassments	555	164	476	420	1,615
<u>March</u>					
Attacks	113	87	176	67	443
Harassments	727	204	589	300	1,820

January

(S) Summary. Enemy activity in I CTZ was at its lowest level of the first quarter during January; there were no large scale attacks. In II CTZ, the level of enemy activity throughout most of the provinces showed a marked increase; with the movement of the 24th NVA Regt from Cambodia into the highlands, activity had increased sharply. The enemy continued to reposition his forces while attempting to avoid large scale contacts in III CTZ; there were small unit contacts along the Song Be and Saigon Rivers which indicated continued enemy infiltration of men and materiel into central III CTZ. Enemy initiated activity was negligible in IV CTZ; an ARVN

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operation, however, resulted in 200 enemy KIA in the U Minh Forest. 441

(C) I Corps Tactical Zone. During January, enemy activity throughout I CTZ increased slightly over that of December. Allied positions in the B-5 Front continued to receive harassing mortar attacks. On 27 and 29 Jan, the enemy occupied firing positions within the southern DMZ for the first time since 21 Dec 68. A Hoi Chanh and agents revealed that elements of the 246th NVA Regt were located west of Khe Sanh and in the western DMZ, and they were to have initiated attacks against Allied positions in the DMZ area. Enemy forces in the B-5 Front also conducted harassing attacks against ARVN positions south of Gio Linh. In Military Region Tri-Thien-Hue (MR TTH) the enemy continued to concentrate his attacks against military targets while attacks on population centers decreased. On 18 Jan, the Mai Linh Popular Forces outpost southwest of Quang Tri City was overrun, and on 19 Jan, the Phu Loc Subsector Headquarters received a mortar attack. A PW captured north of Camp Evans identified his unit as the 806th Bn, 6th NVA Regt. Documents captured earlier in Thua Thien Province identified both the 806th Inf Bn and the 835th Arty Bn, 6th NVA Regt. PWs, ralliers, and agents continued to predict attacks against Hue and Quang Tri City; however, continued Allied sweeps in the area failed to detect any sizeable enemy force near these target areas. In northern MRS the enemy directed attacks against RF and PF units and attempted to avoid contact with major Allied units. Da Nang Air Base, Hoi An City, Dien Ban District Headquarters, and Marble Mountain received mortar and rocket attacks. On 22 Jan the headquarters of VNN Coastal Group 14, was overrun, and two PF groups in the Hoi An areas received ground attacks on 28 Jan. Elsewhere in Quang Nam Province, the 2nd ARVN Div and 36th ARVN Regt elements were preoccupied with Allied Operations TAYLOR COMMON and LINN RIVER (See Chapter V, Ground Operations). These operations probably pre-empted enemy attack plans for early February in central I CTZ. In Quang Tin Province a PW from the 3rd Regt, 2nd NVA Div, stated that his unit was awaiting orders to attack outposts southwest of Tam Ky City. In Quang Ngai Province the enemy failed to conduct any significant offensive activity against military forces and appeared content to direct his efforts against civilian targets. Documents and PWs continued to reflect preparations of the 3rd NVA Div for offensive activity against Quang Ngai City. On 11 Jan, elements of the probable 22nd Regt, 3rd NVA Div, forced approximately 800 people from Phu Hau Hamlet to move to a VC village west of Quang Ngai City; cordon operations conducted around the village resulted in 46 enemy KIA. This type of civilian harassment and terrorism, was prevalent throughout Quang Ngai Province during the month.

(C) II Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy activity in the B-3 Front increased slightly during the month. The most significant development involved the movement of the 24th NVA Regt into northwest Pleiku Province following an extended period of refitting in out-of-country border sanctuaries. The discovery of large caches of rice and ammunition in the Chu Pa Mountains, approximately 20 km west of the Plei Mrong CIDG Camp, combined with information from captured documents and numerous contacts after 10 Jan, indicated that the entire 24th NVA Regt was located in the area. The enemy continued to demonstrate his presence throughout the B-3 Front by the use of widespread attacks-by-fire. Principal airfields at Kontum, Pleiku, and Ban Me Thout cities received 122mm rocket attacks. Significant activities in northern Quang Duc Province consisted of standoff attacks in the Duc Lap area on 4 and 8 Jan and contacts on 20 and 21 Jan, approximately 22 km east-southeast of the Duc Lap CIDG Camp. Documents captured during the contacts identified both the K-39 Bn and the K-34 Arty Bn, 40th NVA Arty Regt. The capture of documents referring to both units, in the same area, suggested that elements of the K-34 Arty Bn, which had a 122mm rocket capability, were operating in support of the K-39 Bn. A prisoner captured on 9 Jan, 27 km east-northeast of the Plei Me CIDG Camp,

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identified his unit as the 1st Bn, 250th Trans Regt. He stated that the regiment consisted of three battalions and performed transportation missions in VC Gia Lai Province. According to the prisoner, the regiment also supplied food and arms to elements of the 3rd NVA Div and MR 5 in Quang Ngai Province. Elements of the 95B NVA Regt remained in the An Khe area and along QL-19, west of the city. Elements of the regiment probably were responsible for the 16 Jan attack-by-fire on Camp Radcliff, 4 km north-northwest of An Khe, and the 21 Jan attack-by-fire on the An Khe District Headquarters and MACV compound. On 15 Jan prisoners from the regiment's 4th Bn were captured during a company sized attack on QL-19, 15 km west of An Khe. In Binh Dinh Province documents captured following a 22 Jan contact, 2 km east of Bong Son, identified an element of the XC-II LF Bn, which was known to have operated in the area. Plans for offensive operations by the 18th NVA Regt, to be carried out in the lowlands of Binh Dinh Province during Tet were revealed by a prisoner from the regiment's 9th Bn. According to the prisoner, the regiment was located 15 to 20 km northwest of Phu My. Other documents revealed enemy plans for attacks in coastal Binh Dinh Province. The attacks apparently were to have been carried out by the 405th Sapper Bn and were to have centered on the Qui Nhon area during the period 9-15 Jan. The capture of the attack plans and the death of the commander and political officer of the 405th Sapper Bn during the 4 Jan contact probably resulted in the cancellation of the plans. In the southern subregion a prisoner identified himself as the Chief of Staff, 407th Sapper Bn. He stated that the battalion had been in the Ba Cum area, approximately 30 km southwest of Nha Trang, since mid-December 1968. According to the prisoner, the battalion's mission was to conduct attacks-by-fire in the Cam Ranh area with the Dong Ba Thin Airfield as one of its targets. In MR 6, enemy-initiated activity increased significantly, particularly in Binh Thuan Province. A number of enemy-initiated attacks occurred during the month in the Triangle area north of Phan Thiet. They were probably the result of plans contained in a document captured on 27 Dec 68. The document revealed plans for coordinated attacks in the Triangle area, to be carried out by elements of the 482nd LF Bn and several LF companies. Elements of the 482nd LF Bn were identified through documents captured during a 12 Jan contact, 5 km north of Phan Thiet.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone. In III CTZ the enemy continued to reposition his forces throughout the month, while attempting to avoid large scale contacts. Small unit contacts along the Song Be and Saigon River corridors indicated continued enemy infiltration of men and materiel into central III CTZ. The 95C NVA Regt, 1st NVA Div, was identified in contact 14 km north-east of Nui Ba Den. The 320th NVA Regt, 1st NVA Div, was contacted in west-central Phuoc Long Province. The 174th NVA Regt, 5th VC Div, was identified by a Hoi Chanh in west-central Phuoc Long Province. The 165th NVA Regt, 7th NVA Div, was contacted south of the Cambodian Fishhook area in northeast Tay Ninh Province. The 271st VC Regt, 9th VC Div, was contacted in southwest Tay Ninh Province. Elements of the 272nd VC Regt were contacted in the Cambodian Angel's Wing area in Tay Ninh Province. The 101st NVA Regt was identified by PWs in the Boi Loi Woods area in southeast Tay Ninh Province. The 268th VC Regt was also located by PWs in the Boi Loi Woods area in Tay Ninh Province. Sapper reconnaissance elements of the 6th LF Bn were contacted while probably attempting to infiltrate into Saigon. A reconnaissance element of the 265th VC MF Bn was identified in contact south of Saigon near the Can Giouc Bridge in Long An Province. In southeast III CTZ, the 1st VC Regt, SR 4, and the 274th VC Regt continued to threaten the Long Binh-Bien Hoa complex and the Bear Cat Base Camp. The enemy force attempted to avoid major engagements with the exception of an ambush by elements of the 95C NVA Regt in which the enemy lost 122 KIA and an attack by an unidentified enemy force on Loc Ninh in Binh Long Province. The enemy, however, did continue to reconnoiter routes to Saigon from all directions, indicating continued enemy planning to attack Saigon.

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(C) IV Corps Tactical Zone. In IV CTZ enemy-initiated activity remained at approximately the same level as for the month of December 1968. There were 31 enemy-initiated incidents on the night of 9 Jan as compared to the high for December of 44 on the night of 5 Dec. Attacks on airfields and river patrol boats increased significantly, indicating VC concern over Allied air support capabilities and the effects of USN patrols along the enemy's infiltration routes. On 14 Jan, operation DELTA BLACKHAWK in Kien Phong and Kien Tuong Provinces resulted in 139 enemy KIA and the capture of a large quantity of arms and ammunition, including a 12-tube, 107 mm rocket launcher; this was the first weapon of this type captured in IV CTZ. The largest cache of the month was discovered on 23 Jan in Kien Giang Province; it contained over 32 tons of weapons, ammunition, mortar rounds, and rockets. The number of VC rallying to the GVN increased for the fourth consecutive month. 442

February

(S) Summary. Until 23 Feb, activity in I CTZ was light with the exception of unidentified artillery attacks on forces participating in Operation DEWEY CANYON (See Chapter V, Ground Operations). On 23 Feb, the enemy launched his post-Tet offensive with widespread, coordinated indirect fire attacks and limited ground attacks in the southern three provinces. As with I CTZ, II CTZ activity was light until the enemy launched his post-Tet offensive; during the period 22-27 Feb, there were approximately 147 attacks-by-fire -- only 40 of which were in conjunction with a ground attack. During early February, the enemy in III CTZ continued to refit and resupply his forces in preparation for future engagements. On 22-23 Feb the enemy launched a CTZ-wide offensive which was characterized by extensive attacks-by-fire against base camps, airbases, and some major cities; ground probes were also initiated against several Allied base camps and support bases. Throughout the month, the enemy in IV CTZ launched heavy attacks-by-fire and small scale ground attacks against military targets and installations. The monthly highpoint occurred on 22-23 Feb with the enemy launching widespread, well-coordinated attacks-by-fire. These attacks followed a pattern of an accelerated effort against the Allied pacification program rather than large scale commitments of troops against provincial cities. 443

(C) I Corps Tactical Zone. Throughout I CTZ during the first three weeks of February, enemy-initiated activity was generally light. At 0100 hours on 23 Feb, enemy forces launched an offensive with widespread indirect fire attacks and limited ground probes against targets throughout northern MR 5 and B-5 Front. During this period enemy offensive activity was conspicuously absent in MR TTH. However, between 1 and 3 Feb there were seven enemy indirect fire attacks in the Hue area and surrounding the Thua Thien lowlands. On 2 Feb, the enemy employed 122mm artillery against Allied forces in southern Quang Tin Province. This was the first enemy artillery fire received in I CTZ since the 1 Nov 68 bombing halt. Operation DEWEY CANYON continued to meet stiff resistance in the vicinity of Base Area 611. From 16 to 22 Feb, over 220 enemy were killed in the area, and a large number of enemy weapons, vehicles, and engineering equipment was captured. In southern I CTZ the primary enemy targets were US and ARVN forces and installations in the Quang Nam lowlands, an An Hoa industrial complex, Tam Ky City, the Tien Phuoc Special Forces Camp, and Quang Ngai City. Prisoners identified the 31st, 36th, 38th, and 141st NVA Regts, Front 4, and virtually all LF units in contact in Quang Nam Province. In Quang Tin Province, LF units suffered the brunt of the attack. A similar situation existed in Quang Ngai Province, except in the area west of Quang Ngai City where elements of the 22d Regt, 3d NVA Div, were engaged. At the close of the month a lull in enemy offensive action was noted but PWs and agents revealed that a second offensive phase was to have taken place in March.

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(C) II Corps Tactical Zone. In II CTZ the enemy generally avoided major combat during the first three weeks of February while completing preparations for his post-Tet offensive. In the B-3 Front, the 24th NVA Regt remained in northwest Pleiku Province. The 24th Regt, seriously weakened by the loss of approximately 500 KIA during January, lost at least another 100 KIA in February. Prisoners from the regiment's 4th Bn, captured on 23 Feb, stated that the mission of the 4th and 5th Bns was to interdict QL-14 between Kontum and Pleiku Cities. The PWs claimed that the 6th Bn of the 24th NVA Regt and the 8th Bn of the 66th NVA Regt were located in the Chu Pa Mountains west of Plei Mrong with the mission of observing US forces in the area. According to the prisoner, this situation would have left Kontum City and Dak To open to attack by a regiment other than the 24th, possibly the remainder of the 66th. In late February the 66th Regt was believed to have been located in southwest Kontum Province, targeted against Poley Kleng CIDG Camp; however, the regiment remained uncommitted as of 28 Feb. A Hoi Chanh of 25 Feb stated that the X-45 and H-15 LF Bns and the 966th NVA Bn were located in northwest Pleiku Province and were to have attacked Pleiku City. A PW who was captured on 4 Feb in the B-3 Front revealed that the K-39 Bn was reconnoitering in preparation for attacks on Ban Me Thuot. Captured documents indicated that the K-34 Arty Bn of the 40th NVA Regt may have been operating in support of the K-39 Bn. In Phu Bon Province, on 11 Feb, the district headquarters at Cheo Reo received an attack-by-fire by an unidentified force. On 12 Feb there was an indirect fire attack on Landing Zone (LZ) SARA, 13 km northeast of Phan Thiet. A PW captured during the attack stated that his unit, the 240th NVA Bn, moved to the area north of Phan Thiet from Tuyen Duc Province in early January and joined with the 186th and 840 Main Force Bns for the attack. Early on 22 Feb, there was an attack-by-fire against LZ BETTY, located southwest of Phan Thiet. A PW stated that his unit was the 1st Co, 481st LF Bn, substantiating earlier indications that the 481st LF Co had been upgraded to battalion echelon. During the night of 22 Feb, there were 41 indirect fire attacks reported throughout II CTZ. During the next five days the number of attacks declined to a low of six on 27 Feb. After 23 Feb the focus of the attacks shifted to the western Highlands. Significant ground probes took place at Ben Het and Poley Kleng. Kon Houng Village, 30 km northwest of Kontum City, suffered 81 civilians killed, 100 wounded, and 125 houses destroyed. Also, Routes QL-14 and QL-19 were interdicted in coastal II CTZ, ground action was marked by interdiction of Route QL-1 and the rail line in Binh Dinh and Khanh Hoa Provinces.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone. In III CTZ, enemy activity during February was in two phases. During phase one, 1-22 Feb, the enemy generally avoided contact while positioning his forces and attempting to establish supply bases in areas near prospective urban and military targets. The second phase, from 23 Feb to the end of the month, was characterized by an enemy offensive directed primarily against military installations in the CTZ. Enemy activity consisted mainly of widespread indirect fire attacks, resulting in relatively light casualties and damage. Ground assaults accompanied the indirect fire attacks in some instances, but all were repulsed, resulting in heavy enemy losses. Over 200 enemy were KIA in two attacks at FSB DIAMOND in Tay Ninh Province on 23 and 25 Feb. Over 400 enemy were killed in a series of attacks on the Dien Hoa/Long Binh military complex between 23 and 26 Feb. Enemy divisional forces identified in contact during the offensive were the 95C NVA Regt, 1st NVA Div, at Dau Tieng; the 275th VC Regt, 5th VC Div, at FSB MAHONE in western Binh Duong Province; and the 272nd VC Regt, 9th VC Div, at FSB DIAMOND in southwestern Tay Ninh Province. The 274th VC Regt was also identified in the attacks against Long Binh, and the 88th NVA Regt was involved in an attack on FSB STEWART in eastern Tay Ninh Province. Subregional forces identified in the offensive included the 1st VC Regt of SR 4, which was engaged southeast of Thu Duc, and the

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Dong Phu Bn, SR 3, which was contacted south of Saigon. Most of the enemy's indirect fire attacks in support of the late February offensive were relatively light, and the major portion of his divisional and subregion forces were not committed. Through the end of February, the 5th VC Div continued to threaten the Bien Hoa/Long Binh area. The 1st and 7th NVA Divs continued to pose a threat in Tay Ninh and Binh Duong Provinces. The 9th VC Div was in position to launch attacks in Tay Ninh Province.

(C) IV Corps Tactical Zone. In IV CTZ, the level of enemy-initiated activity during the first three weeks of February remained generally unchanged from that of January. On 14 Feb, US elements in Kien Hoa Province Killed 62 enemy in a contact 5 km southeast of Ben Tre City. The US operations on 20 Feb in Dinh Tuong and Kien Hoa Province resulted in 144 enemy KIA. At 0200 hours on 23 Feb, the enemy launched his offensive in the Delta; from that time until the end of the month there were approximately 240 indirect fire attacks and 25 ground attacks. The enemy attacks were directed primarily against military targets in both isolated and urban areas. Enemy activity was concentrated in Dinh Tuong, Kien Hoa, and Chau Doc Province of MR 2. On 25 Feb ARVN and PF units contacted an enemy force 6 km northwest of Chau Doc City, resulting in 187 enemy KIA. In MR 3, enemy attacks were less intense and fewer in number than in MR 2. Regional Force elements contacted enemy forces in Vinh Binh Province on 24 and 25 Feb killing 80 enemy. Despite his efforts, the enemy in IV CTZ failed to gain any significant military advantage; casualties and damage inflicted on Allied forces were light. 444

March

(S) Summary. During March, there were no enemy initiated, large scale ground attacks in I CTZ; however, the enemy did continue his indirect fire attacks on military installations, outposts, and population centers with the most concentrated attacks occurring on 19 Mar. These attacks were interspersed with sapper forays and ground probes. Through this approach, the enemy's economy of force measures maintained continual pressure on Allied forces without the excessive casualties that would have resulted from mass ground assaults. The first three weeks in II CTZ were marked by moderate enemy activity, primarily characterized by indirect fire attacks. A significant development was the relocation of the 66th NVA Regt from Cambodia to southwestern Kontum Province. On 3 Mar, the Ben Het CIDG Camp received approximately 200 rounds of 82mm mortar and 122mm rocket fire followed by a tank/infantry probe. On 20-21 Mar, the enemy launched the second phase of his post-Tet Offensive with attacks-by-fire against friendly installations and some ground attacks against villages. The enemy maintained light to moderate pressure on most provinces throughout III CTZ, with concentrated effort in Hau Nghia, Tay Ninh, Binh Duong, and Long Khanh Provinces; the major emphasis was on attacks-by-fire. In IV CTZ, the incident rate leveled off during March; however, heavy attacks-by-fire on the night of 14-15 Mar created a second high point of the post-Tet Offensive. 445

(C) I Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy activity during March decreased from that experienced in the initial phase of the post-Tet Offensive which the enemy launched in late February. In the B-5 Front, Allied positions continued to receive harassing indirect fire attacks. Nine of these attacks were launched from within the southern DMZ. Continuing enemy use of and infiltration through the DMZ was confirmed by identification of elements of the 27th and 246th NVA Regts and possibly the 270th NVA Regt, south of the DMZ. Enemy ground activity was characterized by sporadic but aggressive contacts involving enemy units of company size and smaller. In contacts on 27 and 28 Mar, friendly forces killed 188 members of the 27th NVA Regt northeast of the Rockpile. In MR FTH, enemy activity was primarily in reaction to friendly operations in

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western Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. From 1 to 18 Mar, heavy enemy vehicular movement was detected on the Route 926/616 system. Prisoners captured in the area identified their units as the 2nd, 250th, and 330th Regts and revealed that the regiments had a logistics/construction function. Marine forces in Operations MAIN CRAG and DEWEY CANYON discovered a series of caches in western Quang Tri Province. Significant enemy offensive activity was limited to scattered indirect fire attacks throughout coastal MR TTH, with emphasis on the Phu Bai/Phu Loc area during the period 22-28 Mar. In Front 4, significant enemy activity from 1 to 19 Mar was limited to indirect fire attacks and ground probes against the An Hoa Combat Base by the 1st VC Regt, 2nd NVA Div. Similar pressure was maintained on the Tien Phuoc CIDG Camp by the 3rd NVA Regt, 2nd NVA Regt, 2nd NVA Div. The 3rd NVA Div, while avoiding major contacts, remained deployed in the vicinity of its primary objectives in the Quang Ngai lowlands. During the early morning hours of 19 Mar the enemy launched 27 indirect fire and 13 ground attacks against selected military and civilian targets in central and southern I CTZ. Primary targets were in the areas of Danang, Hoi An, Tam Ky, Chu Lai, and Quang Ngai City. Cumulative results were 42 friendly KIA, including 17 civilians; 194 friendly WIA, including 60 civilians; and 164 enemy KIA. During the period 25-30 Mar, enemy forces suffered more than 300 KIA in a series of contacts with ARVN forces 17 km west of Hoi An. Elsewhere in central and southern I CTZ, a lull in enemy offensive action was noted at the end of the month.

(C) II Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy initiated activity throughout II CTZ was light except for the periods 3-4 Mar and 20-21 Mar. The enemy's most widespread and intensive activity occurred during these periods and consisted primarily of indirect fire attacks. The most significant ground attack during the month occurred on the night of 3 Mar when the Ben Het CIDG Camp received mixed 82mm mortar and 85mm artillery fires followed by a ground attack. The attacking force, estimated to be a battalion, was supported by 10 tanks. Two of the tanks, identified as Soviet PT-76 models, were destroyed. The 66th NVA Regt, which was engaged in significant contacts in southwest Kontum Province from 3-13 Mar, was believed to have suffered over 400 KIA during the month. A series of contacts in southwest Kontum Province, approximately 23 km southwest of the Poley Kleng CIDG Camp, resulted in 112 enemy KIA from 3-7 Mar. The enemy force was unidentified but was believed to have been elements of the 66th NVA Regt. On 21 Mar, 13 km southeast of Dak To, Kong Haring Village received from 150 to 200 rounds of mixed 60mm and 82mm mortar and B-40 rocket fire, killing seven civilians and wounding 36 others. This village had also been attacked on 22 Feb, resulting in 78 civilians killed and 100 wounded. On 21 Mar, 7 km south of Kontum City, a US compound received mixed rocket and mortar fire followed by a ground attack by an estimated enemy battalion. Documents captured in Pleiku Province on 19 Mar indicated that the K-37 NVA Sapper Bn and elements of the 31st Arty Bn probably conducted the attack. On 22 Mar sappers attacked a US fuel depot at Qui Nhon, destroying 727, 200 gallons of fuel. On the same day an RF company was attacked by an estimated enemy battalion 17 km north of Phan Thiet; the enemy lost 34 killed in the attack. A Hoi Chanh who rallied on 27 Mar near Tuy Hoa stated that he arrived in the B-3 Front in July 1968 with a 500-man infiltration group. Most of the group was used as replacements for the 95th NVA Regt, then located in the tri-border area. The rallier and 50 other men travelled to Phu Yen Province where they were integrated into the newly formed 10th NVA Regt. A member of the 186th MF Bn reported that his battalion was located in a jungle area northeast of Phan Thiet as late as 26 Feb. He also stated that the entire 186th MF Bn had participated in the 22 Feb ambush of an ARVN convoy 30 km northeast of Phan Thiet.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone. In III CTZ enemy activity during March was characterized by attempts to maintain the momentum of the post-Tet offensive. Despite the enemy's efforts,

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his activity decreased gradually during the month. Most enemy activity involved indirect fire attacks against Allied military installations. Ground assaults and convoy ambushes were also attempted, but these achieved no tangible success. Elements of all four enemy divisions in III CTZ were identified in contact. All three regiments of the 9th VC Div (271st, 272nd, and 273rd VC) were involved in engagements along the western Tay Ninh Province border. The 95C NVA and 101D NVA Regts, 1st NVA Div sustained significant losses in attacks on Allied bases and convoys in eastern Tay Ninh Province. The 18B NVA Regt, 1st NVA Div was also identified in this area, but it did not sustain heavy casualties. The 7th NVA Div was involved in several attacks in the Michelin Plantation area during the first half of March, and it was involved in numerous engagements with Allied forces conducting Operation ATLAS WEDGE in the Michelin area during the latter half of the month (See Chapter V, Ground Operations). The 141st NVA Regt, 7th NVA Div and the 209th NVA Regt (formerly known as the 320th NVA Regt) sustained significant losses in the Michelin Plantation area. This regiment was believed to have been under the operational control of the 7th NVA Div. The 165th NVA Regt, 7th NVA Div was also tentatively identified north of the Michelin Plantation during the last few days of March. The 32nd NVA Regt, formerly subordinate to the 7th NVA Div, had been transferred to SR 3 during the latter part of 1968; it was redesignated the 1st NVA Regt. Elements of the 5th VC Div were contacted in the area northeast of the Bien Hoa - Long Binh complex. The 174th NVA Regt, 5th VC Div was identified in minor contacts in northeastern Bien Hoa Province. The 275th VC Regt, 5th VC Div sustained heavy casualties in contacts in western Long Khanh Province. The only subregional forces involved in major contacts during March were those of SR-1; the 88th NVA, 101st NVA, and 268th VC Regts sustained heavy casualties in contacts in southern Tay Ninh and northern Hau Nghia Provinces. Military Region 7 forces conducted several attacks in southeastern III CTZ; the 274th VC Regt sustained moderate losses in attacks on Allied forces in southwestern Bien Hoa Province, and the 33rd NVA Regt, which was believed to have been under the operational control of MR 7, took moderate losses during attacks in southern Long Khanh Province. Although the enemy expended a considerable amount of combat power in his offensive, regimental-sized enemy forces remained in position to make further attacks.

(C) IV Corps Tactical Zone. The level of enemy-initiated activity in IV CTZ declined significantly from that of the last week in February, except for the night of 14 Mar. On that night the enemy conducted over 50 indirect fire attacks throughout the CTZ. The enemy continued to mount the majority of his attacks in MR 2 particularly in the Dong Tam - My Tho area. On 26 Mar, Dong Tam received nine rounds of mortar fire which ignited the ammunition dump. Results of this attack were two soldiers killed and 56 wounded - all US. Large amounts of small arms ammunition, mortar and artillery rounds, grenades, mixed fuzes, plus a large number of vehicles, helicopters, buildings, and one ship were damaged or destroyed. In Chau Doc Province on 9 and 10 Mar, a 2.3 ton cache of arms and ammunition was discovered along with the bodies of 64 VC, who apparently had been KIA in B-52 strikes on 3 Mar. In Vinh Long Province, 96 enemy were KIA in two separate contacts, on 6 and 7 Mar. On 11 and 12 Mar, Allied operations in Dinh Tuong Province resulted in 57 enemy killed. An additional 126 enemy were killed during a contact involving the 261A VC MF Bn on 23 and 24 Mar in southeastern Kien Phong Province. Also adding to the serious drain on the enemy's manpower in IV CTZ were the high number of VC who rallied to the GVN during March. 446

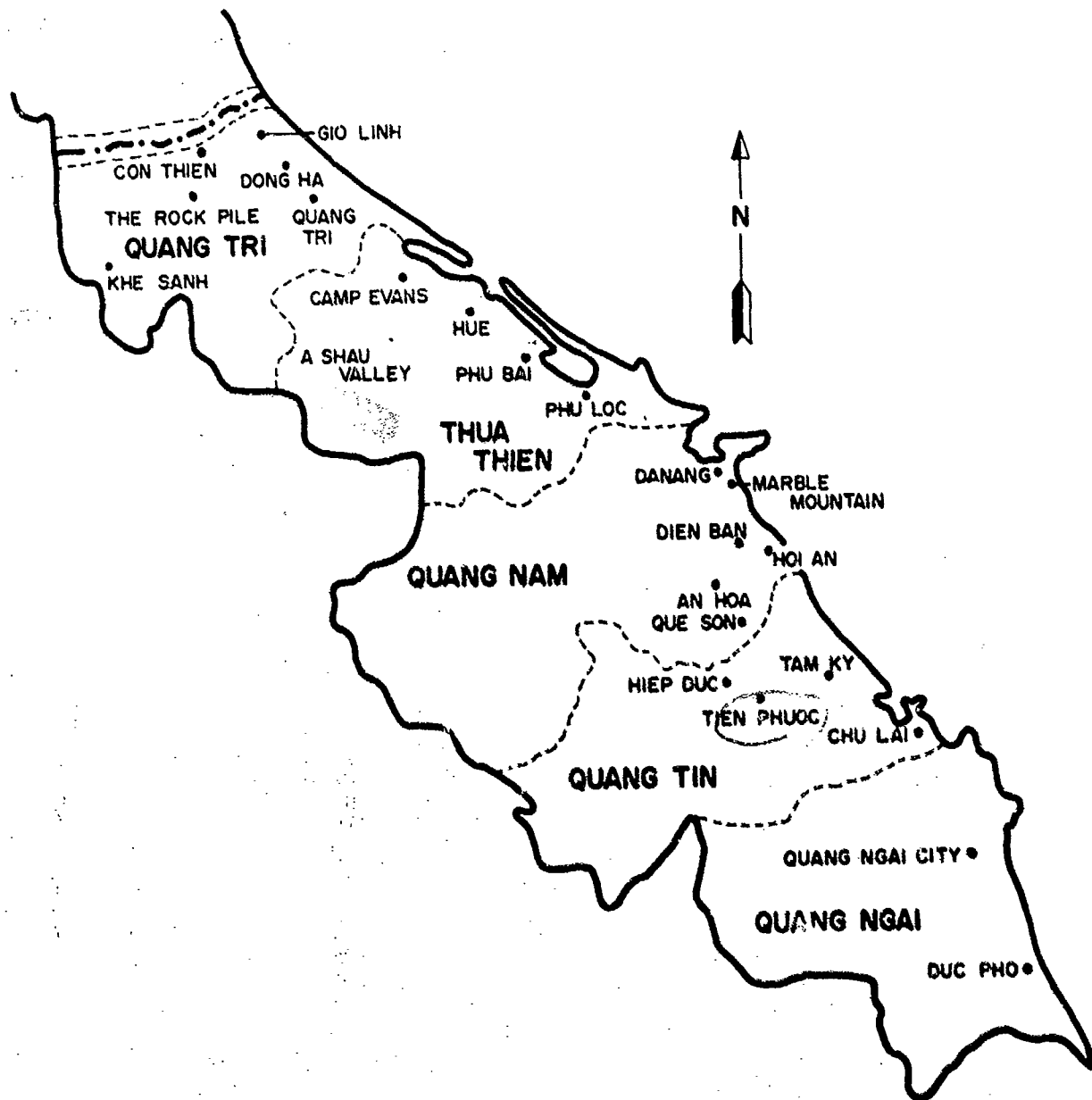
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LOCATIONS OF ENEMY INITIATED INCIDENTS I CTZ-1969



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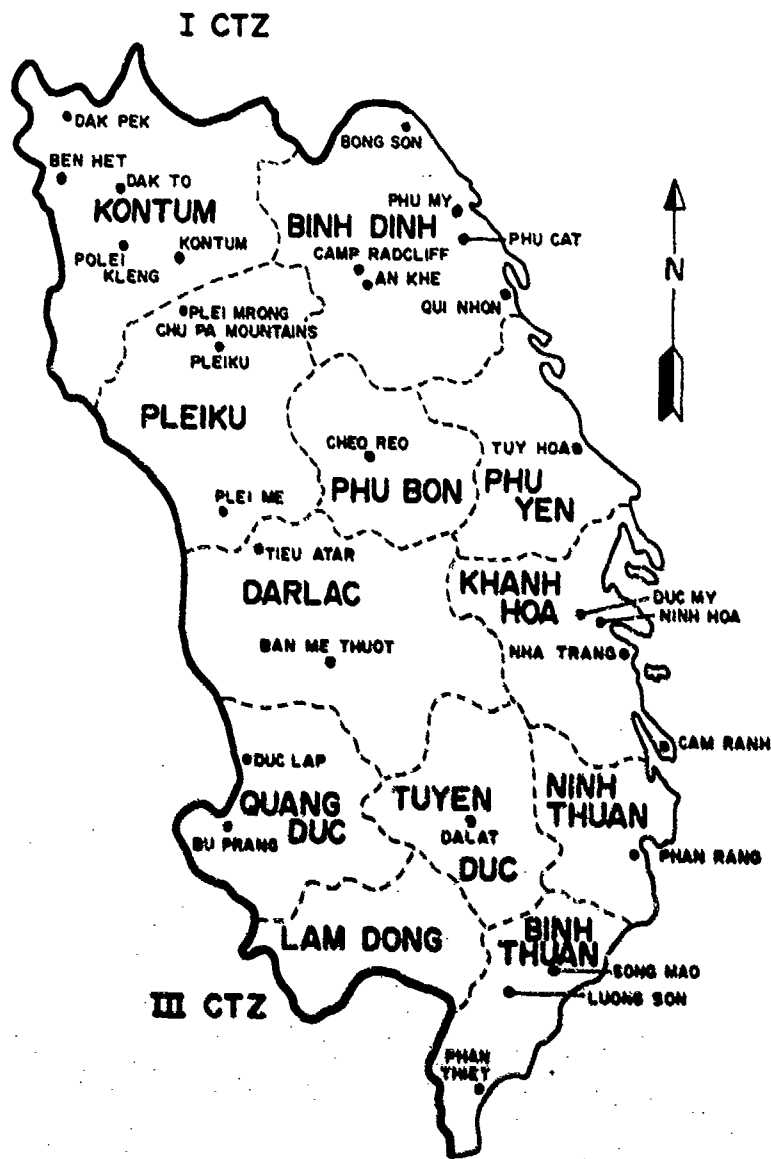
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FIGURE III-19

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LOCATIONS OF ENEMY INITIATED INCIDENTS II CTZ-1969



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FIGURE III-20
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LOCATIONS OF ENEMY INITIATED INCIDENTS III CTZ-1969



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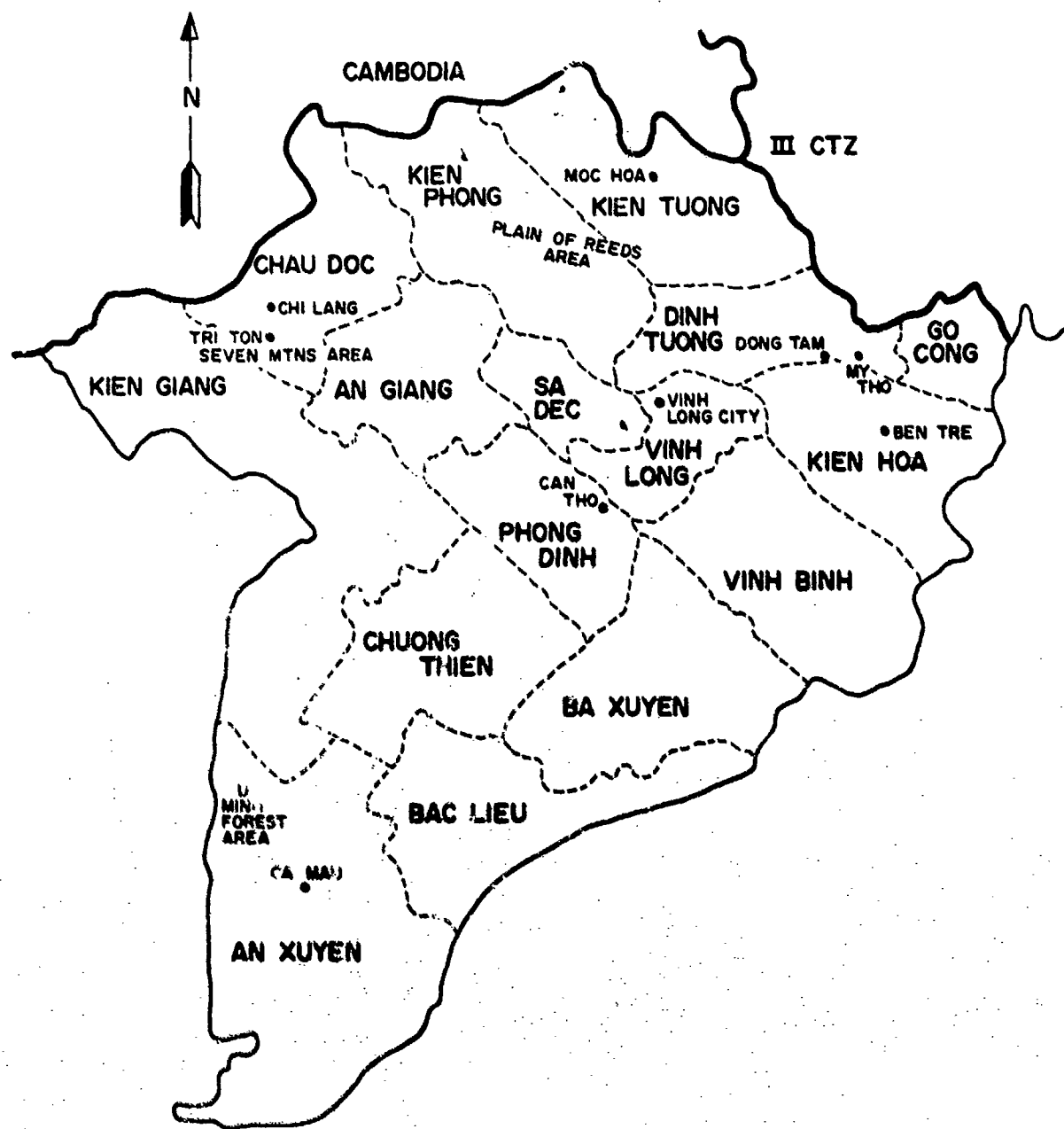
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FIGURE III-21

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LOCATIONS OF ENEMY INITIATED INCIDENTS IV CTZ-1969



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FIGURE III-22

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This plane was destroyed on 23 Feb 69 when fifty four 107mm rockets hit Bien Hoa AB

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VC/NVA Offensive Operations: 2d Quarter 1969

Introduction

(S) Before the lull began in late June, the second quarter 1969 was highlighted by a shift in enemy operations away from sustained offensives to smaller scale actions peaking in a series of highpoints; the enemy initiated two periods of country-wide attacks, one occurring on 11-12 May and one 6-7 Jun. The enemy's activities (except for large scale attacks) reached the level of the 1968 May Offensive (See Figures III-19 - III-22 for the locations of enemy initiated incidents in 1969). Although ground assaults and ambushes again increased more than attacks-by-fire, most were of a fairly low intensity. Battalion size attacks remained at less than half the level of 1968. Incidents of harassment and terrorism reached their highest level of the 1968-69 period during the second quarter, confirming the enemy's shift to smaller scale tactics and his return to guerrilla operations. Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces KIA increased, but US KIA remained at the first quarter level. Enemy personnel and equipment losses as a result of friendly efforts were high during the quarter; the enemy suffered more than 85,000 personnel losses, a 10 percent increase over the first quarter. Enemy weapons captured totalled 22,242, and enemy weapons recovered through the Volunteer Informant Program (VIP) totalled more than for the entire year of 1968. Despite such losses, the enemy retained the capability of conducting ground attacks or attacks-by-fire against population centers and bases. ⁴⁴⁷ Statistics follow of some categories of enemy initiated incidents during the second quarter. ⁴⁴⁸

April

	<u>I CTZ</u>	<u>II CTZ</u>	<u>III CTZ</u>	<u>IV CTZ</u>	<u>Total</u>
Attacks	62	54	121	84	321
Harassments	703	164	628	470	1,965

May

Assaults	40	63	41	34	178
Attacks-by-fire	50	43	124	45	262
Ambushes	2	7	2	3	14
Harassments	555	185	774	489	1,923

June

Assaults	43	61	41	25	170
Attacks-by-fire	68	69	102	37	276
Ambushes	1	9	4	4	18
Harassments	796	225	632	291	1,946

April

(S) Summary. During April, enemy-initiated action was at a relatively low level in all four CTZs. The VC/NVA generally limited their operations to attacks-by-fire on friendly military

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installations and population centers, and to some ground probes against ARVN/US positions. Ground contact consisted mostly of small unit engagements, but there were two exceptions to this pattern. Both occurred in III CTZ, where the enemy launched two attacks with forces estimated to be in regimental strength. In I CTZ, Communist forces followed their long established pattern of harassing attacks-by-fire and small ground probes. Most of the ground attacks occurred in Quang Tri and Quang Nam Provinces, including one in which the enemy employed flamethrowers. The air base at Danang was attacked with rocket fire but damage and casualties were light. VC/NVA forces in II CTZ attacked an ARVN training center in Khanh Hoa Province inflicting a significant number of casualties. Elsewhere in II CTZ, four airfields were attacked-by-fire resulting in light casualties but damage to a number of aircraft and other material. Other enemy activity included terrorism in the city of Dalat. Tay Ninh Province continued to be the center of enemy pressure in III CTZ as the Communists launched two attacks against US FSBs with forces of estimated regimental strength. Except for these two actions, ground contact with enemy forces was limited to small unit engagements. Other enemy activity included attacks by fire against friendly installations and terrorism in Saigon. In IV CTZ, ground contact remained light with the most significant action occurring in Kien Tuong Province near the Cambodian border. Attacks-by-fire against military targets and population centers continued throughout the CTZ. The Chieu Hoi center near Ca Mau was among the targets hit by VC/NVA artillerymen. Also, the first known use of 107mm rockets by the enemy in IV CTZ was reported during the month. 449

(C) I Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy activity during April was lighter than that experienced in late March. In the B-5 Front, Allied positions continued to receive harassing indirect fire attacks. Five mortar attacks were launched from within the southern DMZ. For the third successive month, enemy ground activity in the B-5 Front was characterized by sporadic but aggressive contacts of up to company size; nine contacts occurred during the period 21-29 Apr northeast of the ROCKPILE in the central DMZ area. Prisoners from this series of engagements identified their units as the 16th NVA Regt and 20th Trans Bn, 308th NVA Div. The PWs stated that their units' missions were to harass Allied positions on Route QL-9. In MR TTH, enemy activity was primarily in reaction to friendly operations in western Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces, where friendly forces discovered a series of caches. Captured documents revealed that a serious rice shortage had hampered enemy forces throughout MR TTH since January 1969. Operation MAINE CRAG PWs identified their units as the 10th Sapper, 808th, and 814th Bns. of the 7th Front. The shift of the entire 7th Front from BA 101 to western Quang Tri Province was the result of the rice shortage in coastal MR TTH and the enemy's attempts to protect his logistics network in the western Quang Tri-Laos border area. On 25 and 28 Apr, friendly forces in the Khe Sanh area were subjected to intense and precise enemy sapper attacks. Friendly cumulative results were: 17 KIA, 89 WIA, four armored personnel carriers and one tank destroyed, and two ammunition carriers, two 105mm self-propelled howitzers, one tank, and one armored personnel carrier damaged; the enemy sustained 64 KIA. In Front 4, PWs from the 11st and 141st NVA Regts revealed plans for renewed offensive activity in late April, but no significant attacks occurred. Captured documents indicated that food shortages and disruption to logistical efforts by Operation OKLAHOMA HILLS, central Quang Nam Province, probably preempted enemy offensive plans in the Quang Nam lowlands. On 20 Apr, US forces discovered a large logistics complex and cache southeast of BA 607. Enemy-initiated activity in the Danang area was limited to four rocket attacks against Allied installations during the period 16-24 Apr, resulting in five killed (three civilians) and 83 wounded (31 civilians). Reports from PWs confirmed the presence of the 90th NVA Regt, with a strength of about 1,500 men, in Quang Nam Province. In southern I CTZ, significant enemy-initiated activity was limited to indirect fire attacks and ground probes in the Quang Ngai City and Duc Pho areas on the night of

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16 Apr as major enemy forces in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces remained out of contact. The series of coordinated attacks resulted in seven friendly killed (four civilians), 39 wounded (27 civilians), 53 houses destroyed, and 39 houses damaged; the enemy sustained six KIA.

(C) II Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy-initiated activity throughout II CTZ was light during April. The lack of widespread activity during the month suggested that the 24th and 66th NVA Regts, both of which suffered heavy losses after January, may have withdrawn to Cambodian border sanctuaries. Documents captured in the Ben Het area following the 3 and 4 Mar attacks on the Ben Het CIDG Camp indicated that the PT-76 tanks committed to the battle were from the 16th Co, possibly of the 4th Bn, 202nd NVA Armd Regt. According to the documents, the unit had arrived in the B-3 Front during April, 1968. The 16th Co was the only armored element identified in II CTZ at that time. On 25 Apr, approximately 17 kilometers west of the Poley Kleng CIDG Camp, US forces discovered a notebook identifying the 12th Co, 3rd Bn, 28th Regt. A PW captured in I CTZ on 3 Feb, identified his unit as the 28th Regt and reported that when he deserted on 15 Jan, the unit was in Laos en route to the B-3 Front. On 2 Apr, 26 km west of the Poley Kleng CIDG Camp, US elements engaged an unknown sized enemy force, killing 23. The enemy force was unidentified, but it was probably an element of the 66th NVA Regt. A PW captured on 4 Apr, 7 km northeast of the Plei Mroeng CIDG Camp, identified his unit as the 6th Bn, 24th NVA Regt and stated that elements of the regiment had redeployed to western Kontum Province. Between 26 Mar and 10 Apr, US elements located over 100 tons of rice approximately 28 km southeast of Pleiku City. The rice probably belonged to the 95B NVA Regt and local force elements operating in the area. A series of contacts from 19-26 Apr, approximately 23 km southeast of the Tieu Atar CIDG Camp in northwest Darlac Province, resulted in approximately 140 KIA. Prisoners and documents captured during the contacts identified new infiltration groups. A notebook belonging to the commander indicated that Groups 1063 and 1064 were destined for the 10th Regt in Phu Yen Province. Previously, ralliers had stated that a new regiment, the 10th, was established in Phu Yen Province in December, 1968. On 18 Apr, approximately 6 km northeast of An Khe, a US convoy and four strongpoints received simultaneous indirect fire attacks followed by a small ground attack against one of the strongpoints; this ground attack resulted in two enemy KIA. The enemy forces were unidentified but were believed to have been elements of the 18th NVA Regt. Captured documents and PWs indicated that the 18th NVA Regt had the mission of interdicting Highway QL-19 east of An Khe. On 12 Apr, 17 km west of Tuy Hoa, ROKA elements attacked unknown-sized enemy forces on four separate occasions. Cumulative results were 29 enemy KIA. The enemy force was unidentified but was believed to have been elements of the 6th NVA Bn or the 85th LF Bn, both of which were known to have operated in the area. Also on 12 Apr, 34 km northwest of Nha Trang, ROKA elements attacked unknown-sized enemy forces in two separate contacts, killing 25. Early on 21 Apr the ARVN training center at Due My, 13 km west of Ninh Hoa, received 70 to 80 rounds of 82mm mortar fire followed by a sapper attack from an estimated enemy company. Friendly losses were 46 KIA and 137 WIA, while two enemy were KIA. A PW captured in the area on 22 Apr, identified his unit as the K91 Sapper Co. Early on 18 Apr, Camp Ly Army Airfield, 2 km west of Dalat, received 40 to 45 rounds of 82mm mortar fire and a sapper attack, resulting in two friendly KIA, two enemy KIA, and 60,000 gallons of petroleum products destroyed. The enemy force was unidentified but was believed to have been elements of the 810th MF Bn, which operated in the area. On 7 Apr, Camp Strike Force elements were attacked by unknown-sized enemy forces in two separate contacts approximately 11 km southeast of Lac Thien, resulting in 23 enemy KIA. On 1 Apr, 31 km northwest of Phan Rang, ROKA elements attacked an unknown-sized enemy force, resulting in 92 enemy KIA and large quantities of munitions captured; the enemy force was unidentified. On 16 Apr, 31 km northeast of Phan Thiet, an ARVN element

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attacked an estimated enemy company in probable ambush positions along Highway QL-1. Results were 12 enemy KIA and one captured; the PW identified his unit as the 186th MF Bn.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone. In III CTZ, enemy-initiated activity generally decreased during the month of April. Indirect fire attacks continued at a low to moderate level, however, and several battalion and multibattalion sized attacks were attempted against Allied installations. Elements of the 9th VC Div remained deployed along the western border of Tay Ninh Province and were responsible for indirect fire attacks, as well as ground assaults, in the area. The 272nd VC Regt sustained heavy casualties in three attacks on Patrol Base DIAMOND in southwestern Tay Ninh Province in early April. The 271st VC Regt also sustained significant casualties in two attacks on Patrol Base FRONTIER CITY in the same area during late April. The 273rd VC Regt was not identified in contact during the month. The 1st NVA Div continued to operate from its base areas in War Zone C. Elements of the 18B NVA Regt were identified in a series of contacts in east-central Tay Ninh Province beginning in mid-April. Prisoners and captured documents stated that the 101D and 95C NVA Regts were in northwestern War Zone C. The 7th NVA Div remained deployed in the Saigon River corridor between the Cambodian Fishhook and the Michelin Plantation. Its elements avoided major contacts during April. There were tenuous indications in early April that the 141st NVA Regt was withdrawing to Cambodia. Elements of the 209th NVA Regt were identified in the ambush of a small convoy on QL-13 south of An Loc at the end of April, indicating a possible shift in 7th Div operations toward targets in central Binh Long Province. The 5th VC Div also avoided significant combat during April. The 174th NVA and 275th VC Regts were believed to have withdrawn to War Zone D for refitting. The 95th NVA Regt was reported to be operating in northeastern Bien Hoa Province in support of VC U-1 Province operations. In SR 1, the 268th VC Regt sustained heavy casualties throughout the month in contacts northeast of Trang Bang. Elements of the 101st and the 88th NVA Regts were identified in their normal areas of operation near the junction of the Tay Ninh-Binh Duong-Hau Nghia provincial borders. In SR 3, the 1st NVA Regt sustained moderate casualties in engagements and ground assaults in south-central Long An Province. Units of SRs 2, 4, and 5 avoided major contact. The MR 7 forces also avoided contact, and there were indications that Allied operations had disrupted MR 7 base areas in southern Long Khanh Province. In general, April was a period of reassessment and refitting for enemy forces in III CTZ; all divisions attempted to keep forces in forward bases from which they could threaten their targets, but these forces did little more than maintain an enemy presence in these areas.

(C) IV Corps Tactical Zone. In IV CTZ, the level of enemy-initiated activity during April remained slightly above average, but it decreased at the end of the month. The majority of the attacks were of low intensity and were harassing in nature. An exception was the night of 10 Apr when there were 99 enemy-initiated incidents, most of which took place in MR 3. On that night, Vinh Long City received 25 rounds of 60mm mortar which resulted in 21 civilians killed and 87 wounded. Enemy forces attacked an ARVN company night defensive position in Bac Lieu Province on 17 Apr; results of this attack were 33 friendly KIA, 26 WIA, and two MIA. In addition, the enemy captured 27 individual and five crew-served weapons and four rocket enemy losses were 11 KIA. During sweep operations in Kien Tuong Province on 5, 6, and 7 Apr, ARVN elements killed 102 enemy. Two caches were discovered in the area totalling 21 tons of assorted munitions. A 3.2 ton cache of assorted arms and ammunition was discovered in Binh Hoa Doc Province on 29 Apr. On 10 Apr ARVN elements killed 80 VC in Chuong Thien Province. American elements contacted the 261B Bn on the 11th and 12th in Kien Tuong Province, resulting in 97 VC KIA. 450

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May

(C) Summary. During May, enemy-initiated action followed a moderate pace except for a brief upsurge in mid-month. Attacks-by-fire against friendly military installations and population centers reached their peak at that time but friendly casualties were relatively light. Ground contact with the enemy increased everywhere except in IV CTZ. The most intense fighting took place in the A Shau area of I CTZ, the western highlands of II CTZ, and in Tay Ninh Province in III CTZ.

(C) In I CTZ, US forces conducting Operation APACHE SNOW made the most significant ground contact with NVA forces. The action took place in the A Shau Valley and centered on a battle for Hill 937. Several hundred enemy soldiers were killed in the three days of fighting for this hill. Other enemy action included small ground probes and harassing attacks-by-fire. Ground contact with Communist forces in II CTZ was heaviest in the western highlands, especially the Ben Het-Dak To area of Kontum province. The enemy also attacked two airfields by fire and ambushed an ARVN convoy near An Khe. In III CTZ, Tay Ninh Province continued to be subjected to the greatest enemy pressure. VC/NVA forces launched several attacks against FSBs and LZs in Tay Ninh and suffered a significant number of casualties. The air base at Bien Hoa was attacked with rocket fire but damage and casualties were light. In IV CTZ, ground contact remained very light as the VC/NVA generally limited their operations to attacks-by-fire. One exception was in Chau Doc Province where they attacked an ARVN training center and inflicted a significant number of casualties. 451

(C) I Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy activity was light in I CTZ until the night of 11 May when the enemy conducted 92 indirect fire and 21 ground attacks. The majority were directed against US military installations and troop units. Although indirect fire attacks were experienced throughout the CTZ, all enemy-initiated ground attacks occurred in the southern three provinces. In the B-5 Front, attacks-by-fire remained at a relatively high level, totaling 70 for the remainder of the month. In friendly-initiated ground activity, captured PWs identified their units as elements of the 27th, 34th, 246th and 270th NVA Regts and the 13th Engr Co of the 88th NVA Regt, 325th NVA Div. The 308th NVA Div was redesignated the 325th NVA Div upon deployment southward to the DMZ area. In MR TTH, enemy activity continued to be primarily in reaction to friendly operations. In western Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces, friendly units engaged elements of the 6th and 29th NVA Regts, identified by PWs and documents captured during Operation APACHE SNOW (See Chapter V, Ground Operations). Documents from the 29th NVA Regt revealed that the regiment had relocated from RVN to Quang Binh Province, NVN, in July 1968 for replacements and retraining; it returned to RVN in February 1969. Its mission was to protect supply depots and to restrict Allied incursions in western MR TTH. On 20 May, US and ARVN elements occupied Hill 937 (Hamburger Hill) after overcoming stiff enemy resistance. The enemy sustained over 600 KIA; most of the casualties belonged to the 29th NVA Regt. In other actions, documents captured in western Quang Tri Province identified the 57th NVA Regt, 304th NVA Div, as the enemy unit involved in assaults near Khe Sanh on 25 and 26 Apr. On 22 May, FSB ERSKINE received incoming enemy artillery rounds. The enemy was unidentified, but they were probably elements of the 675B Arty Regt. This was the first use of enemy tube artillery since the US Operation DEWEY CANYON which was conducted in March. In Front 4, indications that the enemy was preparing for offensive activity became available several days prior to 11 May. On 9 and 10 May, USMC elements near An Hoa cordoned a 400 to 500-man enemy force which was moving north. There were 23 friendly KIA and 58 WIA, and the enemy lost 233 KIA and 5 PWs. The PWs were from the 31st, 90th, and 141st NVA Regts. In the 11 enemy-initiated ground attacks in Front 4 on 11-12 May,

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PWs were captured who identified the attacking forces as elements of the 3rd NVA Sapper and R-20 VC Bns and the 36th NVA Regt. In southern I CTZ, significant enemy-initiated activity was limited to the week of 11-17 May, in which a total of 37 indirect fire and 10 enemy-initiated ground attacks occurred. The ground attacks took place primarily around Tien Phuoc, Quang Tin Province, where elements of the 1st VC and 3rd NVA Regts, 2nd NVA Div, were identified in contact with US and ARVN forces. There were three friendly KIA, 23 WIA, and 36 MIA (ARVN), and the enemy suffered 181 KIA and two PWs. No major incidents occurred in Quang Ngai Province; however, captured documents indicated that the 21st NVA Regt, 2nd NVA Div, was assigned an area of operation in Binh Song and Son Tinh Districts. A PW captured on 28 May confirmed the presence of the 21st NVA Regt in northern Quang Ngai Province. A rallier from the 22nd NVA Regt stated that the regiment was to attack Quang Ngai City during the period from 12 to 19 May; the attack failed to materialize. During the last two weeks of the month, a low level of enemy-initiated activity was experienced throughout the CTZ, with the exception of an increase in indirect fire attacks north of Highway 9.

(C) II Corps Tactical Zone. The number and intensity of enemy attacks in II CTZ increased sharply on 8 May and continued through the month at a level substantially higher than that of April. Attacks were concentrated near the Ben Het-Dak To area in Kontum Province where the enemy had an estimated nine maneuver battalions, with artillery and engineer support. The 66th and 28th NVA Regts; D-120 Sapper Bn; 304th LF Bn; and the 5th Bn, 24th Bn, 24 NVA Regt were all believed to be in this area, as well as the D25B and possibly the K25A Engr Bns. Also, three to four battalions of the 40th NVA Arty Regt were probably in the area. An estimated company of 10 PT-76 Tanks, observed in the area in March, did not appear in May. Artillery support in the area included 120mm mortars from the K-32 Arty Bn, 40th NVA Arty Regt, 122 mm rockets, and 85mm and 105mm conventional artillery from unidentified battalions of the 40th NVA Arty Regt. A series of ground contacts in the Ben Het-Dak To area through the end of May resulted in approximately 1,000 enemy KIA. To the south, several contacts north of Plei Mrong, probably with elements of the 4th and 6th Bns, 24th NVA Regt, resulted in over 250 enemy KIA. On 21 and 24 May, contacts approximately 15 km northwest of Pleiku City resulted in 48 enemy KIA. The enemy unit involved was probably the 996th NVA Bn. On 11 May, 22 km north-northwest of the Plei Me CIDG Camp, LZ Oasis received over 300 rounds of mixed mortar, rocket, and recoilless rifle fire, followed by a ground attack. Later the same day, artillery and gunships were employed against unknown sized enemy forces 8 to 9 km west of the LZ. Friendly casualties were 1 KIA, 25 WIA, and 3 MIA; while the enemy had 102 KIA. The enemy force was probably the K37 Sapper Bn supported by an artillery battalion. In eastern Pleiku Province, elements of the 95B NVA Regt were believed to have been responsible for indirect fire attacks and ambushes along Highway 19. In the southern B-3 Front, enemy activity was restricted to indirect fire attacks and ground action of company size and smaller. In coastal II CTZ on 12 May, Phu My City was attacked by an estimated enemy company. Friendly forces had 11 killed (10 civilians), 20 wounded (19 civilians), and 67 houses destroyed, while the enemy suffered two KIA. The enemy force was unidentified but it may have been an element of the 405th NVA Sapper Bn. Also on 12 May, 16 km east of An Khe, an ARVN convoy was ambushed by an estimated enemy battalion. Friendly forces had one KIA, four WIA, three MIA, and 14 vehicles destroyed, and the enemy lost seven KIA. On 16 May, 9 km northeast of An Khe, US elements attacked an unknown sized enemy force. Friendly forces suffered one KIA, 12 WIA, and one MIA, while the enemy had 13 KIA. The enemy forces were unidentified, but they were probably elements of the 18th NVA Regt. Most of the activity in the southern subregion and MR 6 occurred on 11 and 12 May. The most significant action occurred on 12 May when the Song Mao District Headquarters received 80 rounds of unknown type mortar, followed by a

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ground attack by an unknown sized enemy force. On the same day, there were two other contacts 6 km southeast of Song Mao. There were seven friendly KIA (two civilians) and 10 WIA (two civilians), and the enemy had 20 KIA and four detained. PW statements identified the enemy force as the 840th MF Bn. At the end of the month, enemy forces in the Ben Het-Dak To area did not appear to be withdrawing despite their heavy losses.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone. In III CTZ, enemy-initiated attacks increased from a moderate to heavy level during the nights of 11 and 22 May. Elements of the 9th VC Div remained deployed along the western Tay Ninh Province border; however, a regimental resubordination was evident. Documents and PWs indicated that the 88th NVA Regt, SR 1, became subordinate to the 9th VC Div. The 273rd VC Regt deployed to Chau Doc Province in IV CTZ, and probably became subordinate to MR 2. The 271st VC Regt sustained heavy casualties in two attacks against ARVN positions in southwestern Tay Ninh Province. The 272nd VC Regt sustained light casualties in a contact with US forces. One element of the 88th NVA Regt was contacted in northwestern Tay Ninh Province on 23 May. The 1st NVA Div continued to operate from northern to east-central Tay Ninh Province. Elements of the three 1st NVA Div Regiments were identified in their usual areas of operation. The 7th NVA Div may have shifted its operating area to the east of the Saigon River and as far south as northern Binh Duong Province. The 141st NVA Regt sustained moderate casualties during three contacts in central Binh Long Province. Elements of the 165th NVA Regt were identified during a small contact in southeastern Binh Long Province. The 209th NVA Regt remained out of contact. Elements of all three regiments of the 5th VC Div deployed south of the Dong Nai River to an area north of Xuan Loc in central Long Khanh Province. Sapper elements from the three regiments and the division's 21st Sapper Bn were identified in the 18 May attack on Allied positions in the Xuan Loc area. The 174th NVA Regt sustained heavy casualties during a series of contacts and B-52 strikes north to northeast of Xuan Loc. In the SRs surrounding Saigon, enemy-initiated activity was at a low level. The majority of contacts were in SR 1. The 268th VC Regt was identified in one of a series of contacts in northern Hau Nghia Province in which the enemy sustained more than 250 KIA. In SR 3, the 1st NVA Regt sustained moderate casualties in an engagement in south-central Long An Province. Enemy units of SRs 2, 4, and 5 avoided major contact. The 33rd NVA Regt was identified as the unit that lost 39 KIA in two contacts south of Xuan Loc in southern Long Khanh Province on 28 and 29 May. An unidentified unit was contacted by Allied forces in southeastern Bien Hoa Province on 13 May, resulting in 87 enemy killed. This unit was probably an element of the 274th VC Regt, MR 7. In Saigon the NP arrested over 80 individuals associated with VC terrorists and sapper cells. These arrests may have pre-empted plans for extensive terrorist activity in the city. In general, during May the enemy forces in III CTZ emphasized attacks-by-fire and small ground attacks by sapper-trained units. The movement of the 98th NVA Regt to an area north of Tay Ninh City increased the enemy threat in this area.

(C) IV Corps Tactical Zone. In IV CTZ the level of enemy-initiated activity during May reflected the trend of March and April. There was a high point in enemy activity on the night of 11 May, when there were 78 indirect fire attacks reported; enemy activity decreased toward the end of the month. The majority of the attacks were low in intensity and harassing in nature. The use of 107mm rockets in IV CTZ was noted during the week of 11-17 May, when the Chi Lang Training Center north of Tri Ton in Chau Doc Province received four attacks by 107mm rockets and the Ben Xoai Special Forces Camp received two attacks. On 21 May, Dong Tam Base in Dinh Tuong Province received two indirect fire attacks in which 107mm rockets also were used. Most of the activity in May occurred in MR 2. Operations in southern BA 470 on 22 May resulted on 101 enemy KIA. There were 146 enemy KIA in an operation which continued from 13 to 18 May in the An Giang-Kien Phong Province border area. The 273rd VC Regt relo-

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cated from Tay Ninh Province in III CTZ to Chau Doc Province area in IV CTZ; prisoners were captured from the 7th, 8th, and 9th Inf Bns and the 10th Arty Bn. In addition, PWs from the 273rd Regt's K18 AA and K23 Med Cos were captured. 452

June

(C) Summary. During June, enemy-initiated actions declined somewhat from the previous month, with a brief upsurge of activity on 5-6 June. Attacks-by-fire against Allied installations throughout the RVN increased at that time and the VC/NVA launched several ground probes. One exception was in IV CTZ where the enemy generally confined his efforts to low intensity attacks-by-fire. Frequent ground combat occurred in the western highlands of II CTZ, and in Tay Ninh and Binh Long Provinces in III CTZ.

(C) In I CTZ, US forces preempted an enemy rocket attack when they seized 113 rockets in four firing positions near Gio Linh. Communist artillerymen attacked Dong Ha and Danang with rocket fire and employed CS gas in a ground attack near Danang. Other enemy activity included attempts to disrupt Allied LOCs along the coast. Most enemy operations in II CTZ continued to center on the Ben Het-Dak To area of Kontum Province where attacks-by-fire occurred daily. The enemy launched attacks-by-fire against two air bases and terrorists were active in Qui Nhon. In III CTZ, the main enemy effort continued to be directed against Allied positions in Tay Ninh and Binh Long Provinces. Communist forces also attacked elements of the Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force in Bien Hoa Province. More than 200 enemy soldiers were KIA in this five hour battle. Other enemy operations included a rocket attack on the Bien Hoa airbase. In IV CTZ, VC/NVA action generally was limited to scattered attacks-by-fire which caused light damage and casualties to friendly forces. Ground contact was limited to brief fire fights with small groups of enemy forces. 453

(C) I Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy-initiated activity remained relatively light during June, with the only apparent coordinated activity occurring on 6 and 7 June in Quang Nam Province. On those dates, Danang City experienced seven terrorist and three indirect fire attacks, while enemy ground attacks occurred at five locations in the An Hoa area. In the remainder of I CTZ, indirect fire attacks and enemy-initiated ground attacks were at a normal level. In the B-5 Front, enemy activity was characterized by 15 indirect fire attacks from the southern half of the DMZ. Also, the enemy launched six ground attacks on 17 June in the Gio Linh area. In these contacts the enemy suffered 160 KIA and 10 detained; the PWs identified their units as elements of the 270th NVA Regt and the 33rd Independent Sapper Bn. In the same area on 5 Jun, friendly elements discovered 133 rockets in firing positions, thereby curtailing the intensity of enemy activity against friendly locations in the eastern DMZ area. A document captured on 19 Jun near the Rockpile indicated that the elements of the 84th Arty Regt had been operating against friendly units south of the eastern and western portions of the DMZ since late February. In MR TTH, enemy activity continued primarily in reaction to friendly operations. In western Quang Tri Province, elements of the 304th NVA Div significantly increased their activity, and they showed no indication of withdrawing. Friendly elements received at least 10 ground attacks from 304th NVA Div elements, resulting in more than 220 enemy KIA. Prisoners captured during these contacts identified their units as the 20th Sapper and 24B NVA Regt of the 304th NVA Div. In the remainder of MR TTH, the enemy conducted significant sapper attacks against FSBs BERCHTESGADEN, CURRAHEE, and TOMAHAWK on 14, 16, and 19 Jun, respectively. Prisoners identified the enemy forces as the 29th, 6th, and 4th NV/ Regts. The 29th NVA Regt, which sustained more than 600 KIA at Hill 937 in May, was still in the A Shau Valley/BA 611 area. In Front 4 there were 12 enemy ground attacks in the vicinity of An Hoa, resulting in

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approximately 280 enemy KIA. Prisoners captured in these contacts identified the attacking forces as elements of the 3rd Sapper Bn and 90th NVA Regt. In other activity, documents indicated that elements of the 36th NVA Regt may have redeployed from the Go Noi Island areas in an attempt to evade Allied forces committed in Operation PIPESTONE CANYON. (See Chapter V, Ground Operations). In southern I CTZ, the enemy continued to conduct indirect fire attacks and limited sapper-type ground probes in the Tien Phuoc and Duc Pho areas. On 11 Jun a sapper attack 7 km north-northeast of Tien Phuoc Special Forces Camp destroyed a tactical operation center (TOC) and mortar fire direction center (FDC) while damaging an artillery FDC, three 105mm howitzers, and two mortars. Results of this attack were: friendly, 14 KIA and 32 WIA; enemy, 27 KIA. The enemy forces were unidentified but were probably elements of the Quang Nam Provincial Unit. Other significant enemy ground attacks occurred at four locations near Duc Pho, where elements of the 2nd VC and 22nd NVA Regt, 3rd Div, were identified in contact with Allied forces. Cumulative results of these attacks were: friendly, 15 KIA and 61 WIA; enemy, 42 KIA. The last 10 days of the month were marked by a reduction in enemy-initiated activity throughout I CTZ, with the exception of continued enemy attacks in western Quang Tri Province.

(C) II Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy-initiated activity in II CTZ rose on the night of 9 Jun and then fell to a low level during the remainder of the month except in the vicinity of the Ben Het CIDG Camp where the enemy committed both the 28th and 66th Regts, supported by engineers and elements of the 40th NVA Arty Regt. Two prisoners captured on 15 Jun, 6 km south-east of the camp, identified their unit as the 9th Bn, 66th NVA Regt, and stated that elements of the regiment had the mission of encircling and attacking ARVN units in the Ben Het area. They further provided evidence that the 66th NVA Regt had sustained heavy losses after 8 May and that 90 percent of the personnel in the regiment were new replacements. It was believed that elements of the 66th NVA Regt were involved in a contact on 30 May, 11 km south-south-east of the camp, where three ARVN battalions were attacked by an unknown sized enemy force; this action resulted in 309 enemy KIA. A Hoi Chanh, who rallied on 24 Jun at the Ben Het CIDG Camp, identified his unit as the 1st Bn, 28th NVA Regt. He stated that the mission of the regiment was to destroy the camp in order to influence the Paris conference. According to the rallier, the regiment had a strength of between 200 and 700 men, and it was supported by elements of the 40th NVA Arty Regt. He further stated that all three battalions of the regiment were located within 2 km of the Ben Het CIDG Camp. The camp received a ground probe by an unknown sized enemy force on the night of 23 Jun, resulting in 14 enemy KIA. The enemy unit responsible for the ground probe was later identified by a 24 Jun rallier as the 28th NVA Regt. Although the ground probe on 23 Jun against Ben Het was the enemy's only direct ground attack on the camp, over 2,000 rounds of mixed artillery, mortar, and rocket fire fell on the camp during the month. To the south, contacts with elements of the 24th NVA Regt in the area of the Plei Mrcng CIDG Camp continued through 11 Jun. On that date 42 enemy were KIA when they attacked a friendly convoy on Route 14, 11 km east of the camp. Since that date no major contacts have been made in the area. This suggested that the regiment may have withdrawn to the west. On 31 May, 37 km east of the Plei Me CIDG Camp, Camp Strike Force elements engaged an unknown sized enemy force, resulting in 50 enemy KIA. The enemy force was probably an element of the 95B NVA Regt. In coastal II CTZ, enemy forces attempted to disrupt the RVN pacification program by attacking hamlets and refugee centers. On 14 Jun two of these camps located northwest of Qui Nhon City were attacked. Cumulative results were: 20 civilians killed, 67 wounded, and 512 homes destroyed. Approximately 5,000 people were left homeless by the attacks. The enemy forces responsible for the attack may have been elements of the E210 Local Force Bn known to be operating in the area. In the southern subregion during the

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month, there was no significant enemy activity reported. In MR 6 on the night of 5 Jun, the enemy conducted limited ground and indirect fire attacks throughout the region. The district headquarters at Duc Trung, south of Dalat, received an indirect fire attack followed by a ground attack. There were 9 friendly KIA and 17 WIA. The 810th MF Bn was probably responsible for the attack. Phan Rang Air Base received 30 rounds of 82mm mortar and six rounds of 107mm rocket fire, resulting in 12 wounded and one aircraft damaged. In Binh Thuan Province on the same night, ARVN elements were attacked by an estimated enemy company, resulting in 10 enemy KIA.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone. In III CTZ, enemy-initiated activity remained light except for the 5-6 Jun high point and a period of increased activity 18-20 Jun. These consisted primarily of indirect fire attacks, but sapper attacks and ground assaults were also initiated in several areas. Elements of all four enemy divisions were identified in contacts during the month. The 9th VC Div sustained moderate to heavy casualties in ground actions in western and central Tay Ninh Province. The 272nd and 88th NVA Regts, 9th VC Div, sustained losses totaling over 400 KIA and captured during assaults against FSB CROOK in western Tay Ninh Province on 6 and 7 Jun. Elements of the 271st and 272nd VC Regts were tentatively identified in contacts southwest of Tay Ninh City during the same period. Elements of the 88th NVA Regt were identified during engagements north of Tay Ninh City on 19 Jun and west of Nui Ba Den on 27 Jun. Units from the 271st and 272nd VC Regts were suspected of participating in an abortive offensive effort against Tay Ninh City on 19 Jun. Over 280 enemy were KIA during engagements in and near Tay Ninh City on that date. The bulk of 9th VC Div forces was probably deployed along the western border of Tay Ninh Province, but elements of the 88th NVA Regt may have remained in the area north and northeast of Tay Ninh City. The 1st NVA Div sustained moderate casualties while continuing its operations in northern and east-central Tay Ninh Province and shifting a portion of its forces to western Binh Long Province. The 95C NVA Regt received moderate casualties during the month in a series of engagements with Allied forces in east-central Tay Ninh Province. The 18B NVA Regt operated in northern Tay Ninh Province. Elements of the 28th Sapper Bn and the 18B Regt lost over 125 KIA in unsuccessful assaults on FSB IKE in north-central Tay Ninh Province on 18 and 20 Jun. Elements of the 101D NVA Regt were identified in an attempted convoy ambush in central Binh Long Province on 6 Jun. The 7th NVA Div concentrated its forces in central Binh Long Province during June. The 209th and 165th NVA Regts were identified in engagements resulting in over 200 enemy killed in the area west of An Loc. The 141st NVA Regt was identified by a PW in the area east of Quan Loi on 20 Jun. Several heavy contacts southeast of An Loc/Quan Loi earlier in the month may have involved elements of the 141st NVA Regt. The 7th NVA Div probably remained deployed throughout central Binh Long Province. The 5th VC Div remained active in central, east-central, and southeast Long Khanh Province through at least mid-June. Elements of the 95th NVA Regt were identified in a convoy ambush in southeastern Long Khanh Province on 7 Jun. The 275th VC Regt was identified in an attack on FSB JOY on the Binh Tuy/Long Khanh Province border on 12 Jun. On 22 Jun a rallier from a 5th VC Div support unit provided information indicating that the 275th VC and 174th NVA Regt and 5th Div elements had moved to War Zone D and that the 95th NVA Regt was to follow. Although this movement was substantiated, lack of contact after 19 Jun in the 5th Div former base area in central Long Khanh Province suggested that the rallier's information was correct. In MR 7 the only major enemy initiated activity was a ground attack on 16 Jun against Royal Thai forces in central Bien Hoa Province, which resulted in over 200 enemy of the 274th VC Regt KIA. No major repositioning of units was noted in the subregions, and no significant offensive activity was initiated by subregion forces. In Saigon, sapper activity was at a low level except just prior to the enemy "high point" of 5-6 Jun. Enemy activity at the end

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of June was light as enemy forces prepared for a probable increase in activity expected to occur with the initiation of the July phase of the Summer Campaign.

(C) IV Corps Tactical Zone. The level of enemy-initiated activity during June reflected the trend established in previous months. There was a "high point" on the night of 5 Jun when there were 71 indirect fire attacks reported. The majority of the attacks were low in intensity and harassing in nature. In MR 2 the enemy directed his attention to the Dong Tam/My Tho area in Kinh Tuong Province. The Binh Duc Arty Bn reportedly divided its units into small increments to conduct harassing indirect fire attacks in and around Dong Tam and the US 9th Inf Div HQ. The enemy's intentions, reportedly, were to demoralize the remaining US troops after the redeployment of two brigades of the 9th US Inf Div. In MR 3, ARVN elements in an operation conducted during the period 17-28 Jun in southeastern Base Area 480, reported 167 enemy KIA and 29 detained. High numbers of VC continued to rally to the GVN. 454

VC/NVA Offensive Operations: 3d Quarter 1969

Introduction

(C) A relative lull in military activity, which had begun in late June and had provoked speculation about enemy intentions, ended on the evening of 11-12 Aug when the VC/NVA launched their autumn campaign with a high point in all 4 CTZs. The Cam Ranh Bay area was struck twice in August by sapper and attack-by-fire assaults. The enemy presumably wanted to show that no US bases were completely secure from attack. Another high point came in the 4-6 Sep period and included attacks in the Danang area. Thus the VC/NVA continued to follow the high point strategy inaugurated in May. Other significant developments included the first signs of a buildup around the CIDG Camps at Bu Prang-Duc Lap in Southwest II CTZ and one of the worst terrorist incidents of the war in Binh Dinh Province. Activity in IV CTZ was highlighted by confirmation for the first time in the war of movement of an NVA unit into the Delta. 455 (See Figures III-19 - III-22 for the locations of enemy initiated incidents during 1969). Statistics of some categories of enemy initiated incidents during the quarter follow: 456

July

	<u>I CTZ</u>	<u>II CTZ</u>	<u>III CTZ</u>	<u>IV CTZ</u>	<u>Total</u>
Assaults	11	17	10	15	53
Attacks-by-fire	28	18	53	41	140
Ambushes	2	0	3	1	6
Harassments	580	136	742	348	1,806

August

Assaults	18	32	27	18	95
Attacks-by-fire	23	17	62	32	134
Ambushes	0	4	3	0	7
Harassments	364	87	510	305	1,266

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September

Assaults	32	42	42	26	142
Attacks-by-fire	27	9	70	44	150
Ambushes	3	9	5	9	26
Harassments	303	82	413	298	1,096

July

(C) Summary. During July, enemy-initiated operations declined considerably in pace and intensity from the preceding month. In general, only scattered attacks-by-fire against friendly installations and limited ground probes were reported. Friendly forces unearthed only one large enemy munitions cache during the month, in I CTZ. A large NVA infiltration group was reported in IV CTZ.

(C) In I CTZ, enemy activity was scattered and light, with only four ground attacks of more than routine size taking place. In each of the four, enemy casualties outnumbered friendly losses. On 19 Jul, ARVN elements discovered a Communist cache of more than 36 tons of ordnance in Quang Tri Province. In the Phan Thiet areas of Binh Thuan Province, in II CTZ, a flurry of attacks-by-fire occurred during 10-12 Jul but casualties and damage were light. The enemy launched only one significant ground attack during the month, also in Binh Thuan Province, where on 7 Jul sappers assaulted a MACV compound. The enemy decreased his pressures in the western highlands, where in the Ben Het-Dak To area of Kontum Province during June there had been daily attacks-by-fire. By contrast only one minor attack-by-fire struck the Ben Het CIDG camp in July. Only sporadic enemy operations took place in II CTZ. One rocket attack was launched against the Bien Hoa Air Base and another at Saigon. Two US convoys were ambushed near An Loc on 9 and 17 Jul, but on both occasions enemy losses were greater than those among friendly personnel. In the IV CTZ, enemy action continued at a reduced level. For example, the 9th Inf Div base camp at Dong Tam, which had been a favorite enemy target in previous months (it was struck by rockets once in June and received harassing fire on seven other occasions during the same month), was attacked only once in July, by one 107mm rocket which wounded 24 personnel. An infiltration group of 550 NVA troops as fill for VC units in the Mekong Delta was reported, the largest of its kind to date. Also in IV CTZ, during the first two weeks of July, more than 1,000 soldiers of two different non-Communist dissident groups--one of ethnic Cambodians and the other of the Hoa Hao sect--rallied to the government, bringing nearly 250 weapons with them. 457

(C) I Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy-initiated activity during July was characterized by widely scattered indirect fire attacks and limited ground engagements. In the B-5 Front, the enemy conducted 21 indirect fire attacks from the southern half of the DMZ, while limiting his ground activity to company size attacks. On 9 Jul, ARVN elements at three positions near Gio Linh were attacked by an unidentified enemy force resulting in 47 enemy KIA. On 14 Jul, US elements at three locations near Con Thien received eight indirect fire attacks totalling 34 rounds of 122mm rocket fire. There were no casualties or damage reported. Operation UTAH MESA (See Chapter V, Ground Operations) terminated on 9 Jul; a total of 314 enemy were KIA during this operation. A PW captured during UTAH MESA identified his unit as the 5th Bn, 24B Regt, 304th NVA Div and revealed that the 24B Regt may have expanded its area of operation in Quang Tri Province eastward to include Ba Long District. In related activity, on 19 Jul, 13 km south-southeast of Vandergrift Combat Base, ARVN elements found 15 bunkers containing a

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cache of ordnance weighing 36.2 tons. Capture of this cache probably limited the effectiveness of the enemy in that area. In MR TTH, enemy activity was primarily directed against ARVN outposts in the eastern and central area of the region. The Dong Da Training Center, near Phu Bai, received rocket attacks on the 7th and 11th of July, resulting in 11 ARVN KIA and 59 WIA. Allied elements received at least four significant ground attacks, resulting in more than 90 enemy KIA. Prisoners captured in these contacts identified their units as the Chi-Thua II Sapper Bn, 5th NVA Regt; the 814th Bn; and the K10 Sapper Bn of the 7th Front. In the remainder of MR TTH, documents and PWs identified the 9th Bn, 29th NVA Regt, and the 2nd and 3rd Bns, 803rd NVA Regt in the A Shau Valley area. The ARVN elements in the A Shau Valley received 250 rounds of 82mm mortar fire on 15 Jul and 30-50 rounds of 60mm mortar fire on 16 July. In Front 4, enemy activity was characterized by indirect fire attacks and ambushes. On 21 Jul, US and RF elements on Route QL-1 were ambushed by an unidentified enemy force. On 26 Jul, USMC elements were ambushed 14 km east-southeast of An Hoa by an enemy platoon. In four enemy indirect fire attacks near An Hoa on 24 and 25 Jul, USMC elements received a total of 80 rounds of mixed 60 and 82mm mortar fire, resulting in light casualties. In southern I CTZ, enemy activity was limited to scattered indirect fire attacks and limited ground probes. On 15 Jul, the Binh Son District HQ received 20 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. On 20 Jul, US elements near Duc Pho received 38 rounds of 60mm mortar fire, resulting in no casualties or damage. The last week of July was marked by a reduction in enemy-initiated activity.

(C) II Corps Tactical Zone. In II CTZ, enemy-initiated activity during the month was characterized by limited indirect fire attacks and minor ground probes. Major enemy maneuver elements probably were engaged in refitting and retraining. In the B-3 Front, elements of the 4th Bn, 24th NVA Regt were identified in the area of the Plei Mrong CIDG Camp. A PW captured near the camp on 12 Jul identified his unit as the 2nd Trans Bn, B-3 Front. He stated that his unit's mission was to resupply elements of the 4th Bn, 24th NVA Regt which had moved into the Chu Pa Mountains 15 days prior to his capture and were operating in the Plei Mrong area. He also stated that the HQ, 24th NVA Regt, along with its 6th Bn, were located to the west of the Sothey River in Cambodia. A PW captured in the vicinity of Plei Mrong on 30 Jul identified himself as a member of the 4th Bn, 24th NVA Regt, and stated that the battalion's mission was to interdict QL-14 in the Pleiku-Kontum border region. There were no significant attacks along QL-19 west of An Khe by elements of the 95B Regt during the month, but elements of the unit may have been responsible for a 7 Jul attack against a US FSB 39 kilometers northwest of Cheo Reo that resulted in 11 enemy KIA. In the southern B-3 Front, documents captured on 1 Jul in the vicinity of the Duc Lap CIDG Camp confirmed the existence of the 394th NVA Bn and revealed that the unit had 720 personnel. The stated mission of the unit was to "fight in the city and provide security for the local government." On 22 Jul, a cache containing 8.6 tons of munitions was found in the Duc Lap area. The munitions probably belonged to the 394th NVA Bn. In MR 5, enemy activity was confined to minor ground attacks and indirect fire attacks. On 23 Jul, a bridge on QL-19 northwest of Qui Nhon City was attacked and destroyed by an enemy force. Three of the enemy were KIA. In the southern SR few attacks were reported, although low level agent reports stated that the enemy would conduct widespread attacks in the Tuy Hoa area. The ROKFV (See Chapter V, Ground Operations) may have preempted enemy plans in this area. In MR 6, widespread indirect fire and ground attacks occurred during the month, although most were of low intensity. The most significant ground attack occurred on 7 Jul when US elements at the Luong Son MACV Compound lost six KIA, 28 wounded, five armored vehicles destroyed, and three armored vehicles damaged.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone. Elements of three divisions were identified in contacts during the month of July. The 5th VC Div was not identified in contacts during the reporting period.

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The 9th VC Div sustained light casualties in ground actions during the month. On 1 Jul, a contact with an unidentified enemy unit northeast of Tay Ninh City resulted in 44 enemy killed. The enemy force was probably an element of the 88th NVA Regt identified in a 27 Jun engagement in the same area. There were indications that the 88th NVA Regt had redeployed to the Straight-Edge Woods area later in the month. Documents taken from an enemy body north of the Cambodian Angel's Wing on 24 Jul indicated that he was a member of the 88th Regt. The 1st NVA Div sustained light casualties while continuing operations in northern Tay Ninh Province and in west-central Binh Long Province. Enemy documents captured south of An Loc in Binh Long Province following a 17 Jul convoy ambush identified elements of the 101D Regt. The 95C and 18B NVA Regts operated in northern Tay Ninh Province during the month. The 7th NVA Div concentrated its forces in northern Binh Long Province. A PW from the 209th NVA Regt, captured on 11 Jul north-northwest of An Loc, stated that the 7th NVA Div's missing Regt HQ was situated along the Cambodian border. The 165th NVA Regt was identified by a PW captured following a convoy ambush northwest of An Loc on 9 Jul in which 22 enemy were KIA. The 141st NVA Regt probably remained northeast of An Loc. The 7th Div probably remained deployed in north-central Binh Long Province, where it may have been refitting, training, and planning for attacks in the Loc Ninh area. Although the 5th VC Div was not identified in contacts during the month, it was probably deployed in south-central Phuoc Long Province. A Hoi Chanh from the 95th NVA Regt stated that his battalion was located near Bunard SF Camp. He also stated that the battalion's mission was to interdict QL-14. A 27 Jul contact with an unidentified enemy force east-southeast of Dong Xoai Special Forces Camp, in which there were 24 enemy KIA, was probably with an element of the 5th VC Div. Although there was little to substantiate the movement of the 5th VC Div from War Zone "D" to south-central Phuoc Long Province, the lack of contact in War Zone "D" after mid-June suggested that the move occurred. In MR 7, at the end of July, elements of the 33rd NVA Regt were identified in an attack on ARVN elements northeast of Xuan Loc, indicating that the regiment was deployed to the northeast. No major repositioning of units was noted in the subregions and no significant offensive activity was initiated by subregion forces. Enemy units of SR 1 sustained significant losses during the month, and their ability to engage in large-scale offensive action was seriously hampered. A PW captured on 10 July revealed that SR 1 forces were planning to adopt guerrilla and sapper tactics. He claimed, because of Allied operations and heavy losses incurred by SR 1 forces, the Quyet Thang and 268th Regts were being converted to sapper units. At the end of July, enemy units in III CTZ were probably refitting, retraining, receiving political indoctrination, and planning their next campaign.

(C) IV Corps Tactical Zone. During July, enemy activity was highlighted by indications of troop movement into and throughout the CTZ. Prisoners captured on 7 Jul in northern Kien Tuong Province identified infiltration Group 2103. This was the first known case of significant numbers of NVA personnel infiltrating into IV CTZ as replacements. A prisoner captured on 24 Jul in extreme western Chau Doc Province and documents captured in central Kien Giang Province revealed the relocation of elements of the 273rd VC Regt from MR2 to MR3. The most significant enemy contacts occurred in Kien Giang Province during the last two days of the month. During the contacts a total of 81 enemy, tentatively identified as elements of the 273rd VC Regiment, were KIA (41 KBA) northeast and northwest of Rach Gia City. During July, the numbers of VC who rallied increased. 458

August

(C) Summary. The lull in enemy-initiated operations which prevailed during the latter

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part of June, July, and the early part of August ended abruptly on the night of 11-12 Aug when Communist forces attacked military and civilian targets throughout RVN. Some 145 attacks-by-fire and approximately 40 ground assaults took place during the brief upsurge. Friendly forces unearthed over 250 tons of food, ordnance, medical supplies, and miscellaneous equipment as significant enemy caches were discovered in the I, III and IV CTZs. The largest cache, 110 tons of salt was discovered in Quang Ngai Province by US forces participating in Operation NANTUCKET BEACH. The most unusual find, an operational US M41 tank, was uncovered east of Dau Tieng by a CIDG team.

(C) Enemy activity increased significantly in the I CTZ. During the night of 11-12 Aug elements of the 23d (Americal) Division were struck by a number of attacks in the Tam Ky area. Near Danang, the Naval Support Activities Hospital was hit by mortar fire and a number of US personnel were wounded. A rifle company of the 23d (Americal) Division killed 103 enemy while repelling an enemy ground attack of at least battalion size near Tam Ky on 20 Aug.

(C) Except for the upsurge on 11-12 Aug, enemy action continued at a low level in the II CTZ. On 7 Aug, the Cam Ranh Air Base was hit by 107mm rocket fire which damaged several aircraft. On the same evening, the US Army convalescent center at Cam Ranh Bay was subjected to an enemy sapper attack which resulted in more than 50 friendly casualties. Several US convoys were ambushed during the month. Quick reaction by friendly security forces cost the attacking force 43 KIA in one of these ambushes near An Khe. In one of the worst recorded terrorist acts of the war, a 14-year-old youth caused 126 casualties by detonating four grenades during a government meeting in a hamlet near Phu Cat.

(C) There was a substantial increase in enemy action in III CTZ. On the night of 11-12 Aug, Communist forces unleashed 33 attacks by fire and 11 ground assaults against friendly forces and installations in the CTZ. The main thrust of the enemy offensive focused along infiltration routes northwest of Saigon in Binh Long and Tay Ninh Provinces, with the central enemy effort around An Loc in Binh Long Province. Five significant contacts in the vicinity of An Loc cost the enemy more than 260 KIA. US casualties in these contacts were 57 KIA and 128 WIA.

(C) The presence of the first major NVA unit in the IV CTZ was confirmed in August. The NVA 18B Regt, identified through captured documents, was reported operating in the Seven Mountains area of Chau Doc Province. Despite the introduction of major Communist units into the area during the past several months and a brief flurry of action on 11-12 Aug, overall enemy activity continued at a low level in the IV CTZ for the third consecutive month. 459

(C) I Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy-initiated activity was characterized by scattered attacks-by-fire and ground contacts which were limited in scope and intensity. On the night of 11-12 Aug the enemy initiated a total of 66 attacks-by-fire and 20 ground attacks, primarily in the southern three provinces. Seven of these attacks-by-fire and one ground attack were centered south of the eastern DMZ in the B-5 Front. The 9th Regt, 304th NVA Div, was identified by documents and equipment captured in a 7 Aug contact 7.5 km north of the ROCKPILE, though it was not apparent whether it was acting in a reinforcing or replacement role. PWs from the 45th and 49th Bns, Quang Binh Provincial Unit (QBPU), and captured documents indicated that elements of the QBPU were south of the DMZ in mid-August operating from a sanctuary in the Vinh Ling Special Sector. It was probable that the QBPU had been rotating battalions while augmenting enemy forces in the central DMZ and might continue the rotation. A document

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captured on 31 Jul, 11 km east-northeast of the ROCKPILE, indicated that elements of the 33d Inf Sapper Bn may still have been operating south of the DMZ. A Hoi Chanh of 8 Aug stated that his unit, the 27th Bn, Group 31, was also operating south of the DMZ. A rallier of 18 Aug from the 6th AA Bn, 270th NVA Regt, stated that elements of the 270th NVA Regt were in Vinh Ling Special Sector, approximately 15 km north of Con Thien, and that elements of the 164th Arty Regt were operating in the area north of the eastern DMZ. The rallier also stated that a main objective of the Autumn-Winter Campaign was to interdict Route 9-B-5 in order to isolate Quang Tri Province. The 835th Arty Bn was identified in a rocket attack on Hue City on the night of 11-12 Aug, indicating a possible eastward shift in its area of operation. Lack of contact indicated that major elements of the 4th and 5th NVA Regts might have shifted west to base areas, probably in reaction to friendly operations. In Front 4, on the night of 11-12 Aug there were 12 attacks-by-fire and five ground attacks, primarily against US forces and installations. Prisoners identified the 31st NVA Regt, Front 4, as the enemy unit involved in a 24 Aug ground attack 7 km west-southwest of Danang. Major enemy units generally moved south from the lowlands to mountainous base areas, where they were believed to be resupplying. In southern I CTZ, on the night of 11-12 Aug, there were 20 attacks-by-fire and 7 ground attacks. The enemy forces involved in a series of contacts in the Hiep Duc-Tien Phuc area during the period 12-13 Aug were identified as elements of the 1st and 3d Regts, 2d NVA Div. After 11 Aug, US forces discovered 225 tons of salt cached at Dong Xuan, on the Batangan Peninsula. The 2d Regt, 3d NVA Div, was active in a series of ambushes and attacks-by-fire in the Duc Pho area after 22 Aug.

(C) II Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy-initiated activity was limited in scope and intensity except for the period 11-12 Aug, when the enemy launched his Autumn Campaign with 50 indirect fire attacks and 20 ground attacks. In the B-3 Front, a PW captured on 30 Jul near the Plei Mrong CIDG Camp identified his unit as the 4th Bn, 24th NVA Regt, and stated that the battalion's mission was to interdict QL-14 along the Pleiku/Kontum border. Elements of the regiment had been assigned the mission during earlier B-3 Front offensives. A PW from the 4th Bn, 24th NVA Regt, captured on 30 Jul near Plei Mrong, and a Hoi Chanh who rallied near Pleiku City mentioned the existence of a previously unknown 631st Bn. This new unit may have been formed by a merger of the 966th NVA Bn and the K31 NVA Arty Bn. A PW captured on 13 Aug in the vicinity of the Plei Me CIDG Camp identified himself as a member of the 1st Bn, 95B NVA Regt, and stated that the battalion had been involved in transporting rice and other supplies from Cambodia to BA 202 with the assistance of the X-45th LF Bn. He also stated that the 1st Bn continued to have the mission of interdicting QL-19 west of An Khe. An ammunition cache, probably belonging to the 1st Bn, was discovered near Plei Me on 15 Aug. The cache consisted of 113 82mm mortar rounds, 12 cases of small arms ammunition, and 70 mines. Elements of the 95B NVA Regt were probably responsible for ambushing two US convoys 15 km west of An Khe on 23 Aug, and for the 24 Aug attack on a US position 8 km west of An Khe. There were an increasing number of low level agent reports on sightings of large enemy troop concentrations in the southern B-3 Front, in MR 10 in the vicinity of BA 740, and near the Bu Prang CIDG Camp. The 66th and 28th NVA Regts were mentioned in some of these reports. In coastal II CTZ, a Hoi Chanh, previously a member of the Qui Nhon VC City Committee, stated that a country-wide campaign had been planned to begin on 2 Aug and last until 1 Oct. Possibly related to the campaign, on 26 Aug a terrorist detonated four grenades during a meeting between rural development cadre and civilians near Phu Cat in Binh Dinh Province. Friendly casualties from this incident were 26 killed and 100 wounded. On 7 Aug the 6th Convalescent Center at Cam Ranh Bay was attacked by sappers, probably from the 407th Sapper Bn. Friendly casualties from this attack were 2 KIA (US) and 98 WIA (US). Also, three buildings (two wards,

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one BOQ) were destroyed and three buildings (chapel, BOQ, PA & E Building) were damaged in the attack. The center was attacked again on 23 Aug with 82mm mortar fire; resulting in 21 WIA (US). Although the enemy force involved in the latter attack was unidentified, it may have been elements of the 95th NVA Arty Bn. A PW captured in the vicinity of Tuy Hoa on 15 Aug stated that his unit, the 30th MF Bn, currently had a strength of 100 men and one company had been disbanded. The 30th MF Bn had not been identified in contact during 1969. In MR 6 the only significant incident occurred on 11 Aug, when the ARVN regimental headquarters at Song Mao received 80 rounds of mixed mortar fire followed by a ground attack. This attack was probably conducted by the 840th MF Bn. Friendly casualties from this action were 6 KIA, 4 WIA (2 US); enemy casualties were 6 KIA.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone. Except for a considerable increase in enemy activity from 11 to 16 Aug, the month was characterized by scattered, low intensity attacks-by-fire and limited ground probes. On 11 and 12 Aug, the enemy initiated the first phase of the Autumn Campaign with major attacks in Binh Long, Phuoc Long, and Tay Ninh Provinces, and indirect fire attacks in the subregions. Elements of all four divisions in III CTZ were identified in contacts during the month. The 9th VC Div had two regiments deployed in west-central Binh Long Province and one regiment near Tay Ninh City. During the period 12-14 Aug, the 271st and 272nd VC Regts were identified in contacts in the An Loc-Quan Loi area, where they suffered over 200 KIA. Prisoners and ralliers stated that prior to 12 Aug these regiments also suffered heavy casualties from air strikes. Elements of the 88th NVA Regt were identified in three contacts in the Tay Ninh City area between 14 and 21 Aug, resulting in more than 150 KIA. The 1st NVA Div was probably deployed in northern Tay Ninh Province and west-central Binh Long Province. Documents captured in IV CTZ indicated that the 18B NVA Regt deployed to Chau Doc Province and was probably no longer subordinate to the 1st NVA Div. The 95C NVA Regt was not identified in contact during the month, but may have been the unit involved in the attacks against LZ BECKY on 10 and 11 Aug. A 6 Aug document indicated that the regiment was to conduct large scale attacks during the Autumn Campaign. The 101D NVA Regt continued to interdict lines of communication in south-central Binh Long Province. The 7th NVA Div probably remained concentrated in northern Binh Long Province. The 209th Regt suffered 79 KIA in a 13 Aug contact northwest of Loc Ninh. The 5th VC Div was probably located in northeast and central Phuoc Long Province; however, a rallier provided information that the division was planning to conduct operations in the Phuoc Binh/Song Be area. The 275th VC Regt was identified in contacts near Duc Phong Special Forces Camp on 12 Aug and south of Song Be by a rallier on 27 Aug. In MR 7 enemy activity remained light. A Hoi Chanh stated that MR 7 planned to participate in the initiation of the Autumn Campaign but B-52 strikes had disrupted communications, preventing the dissemination and coordination of orders. Ralliers and PWs identified the 33d NVA Regt north of Dinh Quan, near the area where three large caches containing approximately 45 tons of foodstuffs and munitions were captured. No major repositioning of units was noted in the subregions, and no significant enemy activity was initiated by subregion forces. SR I Forces continued to be depleted by friendly operations, but PWs indicated that some replacements had been received. Three sapper battalions subordinate to the 16th Armor Office, COSVN, were identified by documents and prisoners during the month. These units appeared to be targeted primarily against major US installations. Sapper activity remained light in Saigon; a considerable number of terrorists were apprehended in and along the infiltration routes into the city during the month. At the end of August, enemy units in III CTZ were probably refitting and preparing for the second phase of the Autumn Campaign, which documents and agents indicated would begin in early September.

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(C) IV Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy activity was highlighted by the relocation of parts of the 18B NVA Regt from III CTZ to western Chau Doc Province (VS9259). This was the first known instance of a solely NVA-manned unit entering IV CTZ. Elements of the 273d VC Regt engaged in central Kien Giang Province while relocating from western Chau Doc Province, possibly moving to BA 483 and the U Minh Forest. On the night of 11-12 Aug the enemy conducted 41 attacks-by-fire and two limited ground attacks throughout IV CTZ. Enemy initiated activity in eastern MR 2 increased during the month, predominantly in Dinh Tuong Province. PWs captured in Kien Tuong Province revealed that approximately 500 NVA replacements had been introduced into MR 2. Most of the replacements were destined for enemy units in VC My Tho Province (GVN Dinh Tuong Province), though there were indications that enemy interest in MR 3 was increasing. A Hoi Chanh stated that medical cadre from MR 2 were reassigned to MR 3 "to meet future requirements as this is to be the area of main emphasis in the future". Enemy initiated activity in MR 3 was generally scattered and of low intensity during August. RVNAF elements uncovered 61.5 tons of rice in Ba Xuyen Province and three tons of mortar ammunition in Bac Lieu Province.⁴⁶⁰

September

(C) Summary. Significant enemy operations in September, with few exceptions, were limited to the first week of the month. Following this brief upsurge, VC/NVA forces proclaimed a unilateral three-day ceasefire beginning on 8 Sep, which the enemy generally observed with only scattered minor incidents reported. The ceasefire was to commemorate the death of Ho Chi Minh on 3 Sep.

(C) In the Danang area alone, on 6 Sep, 16 attacks-by-fire and four ground attacks took place. Two mining incidents occurred in I CTZ on 8 Sep, but only one other important enemy action was reported during the month -- a 13 Sep ground attack on friendly installations near Quang Ngai city.

(C) In II CTZ, enemy operations consisted mostly of limited harassing attacks except for the period 4-6 Sep when nine attacks-by-fire, three ground assaults, and two convoy ambushes were launched. One of the ambushes, on QL-14 in Pleiku Province, was the first on this highway since 11 Jun, when the Communists had attacked another US convoy in the same location.

(C) On 4-5 Sep in III CTZ, 41 attacks-by-fire and seven ground assaults were reported; five of the latter were in battalion strength. In Phuoc Long Province, for example, the Duc Phong Special Forces camp and PF elements nearby received 400 mixed mortar and rocket rounds in seven attacks-by-fire, followed on 7 Sep by two battalion-size attacks. After the heavy fighting in the first week of the month, enemy action continued relatively light with the enemy apparently trying to avoid contact.

(C) There were 31 attacks-by-fire and three ground attacks in IV CTZ on 4-5 Sep. The most significant incident of the month, however, took place on 11 Sep when elements of the NVA 18B Regt tried to overrun the ARVN Chi Lang Training Center in Chau Doc Province and suffered heavy losses. This regiment had become, in August, the first major NVA unit to enter IV CTZ.⁴⁶¹

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(C) I Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy-initiated activity was characterized by scattered attacks-by-fire and limited ground attacks. In the B-5 Front there were a series of contacts below the central DMZ in the vicinity of the ROCKPILE. PWs from these contacts identified the 9th Regt, 304th NVA Div, while a captured document identified the 1st Bn, 246th NVA Regt. Enemy-initiated activity during the Communist announced cease fire period 8-11 Sep consisted of isolated mining incidents and minor ground probes, indicating that the enemy generally adhered to the cease-fire. Two PWs, captured 24 Sep, 3 km south-southeast of Con Thien, identified their unit as the 1st Bn, 27th NVA Regt, indicating that elements of the 27th NVA Regt continued to operate south of the DMZ. In MR TTH, enemy forces avoided contact with friendly forces while probably engaging in logistical activity. Analysis of a recent series of PW reports revealed the possible existence and use of an enemy supply route stretching from Ban Avao village, Laos, northeast through the upper Da Krong and My Chanh valleys into the 7th Front's forward bases in southeast Quang Tri Province. In Front 4, from 0010 to 1025 hours on 6 Sep, the Danang area received a total of 16 attacks-by-fire and 4 sapper ground attacks. A PW from the 3d NVA Sapper Bn indicated that elements of the 31st and 36th NVA Regts and the T-89 VC Sapper Bn were involved in these attacks. In northeastern Quang Nam Province, a Hoi Chanh identified his unit as the T-87 Sapper Bn, providing the first information received on this unit in Front 4, since January 1969. A PW from the Q-82 LF Company, which operated in Quang Nam Province, revealed resentment and dissension between NVA and VC soldiers in his unit. This, coupled with other similar reports, indicated that this problem might exist in other combined VC/NVA units. Numerous troop sightings in southeast Quang Nam Province during the month revealed an unusual amount of movement, indicating either food gathering for the monsoon season or movements to the lowlands for possible future tactical activity. Documents captured in Front 4 and southern I CTZ revealed an increase emphasis on sapper training and techniques, as well as improved command and control of sapper elements. In southern I CTZ, the continued presence in the Hiep Duc area of elements of the 2d NVA Div indicated that the VC/NVA were continuing their emphasis on disrupting the pacification program. During the month there were five significant attacks of GVN-controlled population centers. Documents captured on 14 Aug 10 km south-southeast of Duc Pho, mentioned two phases of the Autumn-Winter Campaign and indicated that the second phase would run from 2 Sep to 30 Dec.

(C) II Corps Tactical Zone. Enemy-initiated activity was limited in scope and intensity except for 4 and 5 Sep, when activity increased in MR 6. A PW captured in the B-3 Front on 9 Sep, from the 631st NVA Bn, confirmed previous PW and Hoi Chanh statements that the 966th NVA Bn had merged with the K-31 Arty Bn to form the 631st NVA Bn. On 4 Sep, US Air Cavalry elements captured 737, 850 piasters (\$6, 253 US) in a base area 41 km southwest of An Khe. The money probably belonged to elements of the 95B NVA Regt. A Hoi Chanh at the Duc Lap CIDG Camp identified his unit as the 251st Transportation Bn, 250th Transportation Regt, and stated that the battalion had been operating in Quang Duc Province. Additional information provided by this Hoi Chanh indicated that other unidentified units were planning to attack the Duc Lap CIDG Camp during August, but the plan was not implemented because of a compromise. These unidentified units may have included the 28th and 66th NVA Regts which were reported to be located in the vicinity of the Bu Prang CIDG Camp, where several old defensive positions were sighted during September. Two Hoi Chanh, who also rallied at the Duc Lap CIDG Camp, identified their unit as the 251st Mobile Bn, and stated that it operated as a communication-liaison unit in Quang Duc Province. Information from these Hoi Chanh indicated that there were two units, the 251st Transportation Bn and the 251st Mobile Bn, in Quang Duc Province with the same numerical designation. In MR 5, a PW from the E210 Bn and a Hoi Chanh from the 50th LF Bn stated that the mission assigned their units was to coordinate with local guerrillas in assassinating GVN

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employees and gaining control over the population. To do this, they were forming into squad size units. In the southern subregion, MR 5, deactivation of HQ, 10th NVA Regt, was confirmed through prisoners, Hoi Chanh, and captured documents. Disposition of the subordinate battalions of the 10th NVA Regt was as follows: the 11th Bn merged with the 85th LF Bn to form the 96th LF Bn under control of the Phu Yen Provincial Unit; the 12th Bn operated under control of the Khanh Hoa Provincial Unit; and the 13th Bn was resubordinated to the Phu Yen Provincial Unit. In MR 6, a Hoi Chanh from the Lam Dong Province Committee stated there were no battalion size units operating in Lam Dong Province; the 145th MF Bn now operated in Tuyen Duc Province; and the 200th LF Bn now operated in Binh Thuan Province. A PW, captured on 5 Sep, from the 840th MF Bn, confirmed the continued presence of this unit in northeastern Binh Thuan Province. A Hoi Chanh, who rallied in Binh Thuan on 25 Sep, from the 186th MF Bn, stated that units in MR 6 had received NVA replacements. He also stated that a new unit, the 160th Arty Bn, was being formed in MR 6.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone: There was an increase in activity during the night of 4 Sep, and again on 11 Sep, immediately following the Communist announced cease fire period. The increases were concentrated in the northern three provinces of III CTZ. Enemy-initiated activity during the remainder of the month was characterized by scattered attacks-by-fire and minor ground probes. Elements of all four enemy divisions in III CTZ were identified in contacts during the month. The 9th VC Div had its forces divided, with two regiments deployed in the northern Tay Ninh/Cambodian border area and one regiment southwest of Tay Ninh City. Elements of the 271st VC Regt were probably involved in a contact southwest of An Loc on 7 Sep, which resulted in more than 40 enemy KIA. The 88th VC Regt was not identified during the month; however, it was probably involved in contacts northeast of Tay Ninh City on 5 and 6 Sep, which resulted in 71 enemy KIA. The 1st NVA Div was probably deployed in northern and western Tay Ninh Province. Both regiments of the division were identified in contacts. The 95C NVA Regt was identified in contacts on 5 and 6 Sep in central Tay Ninh Province, which resulted in 61 enemy KIA. This regiment may have also been involved in a series of contacts in north central Tay Ninh Province resulting in 150 enemy KIA. The 101D Regt was identified in an enemy ambush on 6 Sep, which resulted in more than 50 enemy KIA. There were indications that the 101D NVA Regt might have shifted its area of operation as a rallier from the unit stated that when the regiment finished its mission in western Binh Long Province, it was to make a 15-day journey to an unknown area. The lack of contact with the 101D NVA Regt since early September lent credence to the rallier's statements. The 7th NVA Div was probably deployed in northern Binh Long Province, where it was training and refitting. Its 209th NVA Regt was identified in a contact west of Loc Ninh on 6 Sep, in which enemy forces suffered in excess of 70 KIA. The 165th NVA Regt remained out of contact, but may have been responsible for the heavy attacks-by-fire in the Bu Dop area on 4-5 Sep. The 5th VC Div was probably deployed in central and northern Phuoc Long Province, where two of its regiments were identified in contacts. Friendly-initiated contacts southeast of Song Be on 14 Sep, identified elements of the 275th VC Regt. The 174th NVA Regt was identified in a contact northwest of Duc Phong Special Forces Camp. The 95th NVA Regt was not identified during the month, but may have been involved in a series of contacts north of Duc Phong Special Forces Camp. Enemy-initiated activity remained light in MR 7. The 274th VC Regt was identified in an enemy ambush, on 25 Sep, which resulted in 62 enemy KIA. The 33d NVA Regt was not identified in contact during the month. Captured documents revealed that MR 7 units would be targeted primarily against pacification elements during the 1969-1970 Winter-Spring Campaign. There was no significant enemy-initiated activity in the subregions. Prisoners from SR 1 indicated that the conversion of the 268th VC Regt into sapper units might have been taking place. Friendly-initiated contacts in SR 1 continued to

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inflict heavy casualties on the three enemy regiments operating in the area. In SR 3, enemy units sustained in excess of 90 KIA, most of which were probably personnel of the 1st NVA Regt. In Saigon, terrorist activity was moderate, with 11 terrorist incidents reported. At the end of September, major enemy units in III CTZ were probably refitting, retraining, and preparing for the next high point, which some reports indicated might begin in early October.

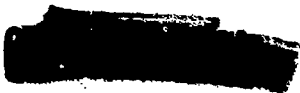
(C) IV Corps Tactical Zone: Enemy-initiated activity was highlighted by the continued arrival of NVA replacements in eastern MR 2. Apparently the reported difficulty of recruiting indigenous personnel into VC units necessitated NVA replacements throughout MR 2. The identification of PWs from the probable T-28 Sapper Battalion in Chau Doc Province may have increased to four the number of battalions subordinate to the 18B NVA Regt. A 16 ton munitions cache, one of the largest of its kind to be discovered in the Delta, was found in western Chau Doc Province. Enemy-initiated activity during the month occurred predominantly in Kien Phong and Chau Doc Provinces of western MR 2. The 8th, 9th and 10th Battalions, 273d VC Regt, relocated from northwestern Kien Giang and western Chau Doc Provinces to the U Minh Forest in BA 483. During September, enemy-initiated activity in MR 3 was generally scattered and of low intensity.⁴⁶²

VC/NVA Operations: 4th Quarter 1969

Introduction

(C) Enemy initiated activity was at a moderate level during the 4th Quarter of 1969. The VC/NVA apparently initiated the Winter Campaign in early November with the possible exception of I CTZ. The enemy achieved a number of irregularly executed highpoints rather than a country-wide general offensive continuing a trend established earlier in the year of not trying to coordinate offensives or high points nationwide. Enemy activity was characterized, for the most part, by isolated attacks-by-fire, ground probes with sapper attacks and terrorist activity directed against the GVN pacification program. One focus of activity was the Bu Prang-Duc Lap area where the VC/NVA launched attacks at the end of October and withdrew in December. The battle and VC/NVA action followed a pattern similar to the developments earlier in the year at Ben Het. Allied fire support bases in northern War Zone "C" of Tay Ninh Province and in Phuoc Long Province of III CTZ continued to be harassed. NVA units continued to move into IV CTZ. In November, there were some sharp contacts between ARVN and VC/NVA troops in the Delta. After one terrorist incident in October in which a number of people were killed and wounded, six boys aged 11 to 14 were detained.⁴⁶³ (See Figures III-19-22 for the locations of enemy initiated incidents during 1969). The statistics of some categories of enemy initiated incidents during the fourth quarter follow:⁴⁶⁴

	<u>October</u>				
	<u>I CTZ</u>	<u>II CTZ</u>	<u>III CTZ</u>	<u>IV CTZ</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Assaults	13	33	8	32	86
Attacks-by-fire	14	10	34	34	92
Ambushes	0	2	6	6	14
Harassments	241	89	391	325	1,046



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November

	<u>I CTZ</u>	<u>II CTZ</u>	<u>III CTZ</u>	<u>IV CTZ</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Assaults	15	79	40	28	162
Attacks-by-fire	21	58	38	40	157
Ambushes	2	12	1	9	24
Harassments	341	214	365	261	1,181

December

	<u>I CTZ</u>	<u>II CTZ</u>	<u>III CTZ</u>	<u>IV CTZ</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Assaults	18	49	45	45	157
Attacks-by-fire	19	33	50	42	144
Ambushes	1	8	1	9	19
Harassments	461	308	492	543	1,804

October

(C) Summary. In much of I CTZ, the enemy avoided contact and concentrated on building up logistically for the Winter Campaign. Activity generally increased in II CTZ after 18 Oct. The attack on Bu Prang-Duc Lap commenced on 28 Oct. In III CTZ there were no signs of a high point and units appeared to be preparing for the Winter Campaign by preparing logistically and politically (by disseminating COSVN Resolution 9). Phase II of the VC/NVA Autumn Campaign began in IV CTZ on the night of 4-5 Oct. 465

(C) I Corps Tactical Zone: Scattered attacks-by-fire and limited ground attacks characterized enemy-initiated activity. In the B-5 Front, a PW captured on 6 Oct, in the ROCKPILE area, identified the 2d Bn, 246th NVA Regt, as operating to the northwest of the ROCKPILE. Aerial photography of 15 Oct revealed two probable T34/85 medium tanks approximately 40 km north of the ROCKPILE and 23 km north of the DMZ. Prisoners captured as a result of contacts in the Cong Thien areas on 28 Sep and 2 Oct, identified their units as the 1st Bn, 27th NVA Regt, and the 45th Bn, Quang Binh Provincial Unit. Documents captured on 13 Oct, near Con Thien, provided initial indications that elements of the 33d NVA Sapper Bn were operating south of the DMZ. On 25 Oct, 13 km north of Gio Linh, an aerial observer reported sighting four Soviet 130mm field guns being towed south. This sighting was unconfirmed. In MR Tri-Thien-Hue, enemy forces continued to avoid major contact while possibly engaged in logistical activity. Documents captured on 27 Oct, as a result of a contact in northern Thua Thien Province, identified the K-55 Company, possibly an alias for an element of the 835th Arty Bn, 5th NVA Regt. In addition to the documents, four complete 120mm mortars were captured. Hoi Chanh and PWs indicated that the major elements of Front 4 continued to operate in their normal areas of operation. A Hoi Chanh from the Q84 LF Co provided information on the increasing difficulty his unit was having in engaging ARVN forces, due to the ARVN's aggressiveness and improved armament. In southern I CTZ, more than 220 members of VC military units and the Infrastructure rallied in Thang Binh and Tam Ky Districts, Quang Tin Province. In Quang Ngai Province enemy units continued their attacks on refugee and population centers in an attempt to disrupt the pacification program. After the beginning of the month, approximately 80 percent of the enemy attacks in Quang Ngai Province were directed against pacification areas.

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Documents captured on 6 Oct, approximately 20 km south of Ba To Special Forces Camp, revealed a serious morale and food distribution problem within elements of the 3d NVA Div.

(C) II Corps Tactical Zone: Enemy-initiated activity was limited in scope and intensity until 18 Oct, when a period of increased activity commenced in the B-3 Front. Possibly related to this activity was the initiation of enemy offensive activity in the Duc Lap/Bu Prang area on 28 Oct. A PW from the 4th Bn, 24th NVA Regt, captured on 20 Oct, confirmed that his unit had the mission of interdicting QL-14 between Pleiku and Kontum City, and attacking friendly troops and installations in the vicinity of Plei Mrong. Documents captured on 14 Oct in the vicinity of the Plei Mrong CIDG Camp, identified the 6th Bn, 24th NVA Regt, as being in the area. Two PWs, captured in the vicinity of the Dak Uy Bridge north of Kontum City, confirmed the continuing existence of the 406th Sapper Bn. Twenty-five km east of An Khe, in Binh Dinh Province, MR 5, US and ROKA forces engaged in sporadic contacts with enemy forces and uncovered sizable munitions and rice caches in BA 226; cumulative results were: 210 enemy KIA, 22 PWs, 26 tons of munitions, and 24 tons of rice captured. PWs captured in the area identified their units as various elements of the 18th NVA Regt. A PW, captured during a series of contacts along QL-19 east of An Khe, between 26 and 30 Oct, identified his unit as the 9th Bn, 18th NVA Regt, and stated the Battalion was located south of QL-19. A recording tape, captured on 25 Oct in BA 226, revealed that members of a North Korean Military Action Group had been operating in Binh Dinh Province and had the mission of proselyting ROKA forces. Based upon contents of the tape, it was concluded that this North Korean group had probably returned to NVN. On 28 Oct, 3 km northwest of Phu Cat, a terrorist threw a hand grenade into the market place in Hoa Hoi Hamlet; results were: friendly: eight civilians KIA, 43 civilians WIA. Six boys, ages 11-14, armed with hand grenades were detained. This was the second major terrorist incident reported in Binh Dinh Province during a two week period. On 19 Oct, in Qui Nhon City, an unknown type explosive was detonated in a civilian theater; results were: friendly: seven wounded, two civilians killed, 28 civilians wounded. In the southern subregion, a freighter of Panamanian registry was sunk in the Nha Trang Harbor by two unknown-type explosives. The explosives were probably set by the K92 Sapper Co, Nha Trang Municipal Unit. Three PWs, captured on 13 Oct near Nha Trang, confirmed the deactivation of the 7th Bn, 18 B NVA Regt, during late 1968.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone: Enemy-initiated activity was characterized by low intensity attacks-by-fire and limited ground probes, as most divisional elements remained out of contact in or near border base areas. Elements of three divisions were identified in contacts during the month. The 9th VC Div had its forces divided, with two regiments deployed in the northern Tay Ninh Province/Cambodian border area and one regiment southwest of Tay Ninh City. The 272d Regt relocated to northern Tay Ninh Province and was identified in several contacts in War Zone C. This indicated that the 272d Regt had assumed responsibility for the area of Tay Ninh Province, where the 95C Regt, 1st NVA Div, previously operated. The 1st NVA Div was not identified in contact during the month. The 7th NVA Div was probably deployed in northern Binh Long Province, where it may have been training and refitting. The 209th Regt was probably the enemy force involved in a 5 Oct, friendly-initiated, contact 8 km west of Loc Ninh which resulted in 15 enemy KIA. The 141st NVA Regt may have been the enemy unit involved in two friendly-initiated contacts in northwest Phuoc Long Province, on 4 and 31 Oct, which resulted in 65 enemy KIA. The 5th VC Div probably remained deployed in central and northern Phuoc Long Province. The 174th NVA Regt was identified in a 20 Oct, friendly-initiated, contact 13 km east of Song Be. A document captured on 11 Oct in the vicinity of the 20 Oct contact indicated that the 174th NVA Regt would continue to operate in this general area until the end of October. In MR 7, enemy-initiated activity remained light. Elements of the 274th Regt were identified in a 9 Oct ambush south of Bear Cat; while the 2d Bn, which was believed to be transporting supplies, was identified in a 4 Oct, friendly-initiated, contact in War Zone D.

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The 1st Bn, 74th Arty Regt, was identified by a PW following a 13 Oct, friendly-initiated, contact southwest of Dong Xoai. A document, dated 29 Jul, captured northeast of Xuan Loc on 9 Oct, revealed MR 7's missions to be achieved in compliance with COSVN's Resolution 9. The document pointed out that attention should be given to developing the guerrilla forces throughout MR 7 and emphasized the development of legal status with respect to the GVN. In addition, the use of small units of highly qualified secret forces was recommended for attacks against large Allied units and positions. Finally, Resolution 9 was to be disseminated throughout MR 7 prior to the end of October and all party members were to study the Resolution prior to 15 Nov. Other captured documents indicated that the Winter-Spring Campaign might begin following the completion of study on Resolution 9. There were no significant enemy-initiated contacts in the subregions. Friendly initiated contacts in SRs 1 and 2 inflicted moderate casualties on enemy units operating in these areas. In SR 3, several caches were discovered in the Ben Luc area. In Saigon, terrorist activity was light with five terrorist incidents reported. At the end of October, major enemy units in III CTZ were probably refitting and retraining in preparation for the Winter-Spring Campaign that might be initiated in mid-November.

(C) IV Corps Tactical Zone: The enemy initiated Phase II of his Autumn Campaign, during the night of 4-5 Oct, with 35 attacks-by-fire and 13 ground probes. Captured documents revealed that in compliance with COSVN's directive, enemy units were instructed to intensify proselyting activity. Interrogation of an NVA rallier confirmed previous reports that HQ, MR 2, relocated from its traditional area of operations in BA 704 to the Cambodian/Kien Tuong Province border. Activity increased in the Plain of Reeds area as the enemy attempted infiltration of men and material into BA 470. PWs stated that the 18B NVA Regt and its subordinate battalions were collocated in the Seven Mountains area of Chau Doc Province. ARVN elements contacted probable elements of the 273d VC Regt in a series of engagements in BA 483 during the month. A captured enemy document provided plausible information concerning enemy intentions in MR 3. It stated that Ca Mau Province (VC) would become the "main base area" and Can Tho Province (VC) would be used as a "primary bridgehead to future attacks on the enemy. In the days to come these two provinces will be our vital battlefield where we will win or die". The D-3 VC Regt moved deeper into Tra Vinh Province (VC) in a probable attempt to avoid the GVN pacification efforts in Vinh Long Province. ⁴⁶⁶

November

(C) Summary. Except in I CTZ, the volume and intensity of enemy-initiated action increased significantly throughout the RVN during November. Battalion size enemy assaults were reported in all areas except II CTZ, with the Communists attempting to open a "Winter-Spring Campaign".

(C) The slow pace of enemy-initiated action continued in the I CTZ for the second consecutive month except for a single NVA attack of estimated battalion size against US forces near Con Thien just south of the DMZ on 12-13 Nov. This attack resulted in 178 NVA KIA, while US casualties were 16 KIA and 63 WIA. Otherwise enemy operations were limited to small ground probes and scattered attacks-by-fire. Some 60 tons of enemy supplies, mostly rice, were uncovered in November.

(C) There was a notable increase in the level of enemy activity, particularly platoon and company size ground assaults, in II CTZ. The focal point of this activity was the area around Bu Prang and Duc Lap in the central highlands where an estimated two NVA regiments appeared to be testing the capabilities of local ARVN forces. No significant enemy caches were discovered.

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(C) In contrast to the pattern of the preceding two months, the enemy stepped up operations against installations and garrisons in the north-central provinces of III CTZ. The pattern and intensity of enemy offensive actions indicated that the attacks were designed to ease pressure on Communist infiltration routes and rear supply sites by forcing friendly units to adopt a more defensive posture. Enemy units were most aggressive near Song Be and Bu Dop in Phuoc Long Province and Phu Khuong in Tay Ninh Province. Friendly forces unearthed over a dozen caches during the month, including one of more than six tons of rice discovered near Katum on 20 Nov.

(C) Enemy activity greatly accelerated in the IV CTZ where ARVN forces were shouldering an increased responsibility for combat operations subsequent to departure of the 9th Inf Div. The intensity of enemy operations made it appear that the VC/NVA were seeking to reestablish their influence in the rice-rich Mekong Delta, while at the same time testing the durability of local ARVN forces. Enemy efforts toward these objectives were most evident in the U Minh forest, where Communist forces generated numerous attacks, including one of battalion size, during the month. No caches of significance were discovered.⁴⁶⁷

(C) I Corps Tactical Zone: Enemy-initiated activity was characterized by scattered attacks-by-fire and limited ground contacts. In the B-5 Front, from 11 to 14 Nov, US forces near Helicopter Valley contacted an estimated reinforced enemy battalion. Interrogation of PWs identified the unit as the 2d Bn, 27th NVA Regt. On 16 Nov, ARVN elements in the ROCKPILE area discovered an enemy ordnance cache containing 440 82mm mortar rounds. Aerial photography of 13 Nov revealed two probable 122mm field guns in firing position; and one T34/85 medium tank, and one ZIL 485 (BAV) amphibious truck 16 km north-northwest of Con Thien and 6 km north of DMZ. Agent reports indicated that elements of the 304th and 320th NVA Divs were in the DMZ area and revealed possible preparations for a three-phase Winter-Spring Offensive. In MR TTH, enemy forces continued to avoid major contact while probably engaged in logistical activity. Documents and a prisoner captured in the vicinity of FSB BLAZE identified the 11th Armd Recon Bn and some possible commo liaison stations within Laos and Thua Thien Province. In Front 4, PWs' and ralliers' statements indicated that major elements of the 131st NVA Regt deployed westward towards the border area. A PW from the 3d District Unit, Danang City revealed plans for a possible three phase, enemy Winter-Spring Offensive in Quang Nam Province which generally correlated with a reported offensive in Quang Tri Province. Significant rice caches were discovered by Allied forces in the Que Son area. In southern I CTZ, sources continued to indicate a possible offensive in Quang Ngai Province in the coming months, while the enemy continued to exert pressure on the pacification program in an attempt to disrupt it.

(C) II Corps Tactical Zone: Tactical activity was at an increased level throughout the Western Highlands, with significant ground probes and attacks-by-fire centered in the Bu Prang/Duc Lap area. In the coastal regions, a significant increase in activity occurred on the night of 3 Nov. On 1 Nov, FSB KATE received three attacks-by-fire, including suspected 85mm artillery fire, followed by ground probes. Subsequently, FSB KATE was evacuated, and on 2 Nov, FSBs ANNIE and SUSAN were also evacuated. Documents and PWs captured in the vicinity of the Bu Prang SF Camp identified the 66th NVA Regt. The PWs stated that the 66th NVA Regt; the K37 Sapper Bn; and the K33 Bn, 40th NVA Arty Regt, were deployed around the camp. The artillery battalion was believed to be equipped with 85mm and 105mm howitzers, and the camp received heavy 85mm and 105mm attacks-by-fire during the latter part of the month. Prisoners and ralliers from units in the Duc Lap area confirmed the presence of the 28th NVA Regt in that area with the mission of conducting attacks against Allied Forces. A rallier from the regiment stated that the unit was supported by the 32d Bn, 40th NVA Arty Regt, and the 394th NVA Bn. He further stated that MR 10 was responsible for resupplying B-3 Front units in the Bu Prang/Duc Lap area and that the current offensive would continue until late December. Cumulative

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enemy casualties in the Bu Prang/Duc Lap area since the campaign commenced on 28 Oct were: 1,391 enemy KIA, 10 enemy detained, 124 individual and 46 crew served weapons captured. In the B-3 Front, a PW captured in the Dak To/Tanh Canh areas identified his unit as the C-56 Co, K-120 Sapper Bn, and stated that his unit had the mission of attacking allied units in the area. On 21 Nov, ARVN elements in the Plei Mrong area received a ground probe from an unknown size enemy force. There were 31 enemy KIA and one PW captured during the contact. The PW identified his unit as the 6th Bn, 24th NVA Regt. On 31 Oct, US elements operating northwest of the Plei Djereng SF Camp engaged an unknown size enemy force. Seventy-five enemy were KIA during the contact. The enemy force was probably an element of the 631st NVA Bn. On 6 Nov, 19 km east of the Plei Me SF Camp, a US Command Post was attacked by an estimated enemy company. Results were 40 enemy KIA, and one PW. The PW stated that his unit, the 408th MF Sapper Bn, had the mission of conducting probes against Allied installations north-northeast of Pleiku City. In MR 5, Binh Dinh Province, a top secret enemy document, captured on 31 Oct, 17 km south of Phu Cat, contained the order to open fire on 2-3 Nov; this was to begin the 1969 Winter-Spring Campaign in MR-5. It further stated that the campaign consisted of two phases, with Phase I running from 28 Nov to 20 Dec. On the night of 2 Nov there were four enemy-initiated contacts. The enemy losses were 39 KIA. The enemy forces involved in two of these contacts were believed to have been elements of the 2d Regt, 3d NVA Div. Prisoners and documents captured in the province indicated that the regiment moved into northern Binh Dinh Province during the beginning of November with the mission of conducting attacks against Allied units and installations in the area. On 15 Nov near An Khe, US elements at Camp Radcliffe received a sapper attack from an unknown size enemy force, possibly elements of the 18th NVA Regt. Results of the enemy probe were one US KIA, 11 WIA; 19 helicopters and two buildings were destroyed. In MR 6, there was a significant increase in enemy-initiated activity on the night of 3 Nov when the enemy initiated eight ground attacks and 13 attacks-by-fire. A PW from the 810th LF Bn stated that elements of his unit have been trained in the use of the H-12 CHICOM 107mm rocket. The availability of this weapon would significantly increase the enemy's capability to conduct attacks-by-fire against Allied installations in Tuyen Duc Province.

(C) III Corps Tactical Zone: Enemy-initiated activity was characterized by low intensity attacks-by-fire and limited ground probes, except for the night of 3 Nov when the enemy initiated the first phase of the Winter-Spring Campaign. Elements of three divisions were identified in contacts during the month in the northern three provinces. The 9th VC Div was deployed in War Zone "C" with the 272d Regt in western War Zone "C", the 95C Regt in the north central portion, and the 271st Regt in the eastern sector. Documents and PWs identified all battalions of the 272d Regt in an area northwest of Nui Ba Den, suggesting that the regiment was targeted against Allied installations in the FSB ST. BARBARA/Nui Ban Den area. Documents and prisoners identified reconnaissance elements of the 4th Sapper Bn, 16th Armor Office, COSVN, in the vicinity of Tay Ninh City and indicated that attacks were planned in the area on an unspecified date by elements of the 4th Bn, possibly in coordination with elements of the 272d Regt, 9th VC Div. Elements of the 271st Regt were identified in a ground attack on FSB IKE on 4 Nov which resulted in 48 enemy KIA. Elements of the regiment were probably involved in two contacts on 18 Nov, one of which was a ground probe against FSB VICKI, which resulted in 45 enemy KIA. A document captured southwest of Katum SF Camp indicated that the 95C Regt was to attack FSB CAROLYN, employing two infantry battalions, two sapper companies, and supported by an anti-aircraft battalion and an artillery battalion. Though the date for the attack was not indicated, it gave some indication of the 95C's area of operation since becoming a subordinate of the 9th VC Div. The 1st NVA Div was not identified in contact during the month. The 7th NVA Div was deployed in northern Phuoc Long Province, and was targeted against the Bu Dop/Bo Duc area. Elements of all three regiments were identified during the month. The Sapper/Recon Co of the

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209th NVA Regt was identified by documents captured northeast of FSB JERRI on 17 Nov, and it may have been conducting reconnaissance for future offensive activity. The 165th Regt was identified by documents captured north of Bu Dop SF Camp on 3 Nov and a PW identified the regiment in a 10 Nov contact north of FSB JERRI which resulted in 50 enemy KIA. Numerous contacts around Bu Dop suggested a continued interest there by the 165th Regt. The 141st Regt was identified in a 4 Nov ground attack against FSB ELLEN resulting in 35 enemy KIA. The 141st Regt was probably involved in two contacts in the Song Be Corridor on 31 Oct and 3 Nov, in which 82 enemy were KIA. The 141st Regt was also identified in a ground probe against FSB JERRI on 8 Nov. A PW from the 141st Regt stated that the Regt would conduct attacks on US bases along the Song Be River in early and mid-December. The 5th Bn, 16th Armor Office, COSVN, was identified by a Hoi Chanh following a 3 Nov attack on FSB BUTTONS, which resulted in 63 enemy KIA. The 5th VC Div was probably deployed in base areas in northern Phuoc Long Province, with the exception of the 174th Regt which was operating in the central portion of the province. All three battalions of the 174th Regt were identified by PWs and Hoi Chanh during the month. Interrogation of these PWs revealed that the 174th Regt had the mission of interdicting QL-14 in the vicinity of Bunard SF Camp; however, three contacts in the latter part of the month, probably involving elements of the 174th Regt, resulted in more than 90 enemy KIA and probably hindered their planned operations. Two contacts in north central Phuoc Long Province on 16 and 17 Nov probably involved elements of the 5th Div and resulted in 80 enemy KIA. In MR 7, enemy-initiated activity was light. A Hoi Chanh from the 2d bn, 33d Regt, who rallied following a 22 Nov contact, indicated that his unit was targeted against the area surrounding Xuan Loc and would conduct attacks in mid-December. The 274th Regt remained in its traditional AO in the Bien Hoa/Long Khanh Province border area, with the exception of the 2d Bn which was identified following a contact in southern War Zone "D". Enemy activity in the subregions was characterized by scattered, low intensity attacks-by-fire. In SR 1, the 101st Regt was identified in a 23 Nov contact, southeast of Dau Tieng, which resulted in 20 enemy KIA. A Hoi Chanh from the 10th Arty Bn revealed that there would be an offensive on 5 or 6 Dec. However, Allied interdiction of primary lines of communication in SR 1 seriously hampered their resupply activities and may have preempted their participation in any planned offensive. In SR 2, a captured directive called for close coordination between military proselyting and combat elements, and indicated that 19, 20, and 22 Dec might possibly be the dates for the December "High Point" of the Winter-Spring Campaign. In SR 3, two contacts on 13 and 17 Nov resulted in 50 enemy KIA and probably involved elements of the 1st NVA Regt, which was believed to be targeted against pacified areas of SR 3. In SR 5, a document captured northwest of Phuoc Vinh outlined a military proselyting campaign to be initiated within SR 5 during the fall and winter period of 1969. In Saigon, terrorist activity was light with four terrorist incidents reported. At the end of November, major III CTZ enemy units were preparing for the next phase of the Winter-Spring Campaign, which analysts thought might be initiated in early or mid-December.

(C) IV Corps Tactical Summary: The enemy initiated his Winter-Spring Campaign with 53 attacks-by-fire and seven ground attacks during the night of 6 Nov. The recent influx of NVA replacements into the MF units in eastern MR 2 resulted in increased aggressiveness and improved combat effectiveness, as exemplified by the enemy's successes against friendly operations in Dinh Tuong Province during the month. In western MR 2, there were increasing indications that the enemy may have been attempting to introduce additional replacements or a new unit. Agent reports of unidentified troop sightings along the Kien Tuong and Kien Phong Provinces and Cambodian border gradually shifted west since late October to the western border of BA 704. The reports have approached the magnitude of those received prior to the infiltration of the 273d VC Regt in May and 18B NVA Regt in August. Although there was no firm identification of the units involved, they may have been elements of the 1st NVA Div, especially the

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101D NVA Regt, which had not been reported in contact recently. Such a move would have significantly increased the threat to Chau Doc City and Allied installations in southwestern MR 2. In MR 3, enemy activity reduced in intensity primarily due to successful friendly operations in BA 483 against the 273d, D-1, and D-2 VC Regts, which resulted in heavy enemy losses. In eastern MR 3, the first indications of NVA replacements were noted in Vinh Long and Vinh Binh Provinces. The D-3 Regt moved to Vinh Binh Province to retrain, refit, and receive replacements. Successful VC/NVA activity against friendly operations in Vinh Binh Province suggested that the D-3 Regt had improved its combat effectiveness and might pose a threat to the GVN pacification effort in eastern MR 3. 468

December

(C) Summary. The volume and intensity of enemy-initiated action was substantially reduced throughout the RVN during December. Only one battalion-sized attack was recorded. Otherwise, VC/NVA initiatives consisted largely of sporadic attacks-by-fire and small scale ground probes.

(C) In the I CTZ, Communist efforts focused on the areas around Tam Ky, Quang Ngai City, An Hoa, Dong Ha, and Hoi An. The most costly encounter for the enemy occurred near Quang Ngai where on 13 Dec enemy ground fire directed against a US helicopter resulted in a significant contact lasting some six hours. The enemy lost 53 KIA and 14 captured; only three US personnel were wounded. During the month, friendly forces discovered some 150 tons of cached supplies.

(C) Enemy activity in the II CTZ declined to a moderate level in December. Overall pressure on the Bu Prang and Duc Lap areas largely subsided, although installations in both were the targets of substantial attacks-by-fire early in the month. The Bu Prang Special Forces Camp was struck by over 100 rounds of mixed mortar and 122mm rocket fire on 1 Dec. On the same day Duc Lap was hit by 124 mixed mortar, rocket, and recoilless rifle rounds. Later in the month, several company-strength attacks took place elsewhere in the CTZ.

(C) Although the VC/NVA twice attacked Saigon with 122mm rocket fire, the intensity of enemy action decreased in December in III CTZ. On 17 Dec, three civilians were wounded when an enemy rocket struck a housing complex. Two days later, four rockets hit Tan Son Nhut Air Base killing one person and injuring 17. 469

(S) I Corps Tactical Zone: Enemy-initiated activity during the last month of the year was characterized by scattered attacks-by-fire and limited ground contacts. In the B-5 Front on 15 Dec, ARVN elements operating north of Gio Linh contacted an unidentified enemy force, possibly elements of the 31st NVA Regt, resulting in 20 enemy KIA and the capture of 600 60mm and 82mm mortar rounds and four 122mm rockets. Visual reconnaissance, sensor activity, and sidelooking airborne radar detections indicated that enemy forces increased their logistical activity along the Quang Tri/Laos border and QL-9 area. In MR TTH, a rallier's statements and aerial photography disclosed that the enemy was possibly using Rt 616 in an attempt to re-establish his traditional supply route across the Vietnamese salient to the 7th Front's AO. A PW's statements revealed that the headquarters, 6th NVA Regt, was located in Laos, approximately 30 km west-northwest of the A Chau Valley. In Front 4, Allied forces operating in eastern Quang Nam Province captured a total of approximately 60 tons of enemy rice. Documents and PW's statements identified the 490th NVA Sapper Bn as a newly infiltrated battalion, subordinate to Front 4 and currently operating in south-central Quang Nam Province. A PW's statement

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revealed the possible augmentation of VC district forces with regular NVA personnel. In southern I CTZ, visual reconnaissance and agent reports disclosed a possible southward shift of HQ, MR 5, to south-central Quang Tin Province. Another PW revealed that the 21st NVA Regt relocated from the Tra Bong Valley to the southern portion of Son Ha District, Quang Ngai Province. A captured enemy document indicated that enemy forces were possibly preparing a large scale offensive which would probably peak during Tet of 1970. The document also revealed that, if necessary, enemy forces were prepared to carry on a protracted war in RVN.

(S) II Corps Tactical Zone: Enemy-initiated activity was limited in scope and intensity. In MR 10, major enemy forces of the B-3 Front ended their six week siege of the Bu Prang and Duc Lap CIDG Camps and probably returned to border base areas adjacent to Kontum and Pleiku Provinces. During the campaign, enemy forces lost over 1,500 men KIA and 10 captured. In the B-3 Front, documents captured near the Dak Pek CIDG Camp identified the K80 NVA Bn. A PW from the 3d Bn, 28th NVA Regt, captured near Duc Lap, stated that the regiment's 2d Bn did not deploy south with the unit in July and was given the mission of protecting infiltration and supply routes into BA 609. It was possible that the K80 NVA Bn may have been the original 2d Bn, 28th NVA Regt, with a new designation. In MR 5, a Hoi Chanh stated that the enemy Winter-Spring Campaign was planned to be conducted through 19 May, and would include coordinated attacks on selected urban areas and Allied installations with exact timing established by a continuing assessment of the world and local situation. Additional elements of the 3d NVA Div were identified in Binh Dinh Province during the month. PWs and documents identified the 300th Arty Bn and the 90th Eng Bn, which were believed to be located in the mountains west of the Bong Son Plain. In MR 6, documents and a PW identified the 130th Arty Bn. The battalion reportedly was formed from infiltration groups in Phuoc Long Province and moved to Binh Thuan Province in September. Additionally, PWs and documents confirmed the existence of the 200C NVA Sapper Bn in Binh Thuan Province. PWs from the 810th LF Bn and 840th MF Bn revealed that increased emphasis was being placed on sapper tactics in MR 6.

(S) III Corps Tactical Zone: Enemy-initiated activity was characterized by low intensity attacks-by-fire and limited ground probes. Elements of three divisions were identified during the month in the northern three provinces of III CTZ. The 9th VC Div was deployed in War Zone "C"; with the 272d VC Regt in western War Zone "C", the 95C NVA Regt in the central portion of the War Zone, and the 271st VC Regt in the eastern sector. Documents captured southeast of Thien Ngan Special Forces Camp identified the 3d Bn, 272nd VC Regt, and the 34th Arty Bn, 96th NVA Arty Regt, which might have been supporting elements of the 272d VC Regt. Furthermore, documents captured following a light contact west of FSB CAROLYN identified the regiment's 18th AA Co. Elements of the 271st VC Regt were believed to be targeted against fire support bases in eastern War Zone "C". Documents captured in the vicinity of FSB VICKY identified the regiment's C18 AA Co and 1st Bn. The 2d Bn was identified by documents captured northeast of FSB IKE. Elements of the 271st VC Regt were probably involved in a 5 Dec contact southwest of FSB JAMIE resulting in 20 enemy KIA, and in a series of contacts northwest of the fire support base on 6 - 9 Dec, resulting in a total of 101 enemy KIA. The 95C NVA Regt probably remained targeted against the FSB CAROLYN area. The 7th NVA Div was deployed in the northern Binh Long and northwestern Phuoc Long Province border area. Elements of the 141st NVA Regt were identified by captured documents following a 27 Dec contact northwest of Loc Ninh which resulted in 80 enemy KIA. Prisoners and documents captured following two 15 Dec contacts southeast of Bu Dop, which resulted in 56 enemy KIA, identified elements of the 209th NVA Regt. Documents captured on 19 Dec northeast of Bu Dop identified the 2d and 3d Bns and the regiment's Signal Company and revealed that as of 12 Dec the duty strength of the

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2d Bn was 130 men. The low strength of the battalion was of particular significance because the 209th NVA Regt remained out of contact from early September until its relocation to the Bu Dop area. It was possible that the relatively low level of tactical activity by the regiment might have been an effort to limit casualties until replacements were received. The 165th NVA Regt might have been undergoing a period of refitting and retraining since the regiment was not identified in contact during the month. The 5th VC Div probably remained deployed in an area from the Cambodian border north of Bu Dop to central Phuoc Long Province. The 174th NVA Regt was probably deployed in central Phuoc Long Province. Although not identified in contact during the month, elements of the regiment may have been involved in a 30 Dec contact east of Song Be which resulted in 29 enemy KIA. The 275th VC Regt was probably deployed in north central Phuoc Long Province. Elements of the regiment were probably involved in four contacts on 11 and 12 Dec northeast of Song Be, in which 93 enemy were KIA. The 275th VC Regt may also have been involved in three 30 Dec contacts northeast of Song Be in which 33 enemy were KIA. In MR 7, enemy-initiated activity was light. The battalions of the 33d NVA Regt were believed to be operating in the area south of Dinh Tuan and north of Xuan Loc. Documents and a 26 Nov rallier indicated that the regiment planned operations during the Winter-Spring Campaign against the pacification program in Long Khanh Province. Elements of the 33d NVA Regt were probably involved in a 2 Dec contact southwest of Dinh Tuan, which resulted in 20 enemy KIA. The 274th VC Regt probably remained deployed in the vicinity of BA 303. Enemy activity in the subregions was characterized by scattered, low intensity attacks-by-fire. In SR 1, a PW indicated that elements of the 101st NVA Regt were engaged in logistical activities north of the Michelin Plantation. Northeast of Ben Luc, US Forces captured an enemy radio intercept team, whose intercept efforts were directed against both US and ARVN communications. In SR 2, on 30 Dec, the 267th VC MF Bn sustained 22 KIA in a contact southwest of Trang Bang. In SR 3, documents captured northwest of Can Giuoc indicated that the GVN's gains would be negated by implementing COSVN Resolution 9. PWs from the 508th VC MF Bn revealed that the battalion had an area of operation along the southern boundary of the Capital Military District and was targeted against the pacification effort. In the same general area, elements of the 520th VC MF Bn were probably involved in a 14 Dec contact, which resulted in 19 enemy KIA. In SR 4, documents captured southeast of Nhan Trach identified the 8th Sapper/Swimmer Bn. In SR 5, documents captured southeast of Chon Thanh identified the Dong Nai Regt. In Saigon, terrorist activity increased, with 13 incidents being reported. At the end of December, major enemy units in III CTZ were engaging in logistical activities and attempting to remain out of contact.

(S) IV Corps Tactical Zone: The enemy-initiated Phase II of his Winter-Spring Campaign in the Delta with 43 attacks-by-fire and four ground assaults during the night of 2 Dec. Elements of the 88th NVA Regt suffered 160 KIA during a 3 Dec attack on the Tong Khot district town, 19km northwest of Moc Hoa in Kien Tuong Province. A PW captured following the attack stated that he believed the 88th NVA Regt was to operate in MR 2. The PW provided the first confirmation of the regiment's relocation from III CTZ. Enemy documents taken from two enemy KIA in a Special Forces ambush, 5 km east of the Vinh Gia Special Forces Camp on 17 Dec, gave indication of the relocation from III to IV CTZ of elements of the 101st NVA Regt. The documents provided inconclusive evidence of the entire regiment's presence in the Delta, but strongly suggested its appearance was imminent. The D-3 Regt appeared to be returning to its old area of operation along the Vinh Binh/Vinh Long Province border after a period of refitting and retraining in Vinh Binh Province. Elsewhere in MR 5, elements of the D-1, D-2, and 273d VC Regts were concentrated in BA 483, where they had been avoiding contact after suffering heavy casualties in November. Correlating indications were received from PWs, Hoi Chanh, and captured enemy documents concerning the climaxing phase to the enemy's Winter-Spring Campaign in the Delta. 470

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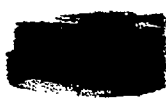
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CHAPTER IV

US AND FREE WORLD FORCES

COMMAND AND CONTROL

(S) Command and control of the war and of US and other FWMA forces in RVN remained essentially unchanged in 1969. This was no more than a reflection of the fact that the troop buildup and expansion was complete. Only minor changes to the organization existing at the beginning of 1969 were made during the year. The command and control relationships of the USMACV to higher headquarters, the US Mission, component and subordinate commanders, senior USMACV advisors, FWMAF, and the RVNAF are shown in Figures IV-1 through IV-6.

(S) United States governmental activities in RVN were under the overall supervision of the Ambassador. The US Mission Council, which was designed to achieve US objectives in the RVN, was composed of: US Ambassador (Chief); the Deputy Ambassador; COMUSMACV; DEPCOMUSMACV for CORDS; Director, USAID; Director JUSPAO; and the Special Assistant to the US Ambassador.

(S) COMUSMACV had three broad functional areas of command responsibility. These included: the component commands, tactical ground forces, and advisory groups. MACV was a subordinate unified command of PACOM. The component commands -- USARV, NAVFORV, 7AF, and III MAF were under the operational control of COMUSMACV, who was also CG, USARV. Command of USARV was exercised through the Deputy, CG, USARV.

(S) The CINCPACFLT provided all US naval forces in RVN. The 7th Fleet provided combat support such as naval gunfire, two special landing forces (USMC battalion landing teams), and tactical air. US Naval Forces, Vietnam, provided coastal surveillance and conducted riverine operations in addition to providing common item support for all US and FWMAF in I CTZ.

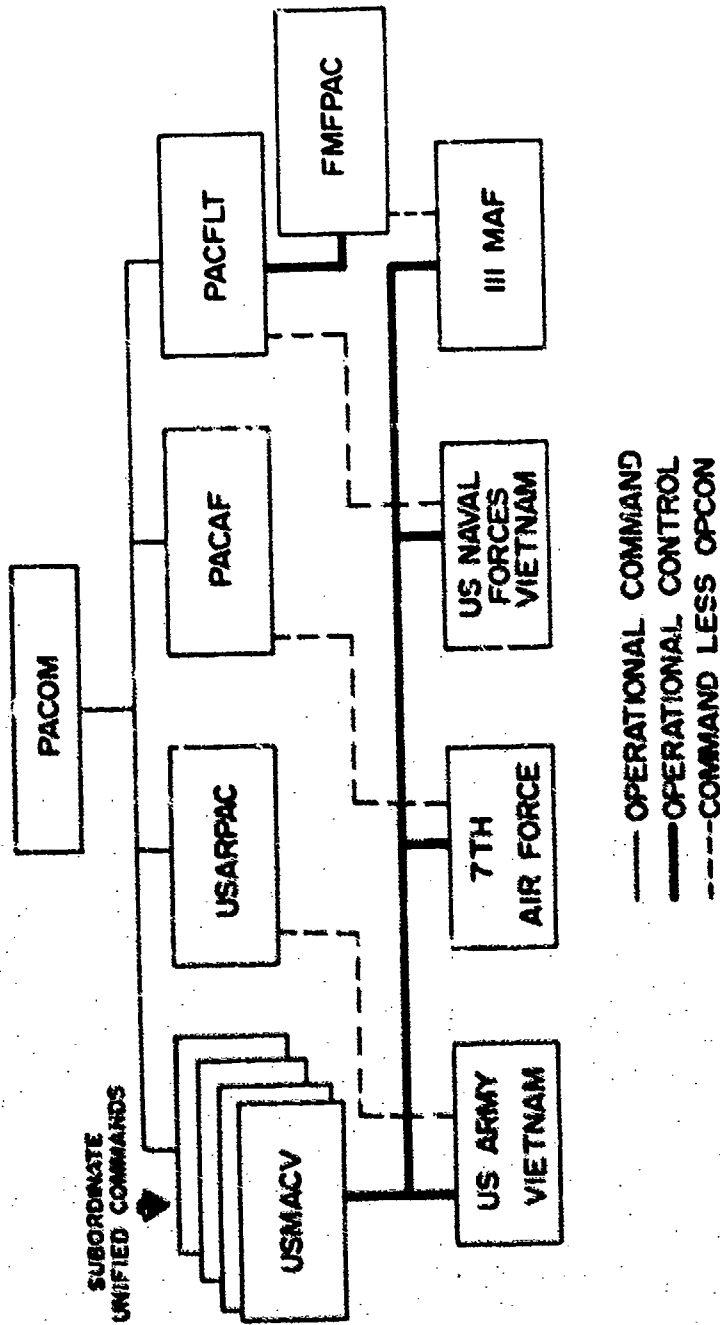
(S) Seventh Air Force units stationed in RVN were used primarily for in-country support. Additionally, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) provided combat support to MACV and the components.

(S) The major tactical ground force headquarters were III MAF, I Field Force, Vietnam (I FFORCEV), II Field Force, Vietnam (II FFORCEV), and since 8 Apr, the Delta Military Assistance Command (DMAC), Republic of Korea Forces, Vietnam (ROKFV), was a major separate command which had a relationship of coordination and cooperation with the US forces. For example CG, III MAF's relationship with the 2d ROK Marine Bde was one of coordination and cooperation through CG, ROKV. The CG, I FFORCEV had the same relationship with respect to the 3d ROK Capital Division and the 9th ROK Division.

(S) The XXIV Corps, established in 1968, was a corps-size headquarters organized to control the large number of units operating in the two northern provinces and the critical DMZ area of I CTZ. It functioned under the operational control of CG, III MAF.

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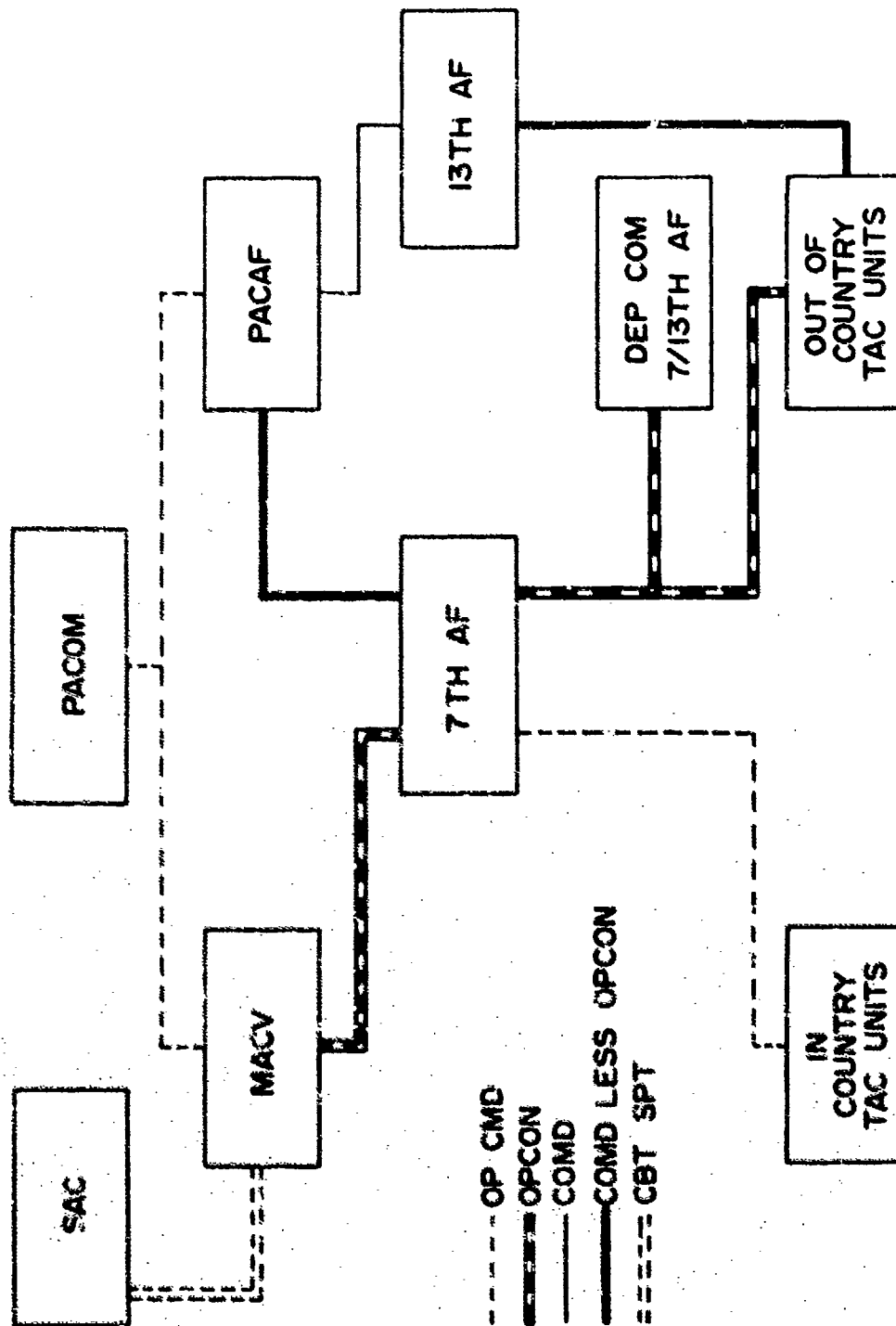
PACOM COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS



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FIGURE IV-1

AIR FORCE COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

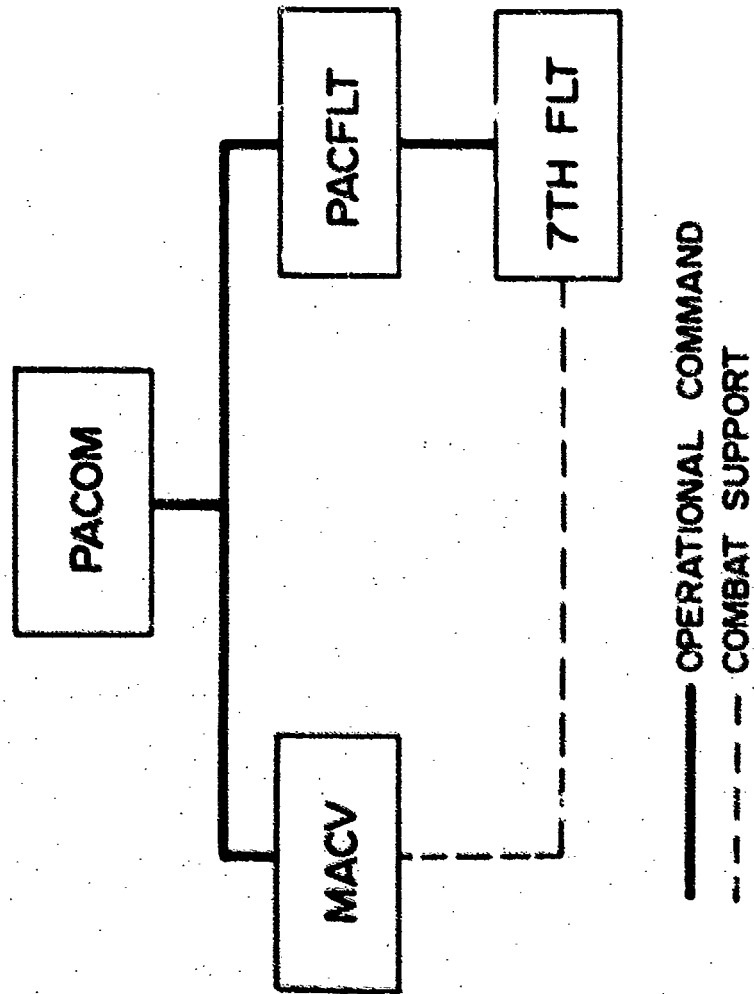
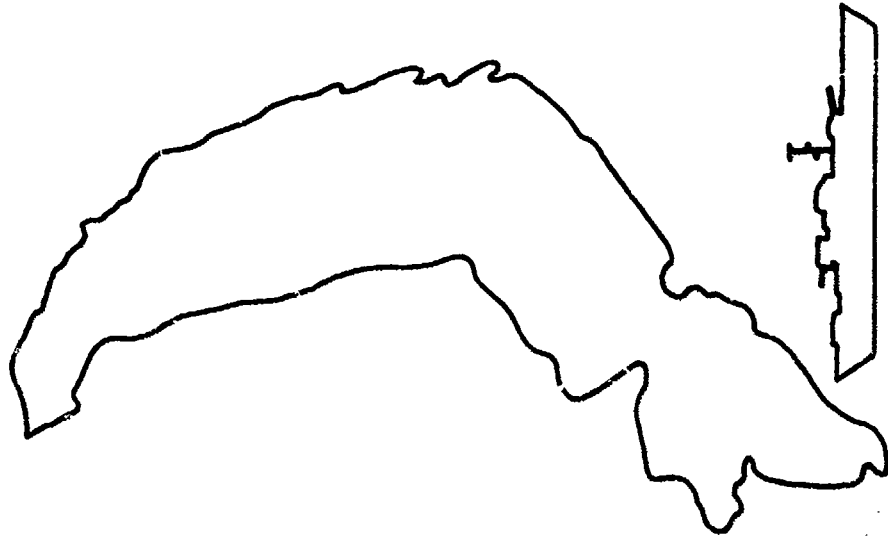


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FIGURE IV-2

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NAVAL COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

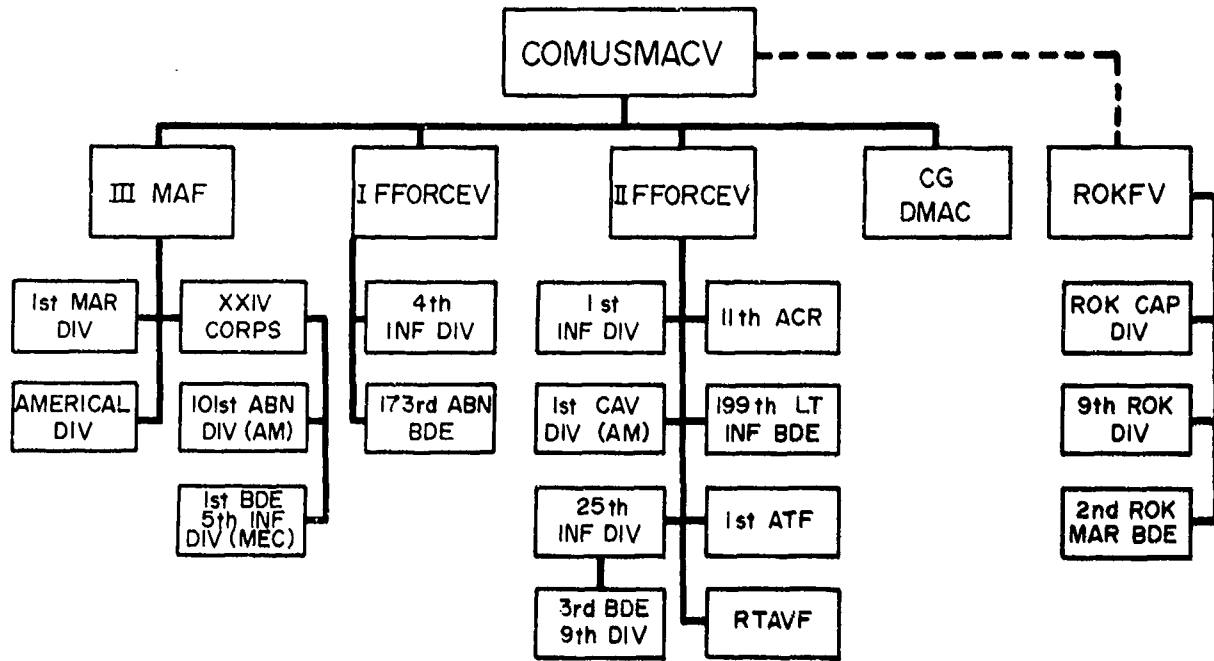


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FIGURE IV-3

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TACTICAL GROUND FORCES



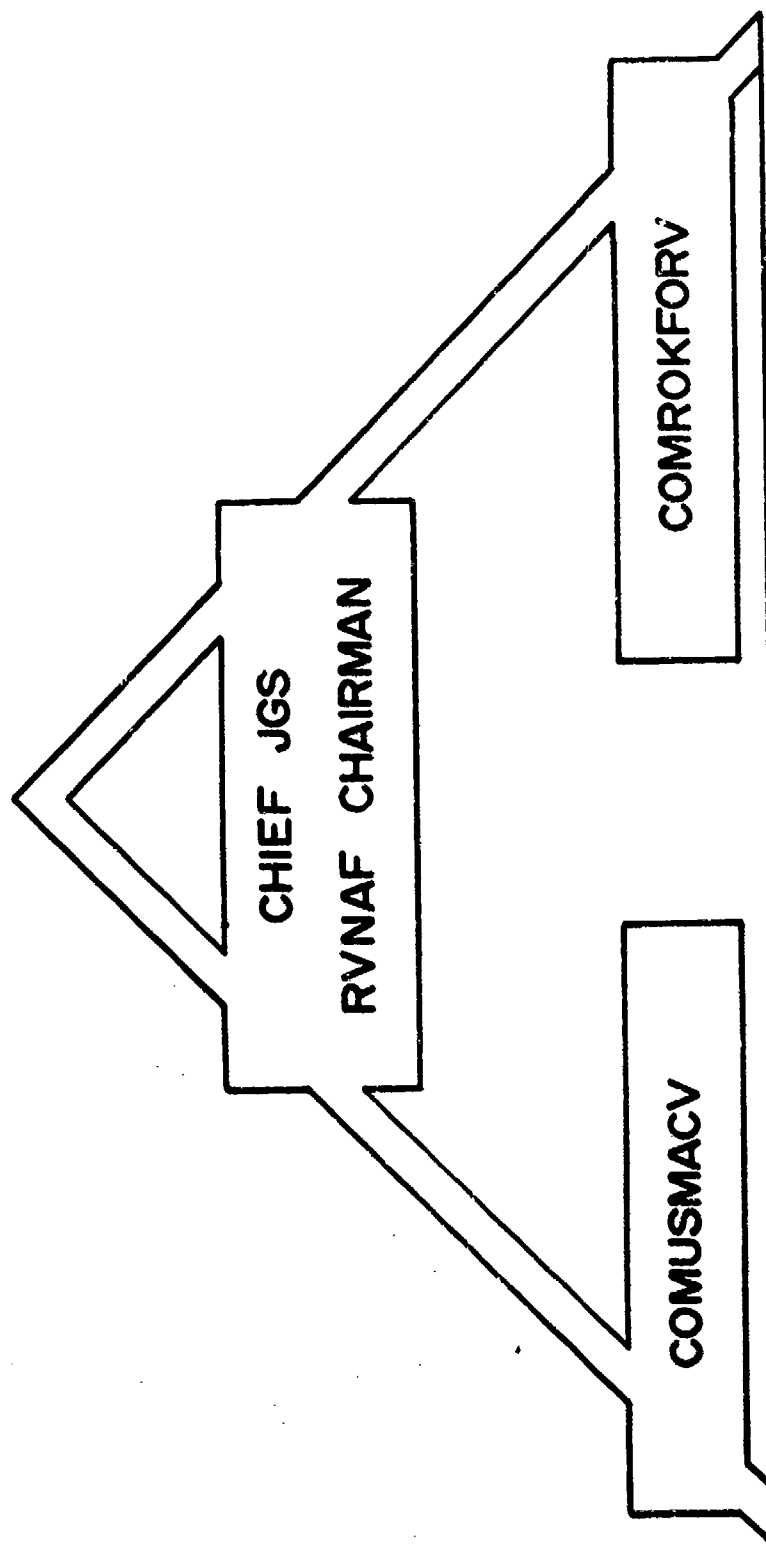
----- COORDINATION

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FIGURE IV-4

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE POLICY COUNCIL

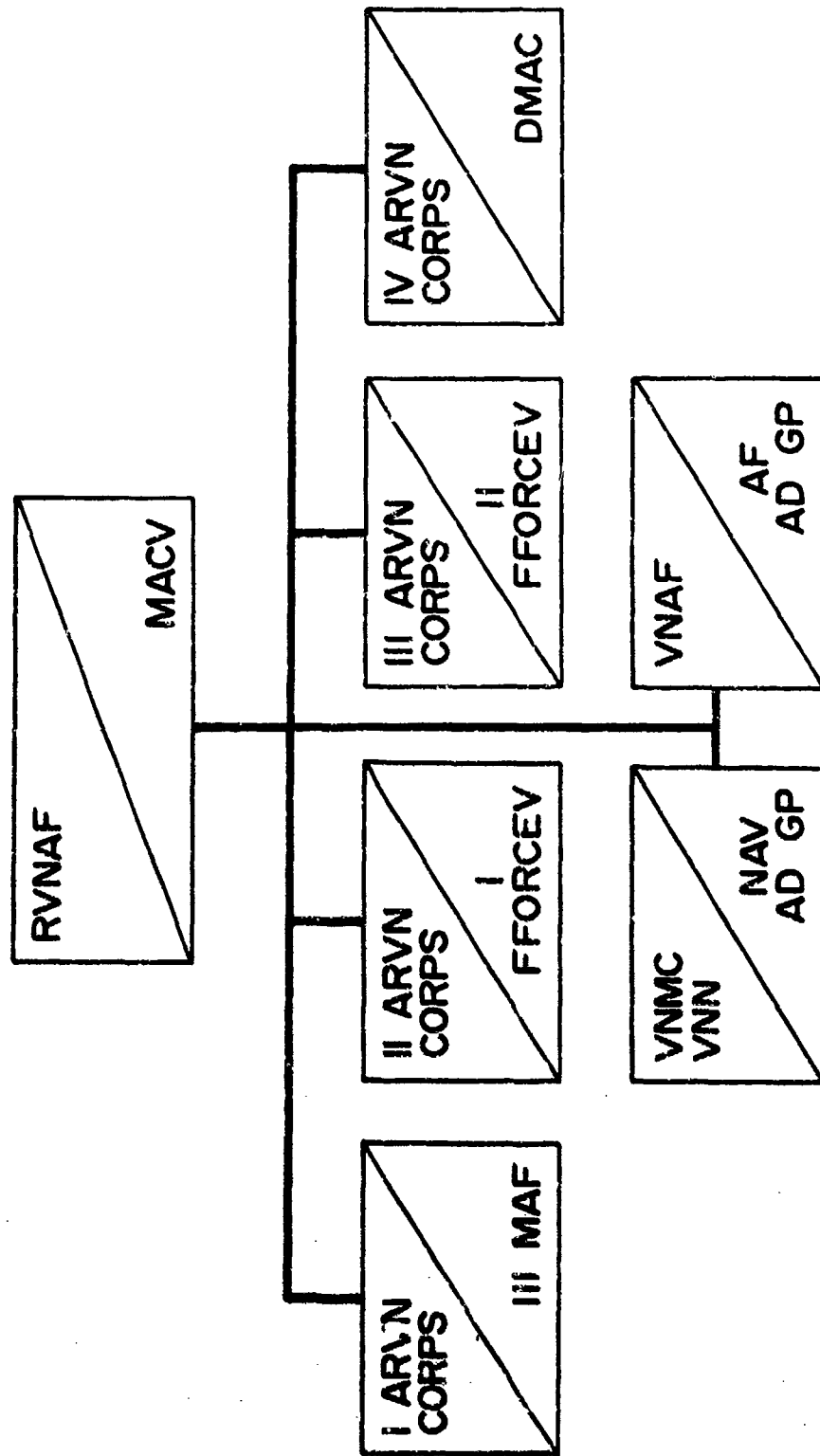
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FIGURE IV-5

ADVISORY PROGRAM



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FIGURE IV-6

(S) Free World Military Assistance Policy Councils had been established to coordinate and control actions of the FWMAF. Each council consisted of the Chief, JGS as chairman, COMUSMACV, and the senior commander of the respective FWMAF command concerned as members. These councils coordinated the assignment of tasks and missions and assured mutual agreement between RVNAF (as agent of the GVN), USMACV, and the forces concerned. In practice, the councils rarely met in formal session as most problems were solved through normal staff channels; however, arrangements provided councils for ROK forces, the Philippine Civic Action Group, and the Republic of China Military Assistance Group. On the other hand, combat and combat support forces of the Australian Task Force and the Royal Thailand Volunteer Force, were under the operational control of II FFORCEV. The New Zealand combat and combat support forces were in turn, under the operational control of the Australians.

(S) The command relationship between MACV and RVNAF was founded on the principles of cooperation, coordination, and understanding. The RVN military structure was organized under the Minister of Defense with a Joint General Staff (JGS), similar to the JCS. Reporting directly to the JGS were the commanders of the Vietnamese Navy (VNN), Air Force (VNAF), Army (ARVN), and Marine Corps (VNMC), General Reserve units, RF/PF, Vietnamese Special Forces, and I, II, III, and IV CTZs. The province chiefs were military officers and they reported to the CTZ commanders on military matters.

(S) The third functional areas of command was the advisory program. The Navy and Air Force Advisory Groups advised the RVNAF operational units and elements. In the IV CTZs, where US ground force commands were located, the advisory functions were the responsibility of the senior US tactical commander who had been designated the senior advisor. To assist in the discharge of this responsibility, these force commanders each had a deputy senior advisor, a deputy for CORDS, Army advisory groups, and CORDS advisors assigned to their operational control. The command relationships were not changed upon relocation of the 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div when there were no US ground troops remaining in IV CTZ and CG, DMAC, was the senior advisor. In all cases, the relationship between US advisors and their Vietnamese counterparts was one of advice and assistance.

US FORCES

General

(C) US Military force strength increased by 61,231 personnel during 1969. (See Figure IV-7). Strengths by service at the beginning and end of the year were as follows:

	<u>1 Jan</u>	<u>31 Dec</u>
Air Force	58,029	58,463
Army	359,313	330,648
Coast Guard	441	433
Marines	80,716	55,039
Navy	37,541	30,236
TOTAL	536,040	474,819

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US STRENGTH
1964-1969

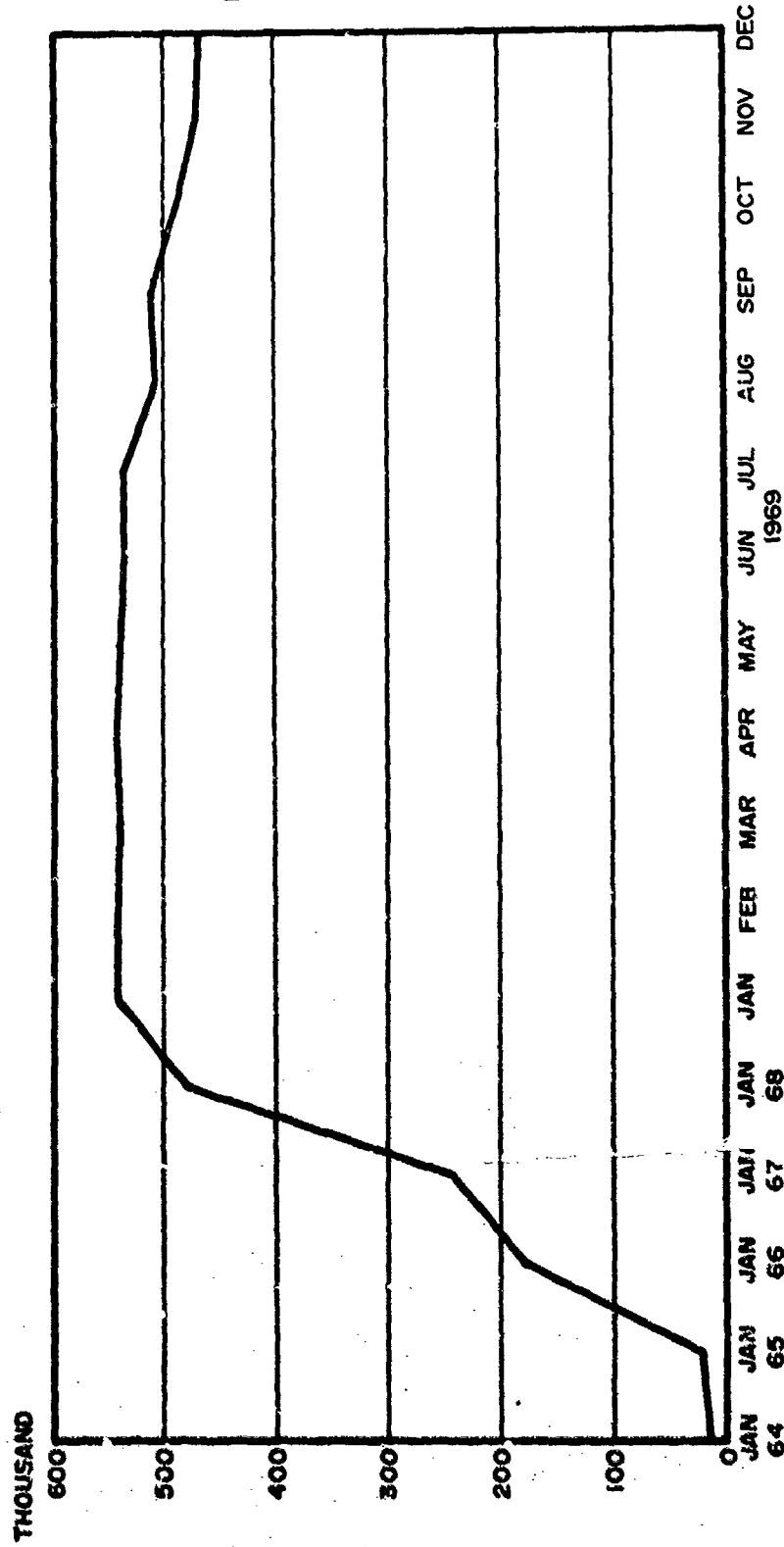
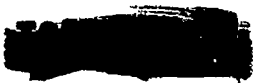


FIGURE IV-7

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(C) The number of US maneuver battalions in-country decreased correspondingly during the year. At the beginning of the year, there were 110 maneuver battalions in-country -- 89 Army and 21 Marine. As 1969 ended the number had decreased to 93 -- 81 Army and 12 Marine. ¹

(C) Early in the year the proximity of the current MACV chargeable personnel strength to the authorized space ceiling (SEASIA Deployment Program 6) reached the point where it was cause for concern and this situation indicated that safeguards were required. Accordingly, COMUSMACV requested all component commanders to project anticipated chargeable strength 60 days in advance. When projected chargeable strength was within 1,000 of the USARV space ceiling and 500 of the III MAF, NAVFORV, and 7AF space ceilings, the projected date, duration, and estimated strength were to be reported to MACV. The respective service ceilings as of 5 Mar were established as follows:

USARV	-	368,285
III MAF	-	82,259
NAVFORV	-	37,432
7AF	-	61,524

The MACV danger point was established as a chargeable strength of 2,500 below the MACV space ceiling of 549,500. ²

Changes in Headquarters MACV

(C) The authorized strength for each MACV JTD as of 1 Jan and 31 Dec was as shown below. Year-end figures are in parentheses. (See glossary for abbreviation meanings.)

<u>JTD</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Total</u>
Hq MACV Staff	1,048(984)	1,068(1,013)	15(16)	2,131(2,013)
ARPA (OSD Unit)	7(7)	4(4)	3(3)	14(14)
AFVN	13(13)	168(162)	1(1)	182(176)
SOG	135(128)	227(265)	0(1)	362(394)
FAE*	3,850(1,886)	5,765(3,100)	1(1)	9,616(4,987)
JUSPAO	42(50)	60(57)	2(2)	104(109)
AFGP	189(206)	262(288)	-	451(494)
NAVADGRP	282(360)	279(603)	1(1)	562(964)
CORDS*	224(2,324)	159(3,830)	5(65)	388(6,219)

*In January, JCS approved a revised CORDS JTD. This action transferred all province and district advisory teams from the FAE JTD to the CORDS JTD. ³

Redeployment of US Troops from RVN

(TS) On 10 Jun, upon completion of the US-RVN Midway Conference, President Nixon announced that 25,000 US troops would be withdrawn from the RVN starting within 30 days. These



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troops would be replaced by RVN troops, and the redeployment (Operation KEYSTONE EAGLE) was to be completed by the end of August. Forces to redeploy would include approximately 15,400 Army troops, 8,400 Marines (8,000 to Okinawa and 400 to Japan), and 1,200 Navy personnel. The Phase I redeployment package consisted of the 9th Inf Div, minus a reinforced brigade, from northern IV CTZ and the 9th Regimental Landing Team (RLT) from the 3d Mar Div in northern I CTZ. The criteria used by COMUSMACV in making up the package were:

1. Lead off with first rate US combat units to make the reduction credible to the enemy, the US public, and to the people and Government of the RVN.
2. Reduce US presence in areas where strong ARVN units, capable of effectively employing US tactical air, artillery, and helicopter support, are available to assume responsibility for all or part of the ground fighting.
3. Reduce in areas where identifiable progress in pacification, as well as in military operations, is being made.
4. Reduce in areas where nearby US forces could readily reinforce in emergencies.
5. Reduce insofar as possible in other than III CTZ.⁴

(C) In preparation for this redeployment, CINCPAC hosted a planning conference at his headquarters on 12 Jun. Attendance included representation from the DOD, JCS, PACOM, STRICOM, MACV, and the four component service headquarters. The agenda included movement planning, destination and disposition, concepts of personnel management, public affairs and psychological operations, and ADP applications. Subsequently, a movement conference of transportation agencies was held in Hawaii on 19-20 Jun to finalize transportation requirements.⁵ (Further details on the redeployment are covered in the appropriate sections following.)

(C) In early August, based on instructions received from the JCS, the service projections for 31 Aug were reported as follows:

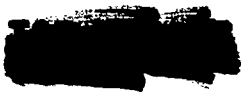
Army	347,000
Navy/Coast Guard	35,700
Air Force	60,300
Marine Corps	<u>72,500</u>
TOTAL	515,500

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Component commanders were directed to take all necessary actions within the scope of their authority to ensure that the above strength ceilings were met by 31 Aug. ⁶

(C) The redeployment started slowly, and, at first, relatively little progress was made in reducing in-country strength to the announced goal of 515,500. By 23 Aug, a reduction of almost 15,000 from the last reported strength was still required to reach the 31 Aug goal. As a result of close scrutiny and discussion by the news media, there was intense high level interest in the strength reduction, and doubt was raised that the goal would be reached by the deadline and maintained under the ceiling figure. In view of this high level interest, SECDEF directed that a daily strength projection, by service, for the remainder of August and the first two weeks of September be provided, together with details as to how the strength reduction was to be achieved.

(C) COMUSMACV's response projected a MACV strength of 513,701 by 31 Aug and 513,094 by 15 Sep. The Navy and Coast Guard were already below their 35,700 authorized strength and they continued to remain under strength. The other services cancelled personnel requisitions to permit no more than 7,177 replacements for the 17,178 DEROs losses which occurred prior to 31 Aug and used selective early rotation of 5,000 additional personnel in order to effect the required reduction. ⁷ By 31 Aug, however, chargeable US military strength in RVN was 509,569. This included 342,644 USA, 34,199 USN, 72,355 USMC, 59,886 USAF, and 485 USCG. Also, at this time, SEASIA Deployment Program 7 became effective and reduced the military strength/space ceiling by 25,000 to 524,500, reflecting the troop replacement announced on 10 Jun. ⁸ Component strength/space ceilings were adjusted as follows:

<u>SERVICE</u>	<u>REDUCTION</u>	<u>REVISED CEILING</u>
Army	15,390	352,674
Navy/Coast Guard	1,222	36,232
Marines	8,388	73,973
Air Force	<u>No change</u>	<u>61,621</u>
TOTAL	25,000	524,500

(TS) Phase I redeployment was completed as scheduled on 31 Aug. The overall military situation was then evaluated and on 16 Oct the President announced further troop reductions. The second increment of redeployment (Operation KEYSTONE CARDINAL) lowered the space ceiling an additional 40,500, for a total of 65,500 from Vietnam War high of 549,500. This reflected an acceleration of the Vietnamization program as 15,000 additional spaces were added to the Phase II drawdown. The President directed the following spaces be redeployed by 15 Dec:

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<u>SERVICE</u>	<u>REDUCTION</u>	<u>REVISED CEILING</u>
Army	14,082	338,592
Navy	5,412	30,820
Air Force	2,541	59,080
Marine Corps	<u>18,465</u>	<u>55,508</u>
TOTAL	40,500	484,000

The major combat and combat support units to be redeployed were:

- 3d Mar Div (-) with supporting elements of 1st MAW
- 4th, 5th 11th, 53d, and 62d Navy Mobile Const Bns
- 1st Bn, 40th Art
- 6th Bn, 15th Art
- 70th Engr Bn
- 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div
- 8th TAC Bomber Sqdn

(C) On 15 Dec, the target date for completion of Phase II redeployment, the President made the initial announcement for Phase III redeployment. Phase III, known as Operation KEYSTONE BLUEJAY, called for a space reduction of an additional 50,000 troops, such action to be completed by 15 Apr 70. The new personnel authorization in RVN would be 434,000. SECDEF indicated that most of the 50,000 troops would not be withdrawn until after Tet, i. e., early February 1970. ⁹

US Air Force

(C) The Air Force was not affected by the Phase I redeployment and in Phase II had no units, as such, redeployed to CONUS. All units or parts of units were inactivated in-country. One tactical bomber squadron (TBS), two tactical fighter squadrons (TFS), and two special operations squadrons (SOS) were inactivated. The two TFSs never arrived in-country; the spaces on the force structure were merely eliminated. All affected support and service elements were inactivated in-country. ¹⁰

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
560th TFS	202		Never in country
68th TFS	194		Never in country
37th TFW	22	15 Dec	Space Reduction



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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
37th FDM	230	15 Dec	Space Reduction
37th AVN	101	15 Dec	Space Reduction
421st Mun Sq	77	15 Dec	Space Reduction
37th CSG	89	15 Dec	Space Reduction
8th TB Sq	225	15 Dec	Deactivate
35th TFW	10	15 Dec	Space Reduction
35th AVN Sq	17	15 Dec	Space Reduction
35th FDM Sq	57	15 Dec	Space Reduction
435th Mun Sq	17	15 Dec	Space Reduction
35th COS Gp	71	15 Dec	Space Reduction
35th DIS	4	15 Dec	Space Reduction
5th SOP Sq	179	15 Dec	Deactivate
14th SOP Wg	13	21 Nov	Space Reduction
14th COS Gp	291	21 Nov	Space Reduction
14th DIS	25	21 Nov	Space Reduction
14th FDM	34	21 Nov	Space Reduction
Det 1, 620th Tac Sqdn	126	15 Oct	Deactivate
Det 1, 903d AMW Sq	39	15 Nov	Deactivate
6th SOP Sq/Al	144	15 Nov	Deactivate
633d SOP Wg	49	15 Dec	Space Reduction
633d Cln Sq	175	15 Dec	Space Reduction
633d COS Gp	38	15 Dec	Space Reduction
633d DIS	4	15 Dec	Space Reduction
Hq, 7AF	100	21 Nov	Space Reduction
37th Dis DS	8	21 Nov	Space Reduction

The USAF space ceiling in RVN was 59,080 at the close of 1969.

US Army

(C) At the beginning of 1969, the US Army had 359,313 personnel in-country. Major combat units and their maneuver battalions were as follows:

<u>ARMY DIVISIONS</u>		<u>BDES, REGTS, OTHERS</u>	
1st Cav Div (Ambl)	9	1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech)	3
101st Abn Div (Ambl)	10	199th Inf Bde	4
1st Inf Div	9	3d Bde, 82d Abn Div	3
4th Inf Div	10	173d Abn Bde	4
9th Inf Div	10	11th Armd Cav Regt	3
23d Inf (Americal) Div	11	1st Sqdn, 1st Cav	1
25th Inf Div	10	2d Sqdn, 1st Cav	1
Sub Total	69	1st Bn (Mech), 50th Inf	1
		Sub Total	20

Grand Total: 89 Maneuver Battalions



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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 howitzer battalions, and 175mm guns. There were also four air defense artillery battalions, 20 combat engineer and 15 construction engineer battalions, 89 other type battalions, and 134 aviation companies in-country. "1

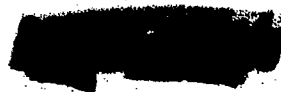
Troop Redeployment

(C) Subsequent to President Nixon's 10 Jun Midway announcement, DA published a detailed letter of instructions for the redeployment.

1. The Army forces to be redeployed from RVN (Phase I) would total 15,400 Army manpower spaces -- 7,400 to Hawaii for retention in the Army force structure and 8,000 to CONUS for demobilization or inactivation. The Phase I redeployment began on 8 Jul and was completed on 28 Aug. The following units were involved:

Active Army Units

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
HHC 9th Div (-)	156	27 Aug	Hawaii
HHB 9th Div Arty	213	18 Aug	Hawaii
1/11th Arty Bn (105 T)	526	14 Aug	Hawaii
1/84th Arty Bn (155/8")	616	18 Aug	Hawaii
HHC 9th Div SUPCOM	37	27 Aug	Hawaii
9th Abn Bn (-)	237	23 Aug	Hawaii
9th CS Bn (S&T) (-)	409	23 Aug	Hawaii
9th Med Bn (-)	229	19 Aug	Hawaii
9th Sig Bn (-)	390	20 Aug	Hawaii
15th Engr Bn (-)	576	24 Aug	Hawaii
709th CS Bn	607	21 Aug	Hawaii
9th AG Co (-)	353	26 Aug	Hawaii
9th MP Co	149	27 Aug	Hawaii
9th MI Det (-)	35	18 Aug	Hawaii
HHC 1st Bde, 9th Div	128	13 Aug	Hawaii
2/39 Inf Bn	920	4 Aug	Hawaii
3/39 Inf Bn	920	8 Aug	Hawaii
4/39 Inf Bn	920	30 Jul	Hawaii
HHC 2d Bde, 9th Div	189	18 Jul	Ft Lewis
3/47th Inf Bn	920	15-19 Jul	Ft Lewis
4/47th Inf Bn	814	14 Jul	Ft Lewis
3/60th Inf Bn	814	8 Jul	Ft Lewis
3/34th Arty Bn (105 T)	468	26 Jul	Ft Lewis
Co E, 75th Inf (Rgr) (-)	57	12 Aug	Ft Lewis
1097th TC Co (Mdm Boat)	246	26 Jul	Ft Lewis
65th Inf Plt (CT) (-)	13	19 Jul	Ft Lewis
Element, 9th Med Bn	57	18 Aug	Ft Lewis
Element, 9th Sig Bn	149	18 Aug	Ft Lewis
Element, 15th Engr Bn	231	26 Aug	Ft Lewis



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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
Element, 709th CS Bn	125	24 Aug	Ft Lewis
Element, 9th Avn Bn	186	23 Aug	Ft Lewis
584th MI Det	13	18 Aug	Ft Lewis
18th BI Det (PI)	5	21 Jul	Ft Lewis
22d BI Det (PI)	13	19 Jul	Ft Lewis
6/56 AD Bn (Hawk)	751	2 Aug	Ft Lewis
86th Engr Bn (Cbt)	812	15 Aug	Ft Lewis
70th Engr Co	113	30 Jul	Ft Lewis

Reserve Component Units

650th Med Det	36	16 Jul	Ft Campbell
74th Med Hosp (Field)	184	14 Aug	Ft Dix
126th CS Co (S&S)	148	10 Aug	Ft L. Wood
173d QM Co (Petrl)	132	6 Aug	Ft Benning
305th Med Det	7	2 Aug	Ft Dix
311th Med Hosp	194	10 Aug	Ft Knox
312th Med Hosp (Evac)	243	2 Aug	Ft Bragg
313th Med Det	7	2 Aug	Ft Meade
316th Med Det	8	14 Aug	Ft Dix
319th Trans Co (Light Trk)	133	14 Aug	Ft Gordon
336th Ord Co (HHC)	124	8 Aug	Ft Hood
378th Med Det	7	2 Aug	Ft Campbell
452d CS Co (GS)	215	2 Aug	Ft Riley
472d Med Det	14	2 Aug	Ft Meade
630th Trans Co (Mdm Trk)	183	3 Aug	Ft Dix
737th Trans Co (Mdm Trk Petrl)	183	11 Aug	Ft Lewis
889th Med Det	7	2 Aug	Ft Meade
950th AG Det (APU)	13	6 Aug	Ft Knox
978th AG Det (APU)	13	2 Aug	Ft Hood
1011th CS Co (S&S)	162	10 Aug	Ft Riley

A decision to inactivate the units originally designated for PACOM Reserve in Hawaii was made midway in the redeployment process. The decision was subsequently reversed, but not before its impact upon the redeployment units was felt. The Army units which redeployed to Hawaii were eventually deactivated there. (See Annex D for additional details and lessons learned on USA redeployment.)

2. The first unit to redeploy was the 3d Bn, 60th Inf (part of the 2d Bde, 9th Inf Div), which moved on 8 Jul by air to McChord AFB, Washington, paraded in Seattle, and moved to Ft Lewis, where it was reduced to zero strength. After the remainder of the 2d Bde closed at Ft Lewis, a ceremonial element formed of Regular Army personnel from organizations within the brigade escorted the colors to Ft Riley, Kansas, for the inactivation ceremony.

3. Personnel from Army Reserve and National Guard organizations in RVN were re-assembled into their original units in RVN. The units were then moved to the transfer station

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nearest their home stations where personnel out-processing was accomplished. The units then moved to their home station for appropriate demobilization ceremonies. 12

Redesignation of Long Range Patrol Units

(U) In January, DA directed the redesignation of Long Range Patrol companies and detachments as ranger companies. The 75th Infantry (Merrill's Marauders) was selected as the parent regiment for all DA authorized ranger companies. The Ranger Training Command, US Army Infantry School, was designated custodian of the 75th Infantry colors and trophies. 13

Reorganization of the 23d Inf (Americal) Div

(C) On 15 Feb, the 23d Inf (Americal) Div was reorganized under the infantry division MTOE to standardize it along the same lines as the 1st, 4th, and 25th Inf Divs. The division had evolved from TF OREGON which had been composed of the 11th, 196th, and 198th Inf Bdes, deployed to RVN as separate brigades. They had been organized into the Americal Division on 25 Sep 67. (See 1968 Command History page 142.) The organization under standard MTOE reduced the combat service elements of the division by approximately 750 spaces which were redistributed to other units within USARV.

(C) The following units were relieved as organic elements of units as indicated and were re-assigned as organic elements of the 23d Inf (Americal) Div:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>RELIEVED FROM</u>
6th Bn, 11th Arty	11th Inf Bde
1st Bn, 14th Arty	198th Inf Bde
3d Bn, 82d Arty	196th Inf Bde
1st Bn, 20th Inf	11th Inf Bde
3d Bn, 1st Inf	11th Inf Bde
4th Bn, 3d Inf	11th Inf Bde
4th Bn, 21st Inf	11th Inf Bde
2d Bn, 1st Inf	196th Inf Bde
3d Bn, 21st Inf	196th Inf Bde
4th Bn, 31st Inf	196th Inf Bde
1st Bn, 6th Inf	198th Inf Bde
1st Bn, 46th Inf	198th Inf Bde
1st Bn, 52d Inf	198th Inf Bde
5th Bn, 46th Inf	198th Inf Bde

(C) The following units were relieved from assignment as organic elements of units as indicated and designated as separate units:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>RELIEVED FROM</u>
Trp F, 8th Cav	23d Inf Div
Trp E, 1st Cav	11th Inf Bde
Trp F, 17th Cav	196th Inf Bde
Trp H, 17th Cav	198th Inf Bde

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(C) The 11th, 196th, and 198th Inf Bde, and the 1st Sqdn, 1st Cav remained attached to the 23d Inf (Americal) Div. The 6th Bn, 31st Inf was relieved from assignment as an organic element of the 196th Inf Bde and was assigned as an organic element of the 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div. The 6th, 8th, and 9th Spt Bns were relieved from assignment as organic elements of the 11th, 196th, and 198th Inf Bdes respectively and inactivated. The headquarters and headquarters companies of the brigades were retained in the division for continuation of their history and lineage. Other units assigned or attached to the division were reorganized to conform to the standardized MTOE or inactivated. The reorganization was accomplished using in-country resources. 14

(C) Army units which redeployed from RVN during Phase II (KEYSTONE CARDINAL) in most cases were inactivated in-country. The 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div; 1st Br, 40th FA; 1st Bn, 15th FA; and the 70th Engr Bn were reduced to color detachments which redeployed to CONUS for appropriate deactivation ceremonies. No Army units were returned to CONUS as complete units. Units affected by KEYSTONE CARDINAL were: 15

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
238th CS Co	175	21 Sep	CONUS
172d TC Co	183	27 Sep	CONUS
842d QM Co	233	30 Sep	CONUS
826th OD Co	223	2 Oct	CONUS
513th CS Co	275	3 Oct	CONUS
1002d CS Co	244	5 Oct	CONUS
107th SC Co	350	8 Oct	CONUS
295th OD Co	223	7 Oct	CONUS
HHD, 400th TC	56	15 Oct	Deactivate
HHC, 53d CS	95	15 Oct	Deactivate
448th AG Det	29	16 Oct	CONUS
23d Med Det	122	18 Oct	Deactivate
34th TC Plt	67	18 Oct	Deactivate
534th CS Plt	47	22 Oct	Deactivate
29th Med Hosp	300	22 Oct	Deactivate
520th Med Co	73	26 Oct	Deactivate
45th Med Det	7	30 Oct	Deactivate
29th TC Plt	41	30 Oct	Deactivate
202d Med Det	16	1 Nov	Deactivate
61st TC Co	167	1 Nov	Deactivate
HHC, 3th TC	36	1 Nov	Space Reduction
274th CS Plt	47	3 Nov	Deactivate
541st Med Det	16	3 Nov	Deactivate
362d SC Co	46	4 Nov	Space Reduction
SC Det, Tape Relay	50	5 Nov	Space Reduction
377th CS Co	183	5 Nov	CONUS
Hq Spt Comd Sqn	30	5 Nov	Space Reduction
240th Med Det	7	7 Nov	Deactivate
HHD, 54th FA	141	7 Nov	Deactivate
HHD, 108th FA	4	8 Nov	Space Reduction
D/87 Inf Co	139	8 Nov	Deactivate
272d MP Co	128	9 Nov	Space Reduction

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
SC Det, Tape Relay	15	10 Nov	Space Reduction
487th TC Det	6	10 Nov	Deactivate
488th TC Det	6	10 Nov	Deactivate
507th TC Gp	30	11 Nov	Space Reduction
564th TC Plt	46	12 Nov	Deactivate
8R/25 FA HHB	122	12 Nov	Space Reduction
245th Med Det	19	13 Nov	Deactivate
140th TC Det	2	14 Nov	Deactivate
74th Med HHL	36	15 Nov	Deactivate
41st FA HHB	141	15 Nov	Deactivate
324th SC Co	140	15 Nov	Deactivate
37th SC Bn, Co A	18	16 Nov	Space Reduction
1/40th FA Bn	505	19 Nov	CONUS
552d MP Co	147	20 Nov	Space Reduction
6/15th FA Bn	528	21 Nov	CONUS
79th FA	9	21 Nov	Deactivate
6th FA Det	9	21 Nov	Deactivate
CS Depot, Qui Nhon	24	22 Nov	Space Reduction
Hq I FFV, Scty Det	70	22 Nov	Deactivate
D/52d Inf Co	139	22 Nov	Deactivate
Hq Spt Comd-Crb	32	23 Nov	Space Reduction
CMD Spt Comd-Dng	23	24 Nov	Space Reduction
70th Engr Bn	812	29 Nov	CONUS
36th Med Hosp	305	28 Nov	Deactivate
CS Depot-Crb	221	29 Nov	Space Reduction
972d SC Bn HHC	127	29 Nov	Deactivate
ACTIV	10	29 Nov	Space Reduction
Elm MACSOG	8	29 Nov	Space Reduction
Elm MACV AFVN	12	29 Nov	Space Reduction
Elm MACV JUSPAO	11	29 Nov	Space Reduction
HQ USARV	134	30 Nov	Space Reduction
CMD Tac Area	23	30 Nov	Space Reduction
1st Log Hqs	49	30 Nov	Space Reduction
CMD CMAC	21	30 Nov	Space Reduction
Det AAFES, Army Elm	60	30 Nov	Space Reduction
3/82d Inf HHC	203	11 Dec	CONUS
52d CM Det	5	28 Oct	Deactivate
82d CS HHC	85	11 Dec	CONUS
A/82d AC Det	192	11 Dec	CONUS
B/82d Med Co	89	11 Dec	CONUS
C/82d CS Co	198	11 Dec	CONUS
B/1/17th Cav Trp	201	11 Dec	CONUS
C/307th Engr Co	165	11 Dec	CONUS
2/321st FA Bn	526	11 Dec	CONUS
0/75th Int Co	61	20 Nov	Deactivate
1/505th Inf Bn	920	11 Dec	CONUS
2/505th Inf Bn	920	11 Dec	CONUS



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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
1/508th Inf Bn	920	11 Dec	CONUS
518th MI Det	48	15 Nov	Deactivate
45th PI Det	5	11 Dec	Deactivate
405th AS Det	77	5 Dec	Deactivate
58th SC Co	102	30 Nov	Deactivate
SC Det, Tape Relay	193	5 Dec	Space Reduction
551st CS Co	183	14 Dec	Deactivate
553d CS Co	213	14 Dec	Deactivate
238th FA Det-RDR	1	8 Nov	Deactivate
USARV Patient Acct	800	14 Dec	Space Reduction
USARV Tdy Acct	200	14 Dec	Space Reduction
XXIV Corps Arty, HHB	22	8 Nov	Space Reduction
6/33d FAB	113	8 Nov	Space Reduction
F/26th FA TA Btry	5	8 Nov	Space Reduction
240th FA Det-RDR	1	8 Nov	Space Reduction
245th FA Det-RDR	1	8 Nov	Space Reduction

(C) The year end status of USARV major combat units and their maneuver battalions were:

<u>ARMY DIVISIONS</u>		<u>BDES, REGTS, OTHERS</u>	
1st Cav Div (Ambl)	9	1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech)	3
101st Abn Div (Ambl)	10	3d Bde, 9th Inf Div	4
1st Inf Div	9	11th Armd Cav Regt	3
4th Inf Div	10	173d Abn Bde	4
23d Inf (Americal) Div	11	199th Inf Bde	4
25th Inf Div	10	1st Bn (Mech), 50th Inf	1
Sub Total	59	1st Sqdn, 1st Cav	1
		2d Sqdr, 1st Cav	1
		3d Sqdn, 5th Cav	1
		Sub Total	22

Grand Total: 81 Maneuver Battalions

Supporting units were: twenty-eight 105mm howitzer battalions, ten 155mm howitzer battalions, four 155/8-inch howitzer battalions, three battalions each of 175mm and 8-inch howitzers/175mm. There were three ADA battalions, 16 combat engineer battalions, 14 construction engineer battalions, 84 other battalions, and 142 aviation companies. 16

US Marine Corps

(C) At the beginning of 1969, USMC strength in RVN was 80,716 in 21 maneuver battalions deployed throughout I CTZ. The authorized strength was 82,254.



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(C) Marine Corps strength remained constant during the first half of 1969 -- approximately 81,000. Subsequent to the Midway Conference on 8 Jun, it was announced that approximately 8,000 Marines would leave RVN during the Phase I Redeployment (KEYSTONE EAGLE). All units listed below redeployed to Okinawa with the exception of Marine Attack Squadron 334 which redeployed to Japan.

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>
1st Bn, 9th Mar	1,166	14 Jul
Co B (Rein), 3d Med Bn	42	15 Jul
Co A-C (Rein), 3d Motor Trans Bn	167	13 Jul
Co D (Rein), 11th Engr Bn	175	15 Jul
3d Anti-Tank Bn (C)	19	29 Jun
Co C (C) (Rein), 3d Tank Bn	74	13 Jul
Co C (Rein), 3d Shore Party Bn	144	15 Jul
Det, 3d Dental Co	1	13 Jul
1st AmTrac Bn	135	13 Jul
1st Armd Amphib Co	42	15 Jul
Hq Btry, Fld Arty Gp	24	15 Jul
Btry D, 2d Bn, 12th Mar	139	13 Jul
107 Btry, 2d Bn, 12th Mar	84	19 Jul
Co C, 11th Engr Bn	180	13 Jul
1st Search Light Btry	116	14 Jul
Det, Mar Air Traffic Control Unit	23	15 Jul
2d Bn, 9th Mar	1,166	1 Aug
Hq Co (-), 9th Mar	234	1 Aug
Co C (Rein), 3d Engr Bn	257	30 Jul
Det, Hq Btry, 12th Mar	21	31 Jul
Btry E, 2d Bn, 12th Mar	139	31 Jul
Hq Btry, 2d Bn, 12th Mar	161	31 Jul
3d Bn, 9th Mar	1,166	13 Aug
Btry F, 2d Bn, 12th Mar	139	13 Aug
Btry L, 4th Bn, 12th Mar	112	13 Aug
Det, Hq Bn, 3d Mar Div	354	5 Aug
Co C (Rein), 3d Recon Bn	120	13 Aug
Det, Force Log Comd	150	12 Aug
Det, Hq Co, 9th Mar	20	13 Aug
Co A (Rein), 9th Motor Trans Bn	130	14 Aug
1st Light AA Missile Bn	661	16 Aug
Mar Atk Sqdn 334	388	30 Aug
Med Helo Sqdn 165	279	14 Aug
TOTAL	8,028	

Upon completion of the redeployment on 31 Aug, Marine Corps strength had been reduced to 72,355. 17

(S) One Regimental Landing Team (RLT) of the 3d Mar Div redeployed to Okinawa as part of Phase I. Phase II redeployments moved one more RLT to Okinawa and one RLT to Camp Pendleton, California. The 3d Mar Div Hq Base was redeployed to Okinawa. Two battalion

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landing teams (BLT) from the two BLTs on Okinawa reconstituted the Special Landing Force (SLF) with the Amphibious Ready Groups. These SLF troops were constituted from USMC units which were redeployed from RVN and could not be re-introduced into RVN without specific authorization from JCS. (Note: further information on this subject can be found under the section on Amphibious Ready Group.) Division supporting and service support units, i. e., artillery, tanks, and engineer battalions, were divided between the three RLTs.

(C) Air units redeploying from the 1st Mar Air Wing were one attack squadron, two medium helicopter squadrons, one heavy helicopter squadron, and one observation squadron. The above assets were distributed among Okinawa, Japan, and CONUS. Supporting elements were divided to support the squadrons redeployed to the three locations. 18 The specific units and their destinations were:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
1st Bn, 3d Mar	1,166	6 Oct	CONUS
Co B, 3d Engr Bn	159	2 Oct	CONUS
Co C, 3d Med Bn	24	2 Oct	CONUS
1st Bn, 12th Mar	662	2 Oct	CONUS
3d Bridge Co (-)	102	4 Oct	CONUS
2d Bn, 3d Mar	1,166	6 Oct	CONUS
HQ Co (-), 3d Mar	230	7 Oct	CONUS
Det 3d Bn, 12th Mar	91	6 Oct	CONUS
Det HQ Btry, 12th Mar	61	6 Oct	CONUS
Det HQ Bn, 3d Mar Div	436	6 Oct	CONUS
Det 11th Engr Bn	622	4 Oct	CONUS
3d Bn, 3d Mar	1,166	7 Oct	CONUS
Det 4th Bn, 12th Mar	150	6 Oct	CONUS
Det HQ Co, 3d Mar	24	6 Oct	CONUS
Co B, 3d MT Bn	68	4 Oct	CONUS
Co B, 3d SP Bn	84	2 Oct	CONUS
Det FLC	400	6 Oct	CONUS
Co A, 3d Recon Bn	143	4 Oct	CONUS
Det 7 Comm Bn	193	6 Oct	CONUS
Co B, 9th MT Bn	91	2 Oct	CONUS
Det 1st Bn, 4th Mar	118	7 Oct	CONUS
Det 2d Bn, 4th Mar	118	6 Oct	CONUS
Det 3d Bn, 4th Mar	118	6 Oct	CONUS
Det HQ Co, 4th Mar	100	6 Oct	CONUS
Det 1st SSCT	4	6 Oct	CONUS
Det HQ III MAF	70	30 Sep	CONUS
OOCNE	724	30 Sep	CONUS
OOCNE	14	6 Oct	CONUS
1st Bn, 4th Mar	1,048	22 Oct	Okinawa
Det HQ Bn, 3d Mar Div	200	22 Oct	Okinawa
7th Comm Bn (-)	190	20 Oct	Okinawa
Btry G, 3d Bn, 12th Mar	133	23 Oct	Okinawa
3d Engr Bn (-)	341	23 Oct	Okinawa
3d MT Bn (-)	41	20 Oct	Okinawa

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
3d Tk Bn (-)	345	23 Oct	Okinawa
Plt, 3d Bridge Co	21	20 Oct	Okinawa
Hq Btry (-), 12th Mar	100	20 Oct	Okinawa
2d Bn, 4th Mar (-)	1,048	9 Nov	Okinawa
Hq Bn (-), 3d Mar Div	308	9 Nov	Okinawa
Hq Co (-), 4th Mar	130	6 Nov	Okinawa
3d Bn, 12th Mar (-)	328	5 Nov	Okinawa
K Btry, 4th Bn, 12th Mar	100	10 Nov	Okinawa
17th ITT	11	5 Nov	Okinawa
11th IT	6	5 Nov	Okinawa
9th IT	6	5 Nov	Okinawa
Det Hq Btry, 12th Mar	83	9 Nov	Okinawa
9th MT Bn	89	4 Nov	Okinawa
Co B, 3d Tk Bn	140	6 Nov	Okinawa
3d SP Bn (-)	228	10 Nov	Okinawa
1st SSCT (-)	6	8 Nov	Okinawa
15th CIT	16	3 Nov	Japan
3d Bn, 4th Mar	1,048	20 Nov	Okinawa
Det Hq Bn, 3d Mar Div	200	24 Nov	Okinawa
Det Hq Co, 4th Mar	24	20 Nov	Okinawa
3d Recon Bn	309	24 Nov	Okinawa
3d Med Bn (-)	86	24 Nov	Okinawa
11th Engr Bn (-)	103	21 Nov	Okinawa
3d Dental Co	3	24 Nov	Okinawa
4th Bn, 12th Mar (-)	152	19 Nov	Okinawa
Co C, 9th MT Bn	83	22 Nov	Okinawa
H Btry, 3d Bn, 12th Mar	110	27 Nov	Okinawa
7th ITT	11	24 Nov	Okinawa
HMM-265	249	7 Oct	CONUS
OOCNE	123	6 Oct	CONUS
Det VMO-6	8	6 Oct	CONUS
Det HMM-164	8	6 Oct	CONUS
Det MABS-36	89	6 Oct	CONUS
Det H&MS-36	164	6 Oct	CONUS
Det MABS-11	20	6 Oct	CONUS
Det MABS-12	20	6 Oct	CONUS
Det MABS-13	20	6 Oct	CONUS
Det MABS-16	22	6 Oct	CONUS
VMA-533	304	7 Oct	Japan
Det H&MS-12	69	7 Oct	Japan
HMM-164	258	20 Oct	Okinawa
VMO-6 (-)	234	22 Oct	Okinawa
Det VMO-6	32	22 Oct	Okinawa
HMH-462 (-)	233	20 Oct	Okinawa
1st MAW Hq (rear)	353	3 Nov	Japan
H&MS-36 (-)	324	7 Nov	Okinawa
MABS-36 (-)	318	23 Nov	Okinawa

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
MASS-2 (-)	123	23 Nov	Japan
Det H&HS-18	18	3 Nov	Japan
Det MASS-2	39	8 Nov	Okinawa
Det MABS-36	87	23 Nov	Japan

Note: All CONUS destinations refer to Camp Pendleton, California.

(C) Upon completion of KEYSTONE CARDINAL deployments the authorized space ceiling for USMC was 55,508.

US Navy/US Coast Guard

(C) COMNAVFORV, as Naval Component Commander for COMUSMACV and Chief of the Naval Advisory Group, Vietnam, was charged with executing US Navy responsibilities in waters adjacent to and within 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.

(C) At the beginning of the year, US Navy strength in-country was 37,541. This included 441 Coast Guard spaces. Navy strength remained constant until July when 1,222 personnel re-deployed under the Phase I Redeployment program. 19

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
USS <u>Whittfield County</u> (LST-1169)	149	25 Aug	Japan
APL-46	101	25 Aug	CONUS
USS <u>Mercer</u> (APB-39)	192	25 Aug	CONUS
Task Force 117 staff	86	25 Aug	CONUS
USS <u>Nueces</u> (APB-40)	192	25 Aug	CONUS
USN crews of River Assault Squadron 13	250	25 Aug	CONUS
USN elements with Marine ground forces	247	15 Jul-31 Aug	Okinawa
USN elements with Marine air forces	5	9 Aug	Japan
TOTAL	1,222		

Upon completion of the redeployment on 31 Aug, Navy/Coast Guard strength had been reduced to 34,199.

(C) The USN space ceiling was revised downward to 30,820 by the Phase II Redeployment. The major movements were five Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB) which returned to CONUS. The Navy corpsmen and dental technicians assigned to Marine units redeployed with

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those units, as no medical personnel were organic to Marine units. The support and headquarters personnel affected by KEYSTONE CARDINAL were re-assigned primarily to CONUS locations. 20

<u>UNITS</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DEPARTURE DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>
US Navy w/3d Mar	916	28 Nov	Okinawa
US Navy w/1st MAW	24	25 Nov	Japan
NMCB-5	748	30 Sep	CONUS
NMCB-11	749	30 Nov	CONUS
NMCB-53	749	5 Nov	CONUS
NMCB-4	748	14 Dec	CONUS
NMCB-62	749	24 Nov	CONUS
30th NCR	31	15 Dec	Space Reduction
3d NCB	25	15 Dec	Space Reduction
NSA - Danang	355	15 Dec	Space Reduction
NSA - Danang	145	15 Dec	Space Reduction
PATRON Det	68	15 Dec	Space Reduction
VQ-1	60	15 Dec	Space Reduction
COMSEVEN FLT Det C	34	15 Dec	Space Reduction
MACSOG USN Elm	11	15 Dec	Space Reduction

(C) Navy strength in-country dropped nearly 7,000 during 1969. The only units which re-deployed as such were the five construction battalions. CTF 117 was disestablished in August, the bulk of the men were transferred to other in-country units and the boats turned over to the VNN. The remaining boats and crews were assigned to SEA LORDS operations.

Advisors

(3) The accelerated Phase II plan for RVNAF improvement and modernization had been approved by the JCS on 18 Dec 68 raising the RVNAF force level for FY 69 to 866,434. A subsequent DEPSECDEF approval of a VNN force of 28,700 on 12 Feb raised the force level to 875,790 for FY 69. On 20 Feb and 27 Mar, JCS authorized the turnover of US equipment to selected ARVN units in 3d and 4th quarter FY 69 to meet the scheduled activations and this process continued during the year. To coordinate and monitor all elements of the RVNAF modernization and improvement program a combined MACV/JCS committee was established in February. MACV members included: the ACof SMA; Chief, Air Force Advisory Group; Senior Naval Advisor; Naval Advisory Group; Director of Training, Training Directorate; and Director, Territorial Security Directorate, CORDS. The JCS membership included the Assistant to the CofS, JCS for Planning; CofS, VNN; and CofS, VNAF. The primary function of the committee, which met weekly, was to review the development, personnel status, equipment availability, and training progress of all components and to foresee and identify problem areas. This RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Committee conducted, in addition to the weekly meetings, frequent field inspections to develop solutions to problem areas.

(5) In March, a Military Assistance Service Funded (MASF) Program Watch Committee was established to develop; MASF program policy, monitor MASF program development and review

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actions that impact on the program. A working group subordinate to the committee was charged with reviewing RVNAF TOEs and proposed TOE changes to ensure that only essential items of equipment were included. In February, an ad hoc committee was formed under the chairmanship of ACoSMA to develop Tables of Distribution and Allowances (TDAs) for type advisory teams in order to standardize personnel and equipment requirements for incorporation into the MACV JTA. (See Chapter IX.)

(S) Continued effort was devoted to the development of an RVNAF Improvement and Modernization System (RIMMS) under an ACoSMA - led working group with Vietnamese representatives from the JGS. Acceleration of RVNAF improvement and modernization generated increased requirements for English language training and plans were made to handle a projected student load of 5,500 by July.

(S) A clearer delineation of objectives was established in the Central Training Command Development Plan which provided a systematic approach in the development of procedures to enable the Central Training Command (CTC) to accomplish its assigned objectives for 1969, 1970, and 1971 through 1974. The CTC's major objective was to develop an efficient and effective military training and educational system to meet RVNAF wartime and peacetime requirements. The plan was published in English and Vietnamese and distributed to the field in May. ²¹

(S) At mid-year, a MACV Desertion Control Committee was formed to monitor the activities of the RVNAF Desertion Control Committee and to assist them in their efforts to control desertions in the RVNAF.

(S) On 14 Jul, CINCPAC issued instructions establishing standardized methods by which US personnel would be trained for the performance of Military Assistance Program duties and assigned responsibilities for the conduct of training. DOD had directed the implementation of a three-phase training program consisting of: Phase I - Washington orientation for key MAP personnel; Phase II - planner/programmer training; and Phase III - Advisor training. ²²

(S) On 18 Aug, SECDEF approved the FY 70 RVNAF force structure increase of 77,883 spaces and a 15,000 man increase in National Police strength as recommended by the US Mission in response to the GVN Midway Proposals. The FY 71 projections of a 39,164 RVNAF increase and 15,000 National Police spaces were approved for planning purposes.

(S) By August, progress was reported in the program to convert Division Advisory Teams to Combat Assistance Teams (CAT). This CAT concept changed the role of the Division Advisory Team from advisory to combat support coordination with an overall reduction in the number of advisor spaces required in the division. The concept was originally tested in late 1968 in the 22d ARVN Inf Div and found to be basically sound with the added advantage of increasing ARVN leadership ability, initiative, and self reliance. By 22 Jan, each CTZ senior advisor and the airborne division senior advisor had been authorized to implement the CAT program. ²³

(S) On 27 Oct, MACV approved the submission of the RVNAF Improvement and Modernization System (RIMMS) report on a quarterly rather than a monthly basis. On 18 Nov, the first quarterly issue of the RIMMS report, covering the third quarter of 1969, was published and distributed.

(S) On 14 Nov, a staff and training conference was conducted at the Quang Trung National Training Center which was attended by all training center commanders and training center

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IV-26

**FREE WORLD STRENGTH
(1966-1969)**

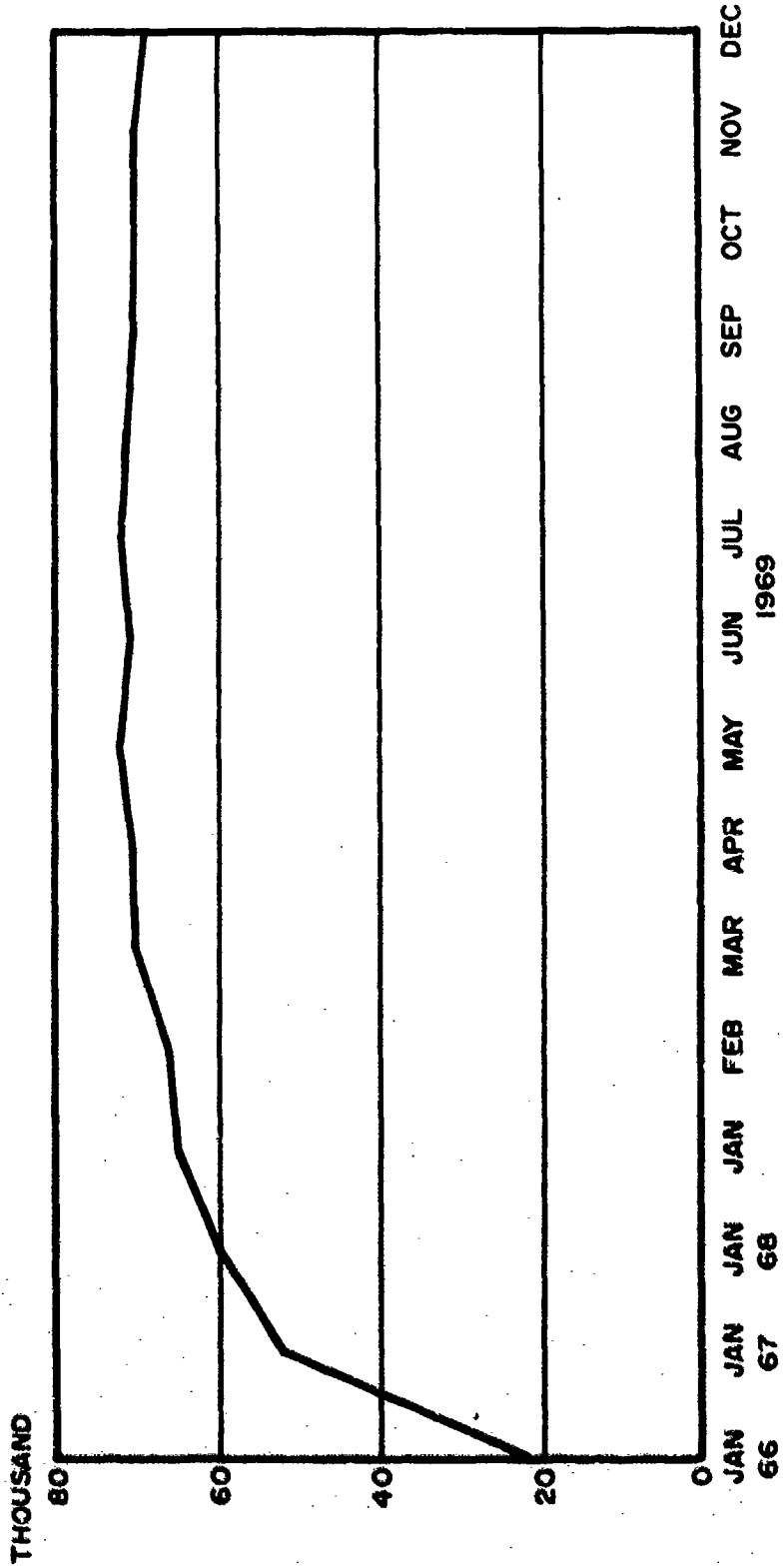


FIGURE IV-8
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senior advisors. This combined RVNAF/US effort was designed to discuss the training results of 1969, overall training concepts and policies, and to outline the training plan for 1970. 24

Note: Details of the buildup of the US advisory effort in RVN from 1950-1968 are contained in Annex J.

OTHER FREE WORLD MILITARY ASSISTANCE FORCES

General

(C) As in past years, the FWMAF increased in 1969. The following table and Figure IV-8 reflect the growth in assigned strength of these forces:

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>END</u> <u>1965</u>	<u>END</u> <u>1966</u>	<u>END</u> <u>1967</u>	<u>END</u> <u>1968</u>	<u>END</u> <u>1969</u>
Australia	1,557	4,525	6,818	7,661	7,672
Republic of China	20	23	31	29	29
Republic of Korea	20,620	45,566	47,829	50,003	48,869
New Zealand	119	155	534	516	552
Republic of the Philippines	72	2,061	2,020	1,576	189
Spain	0	12	13	12	10
Thailand	16	224	2,205	6,005	11,568
TOTAL	22,404	52,566	59,490	65,802	68,689

Australia/New Zealand

(U) The first presence of Australian personnel in RVN had come after the Government of Australia had decided to assist the US effort and sent an initial team of 30 instructors to work with RVNAF units in 1962. These advisors had joined with US advisory teams and had worked mostly in the northern provinces of RVN. In 1965, the Australian effort had been increased, as a force of approximately 1,500 troops had arrived and were headquartered at Bien Hoa. One year later the contingent had been substantially increased and the battalion group had been replaced by a task force with its own logistic support. There had been two major ground units known as the 1st Australian Logistic Support Group (ALSG) and 1st Australian Task Force (ATF). Additionally, in 1966, a helicopter squadron had been deployed to RVN. In 1967 a squadron of Canberra bombers and a guided missile destroyer had been deployed to RVN. The strength of Australian forces had not changed significantly from the 1967 figure. Integrated with the Australian Task Force were elements of the New Zealand infantry and artillery. 25 The organization of the ATF and New Zealand forces is shown in Figure IV-9.

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(U) The Australian force structure remained basically unchanged during the year. The forces were maintained despite demands in Australia that the troops be returned home. On 15 Dec, in a meeting of 200 shop stewards and leaders of 32 labor unions representing over 1.5 million Australian workers, a resolution was passed protesting Australian participation. Also passed was a resolution calling upon Australian troops in RVN to lay down their arms and refuse to fight. The following day the Secretary of the Trades Council criticized the resolution as being, "...a call for mutiny." 26 The Australian Prime Minister felt required to outline the government position on RVN, in the following television address of 16 Dec:

In my policy speech before the last election, I had this to say to the Australian people: 'Should there be developments (in Vietnam) which result in plans for continuing reduction of United States Forces over a period, we would expect to be phased into that program.' Since I spoke, developments have taken place, and you have today heard the announcement by the President of the United States that a further 50,000 troops are to be withdrawn over the next few months. ***I have spoken directly with the President of the United States, in accordance with arrangements made on my last visit, and we were in complete accord in agreeing, in principle, that should the future situation permit a further substantial withdrawal of troops, then some Australian troops should be included in the numbers scheduled for such reduction. Such agreement in principle is all that has been reached, or all that can at present be reached. ***So I wish to make it clear: That there is no firm timetable for further withdrawal of United States troops of which I know. ***That there is no arrangement made as to how great any Australian reduction, which may take place in the future, will be. ***But these things are clear: We will not unilaterally withdraw any of our forces. We will not abandon the objects for which we entered the Vietnam War. We will participate in the next reduction of forces at some stage, when it comes. ***We will remain to attain the objectives which we started to reach, but we are glad we are able to make reductions without endangering those objectives. 27

(U) New Zealand's contributions in RVN were two infantry companies, integrated with one of the Australian battalions to form an ANZAC Battalion. A Special Air Services troop was integrated with an Australian SAS Squadron, an artillery battery which also operated with the Australian Task Force, and a tri-service medical team engaged in civic action. There was no significant change in strength or mission during 1969 for the New Zealand forces. 28

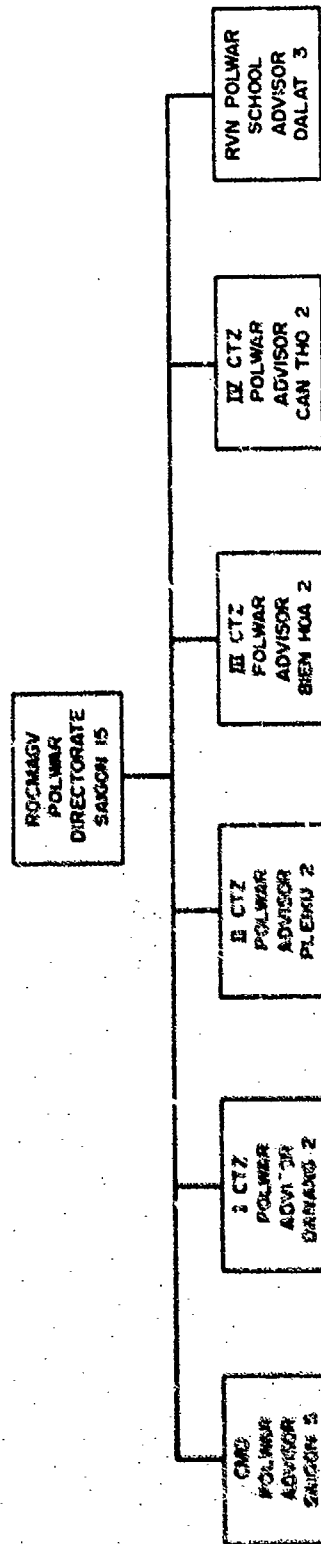
Republic of China

(U) On 7 Oct 64, the Republic of China Military Advisory Group (ROCMAGV) had been activated upon invitation of the GVN. The ROCMAGV had the mission of establishing a Political

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FIGURE IV-10



Warfare (POLWAR) System, training POLWAR Cadres, developing POLWAR Operations, and formulating a POLWAR Manual/SOP. The organization of ROCMAGV is shown in Figure IV-10. During 1969 the ROCMAGV continued to provide POLWAR advisory personnel in each CTZ, at the Political Warfare School in Dalat, and at the Political Warfare Directorate in Saigon. There were no significant changes in personnel strengths during the year. 29

Republic of Korea

(C) At the beginning of 1969, ROK forces in RVN numbered 50,003 (22 maneuver battalions), and were concentrated primarily in I and II CTZs. ROK strength varied only slightly during 1969, and at the end of the year numbered 48,869. Forces in-country included:

Hq ROKFV

Capitol ROK Inf Div

Hq 1st Inf Regt

1/1 Inf Bn

2/1 Inf Bn

3/1 Inf Bn

Hq Cav Regt

1st Bn

2d Bn

3d Bn

Hq 26th Inf Regt

1/26th Inf Bn

2/26th Inf Bn

3/26th Inf Bn

9th Inf Div

Hq 28th Inf Div

1/28th Inf Bn

2/28th Inf Bn

3/28th Inf Bn

Hq 29th Inf Bn

1/29th Inf Bn

2/29th Inf Bn

3/29th Inf Bn

Hq 3d Inf Regt

1/30th Inf Bn

2/30th Inf Bn

3/30th Inf Bn

ROK Mar Bde

1/2 KM Bn

2/2 KM Bn

3/2 KM Bn

5/5 KM Bn

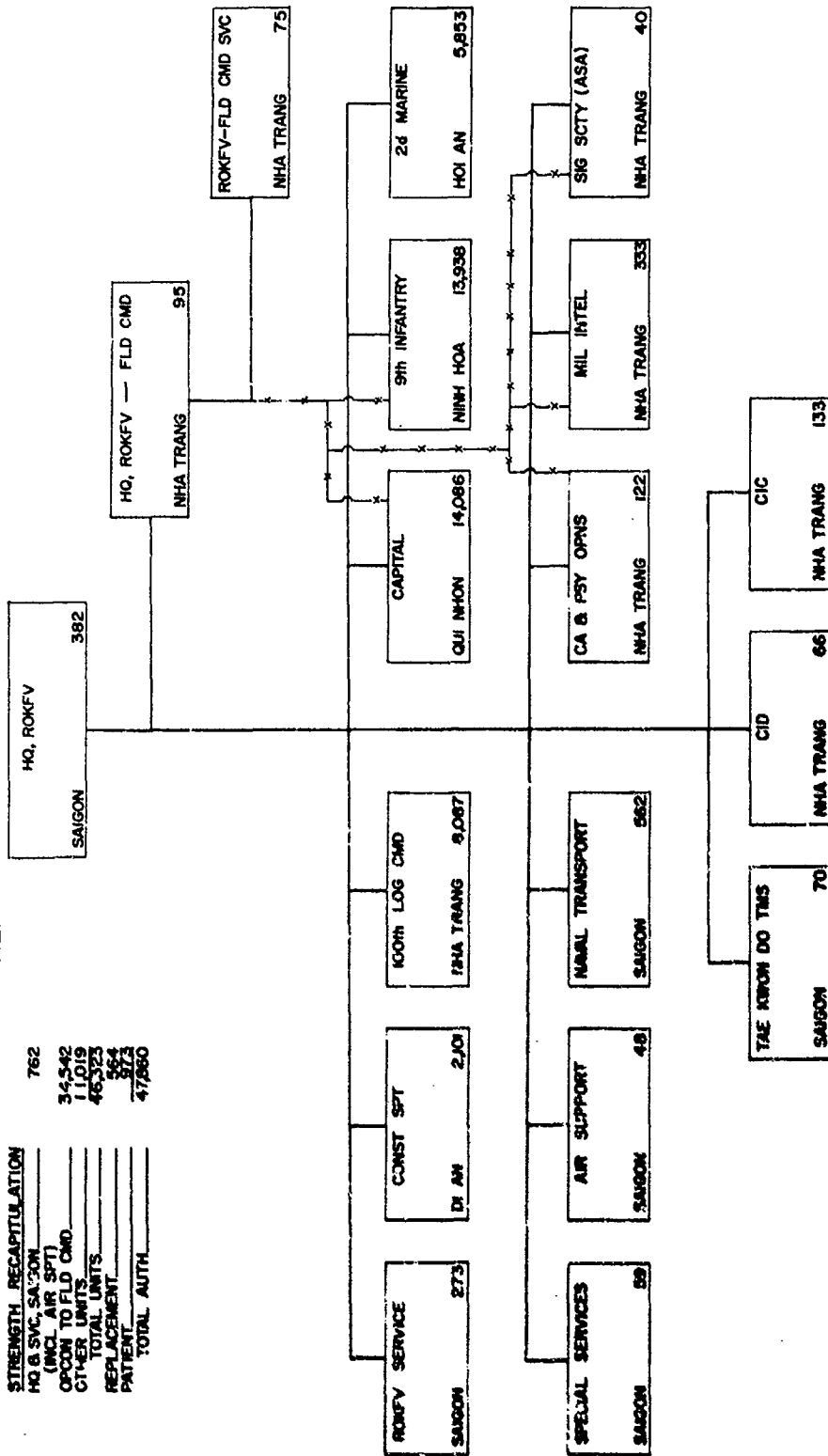


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REPUBLIC OF KOREA FORCES VIETNAM



STRENGTH RECAPITULATION	762
HQ & SVC, SAIGON	34,542
(INCL AIR SPT)	11,019
OPCON TO FLD CMD	46,323
OTHER UNITS	564
TOTAL UNITS	373
REPLACEMENT	47,860
PATIENT	
TOTAL AUTH.	

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FIGURE IV-11

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ROKFV TOE and Strength Ceiling Problems

(C) The ROKFV strength ceiling had been previously established at 48,339, distributed as follows:

1. TO&E Authorization	46,323
2. Allowance for patients and replacements (3.3 percent of 1)	1,537
3. Subtotal (See Figure IV-11)	47,860
4. Allowable overstrength for unforeseen turbulence (1 percent of 3)	479
5. Maximum authorization recognized and supported by US	48,339

(C) Overstrength continued to be a problem in 1969 as it had been since early 1968. During this period the overstrength had fluctuated between 2,750 and 1,500. MACV had been supporting this overstrength with available funds; however, early in 1969 US Government auditors requested COMUSMACV eliminate the added costs incurred in providing support to the ROKFV overstrength. This generated a series of correspondence between COMUSMACV and Commander, ROKFV. In a letter of early January, COMUSMACV pointed out that although some progress had been made in reducing the overstrength, ROKFV was still 1,584 above the acceptable level and requested that forces be reduced to within the 48,339 strength figure not later than 31 Mar. At the end of March, however, ROKFV overstrength had actually increased to 1,939 and COMUSMACV again requested reduction of ROKFV personnel strength to the maximum allowable; the action, this time, was to be completed by 30 Jun. Commander, ROKFV countered this request with a request of his own for an additional one percent overstrength for turbulence, stating that such increase was needed as an integral part of the ROKFV TOE. The MACV response to this proposal was that there would be no increase in overstrength percentages; that if ROKFV needed additional TOE authorizations they should be formally requested.

(C) In August, ROKFV did request a TOE increase of 439 spaces. MACV recommended approval of this increase in exchange for a firm future support figure not to exceed 48,788 as shown below: 30

1. TO&E Authorization	46,762
2. Allowance for patients and replacements (3.3 percent of 1)	1,543
3. Subtotal	48,305
4. Allowable overstrength for unforeseen turbulence (1 percent of 3)	483
5. Maximum authorization recognized and supported by US	48,788

(C) On 17 Oct the ROKFV TOE increase request was disapproved by JCS using the following criteria:

Previous authorizations for increase in ROK forces in RVN have included the following support by the US which we might expect to be requested with this increase:

A. Net additional costs (Base pay and allowances for reconstituted forces and support forces in Korea);

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- B. Overseas allowances;
 - C. Death and disability benefits;
 - D. Clothing and Equipment;
 - E. Increased training requirement.

In view of these potential additional costs, which will require service funding, the request is not favorably considered. 31

Philippines

(U) As early as 1953, the Government of the Philippines (GOP) had decided to extend assistance to the people of RVN. Thus, Operation BROTHERHOOD, conducted by doctors and nurses, had been the first Filipino organization to arrive in RVN to help its people. As member of the UN and SEATO, the Philippines had been bound to send economic and technical assistance. In consonance with that obligation, the Congress of the Philippines had passed a law in 1964 authorizing the President to send economic and technical assistance to the RVN. Pursuant to that act, a 34-man team composed the Philippine Contingent (PHILCON) which had consisted of physicians, surgeons, nurses, psychologists, and rural development workers coming from the Armed Forces of the Philippines deployed to RVN. In 1965 the GVN had requested increased aid from the GOP which had resulted in the authorization and subsequent deployment of the Philippine Civic Action Group, Vietnam (PHILCAGV). This unit which had arrived in the fall of 1966, consisted of engineer construction, medical, rural development teams, security battalion, field artillery company, logistics support company, and a headquarters element. 32

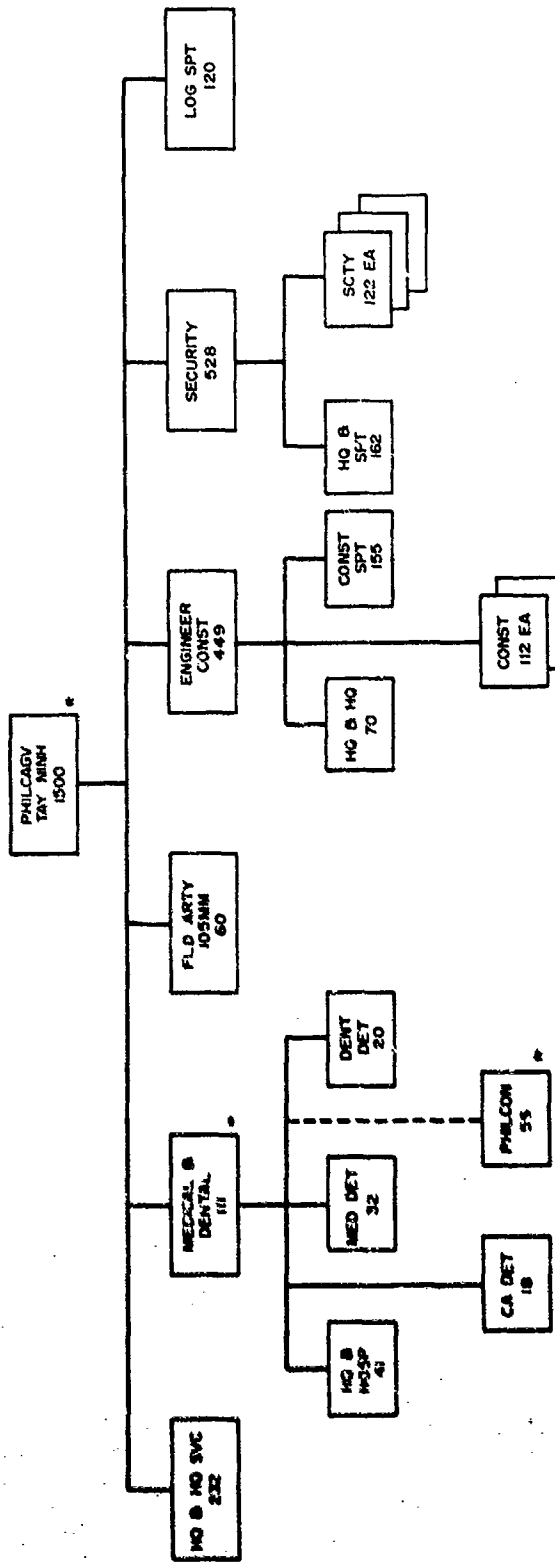
(C) The mission of the PHILCAGV was to provide civic action assistance to the RVN by construction, rehabilitation, and development of works, utilities, and structures; improving public health and communications, and other socio-economic activities. The Military Working Agreement (MWA) specified that the PHILCAGV missions would be determined by the Free World Military Assistance Policy Council. Command and control was vested in CG, PHILCAGV. The Rural Health Teams and the Provincial Hospital Medical/Surgical Teams provided services on a mission basis in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health of RVN and USAID.

(C) The first PHILCAGV had arrived in RVN with an authorized strength of 2,048 with the sole mission of civic action. The in-country strength had remained at this level until 1968 when PHILCAGV was reduced to 1,500 personnel between January and August. In September 1968, the GOP directed the replacement of those PHILCAGV personnel who had completed a 2-year tour in RVN. Subsequently, some 1,400 personnel had been rotated during the period 12 Sep-19 Oct 68. The drawdown of the PHILCAGV was attributed to politico-budgetary problems in the Philippines. 33 Following the 1968 drawdown, the PHILCAGV issue was out of the public eye for many months. The Philippine President had decided that the national interest was served by continued Philippine presence in RVN. It would maintain a GOP right to a seat at the RVN settlement table and a claim to share in surplus war material when a settlement would be reached. Meanwhile, domestic pressures in ROP called for withdrawal of the unit: first, from some members of the Philippine Congress who would "punish" the US for some imagined support of Malaysia during the Sabah crises; and second, there was a legitimate use for the unit at home to counter a HUK insurgency in central Luzon; and lastly, an economic problem of bearing even the modest costs of maintaining the PHILCAGV in RVN. Since the necessary funds were refused by the GOP Congress the PHILCAGV had been financed by regular AFP funds plus \$17 million for engineer

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PHILIPPINE CIVIC ACTION GROUP VIETNAM



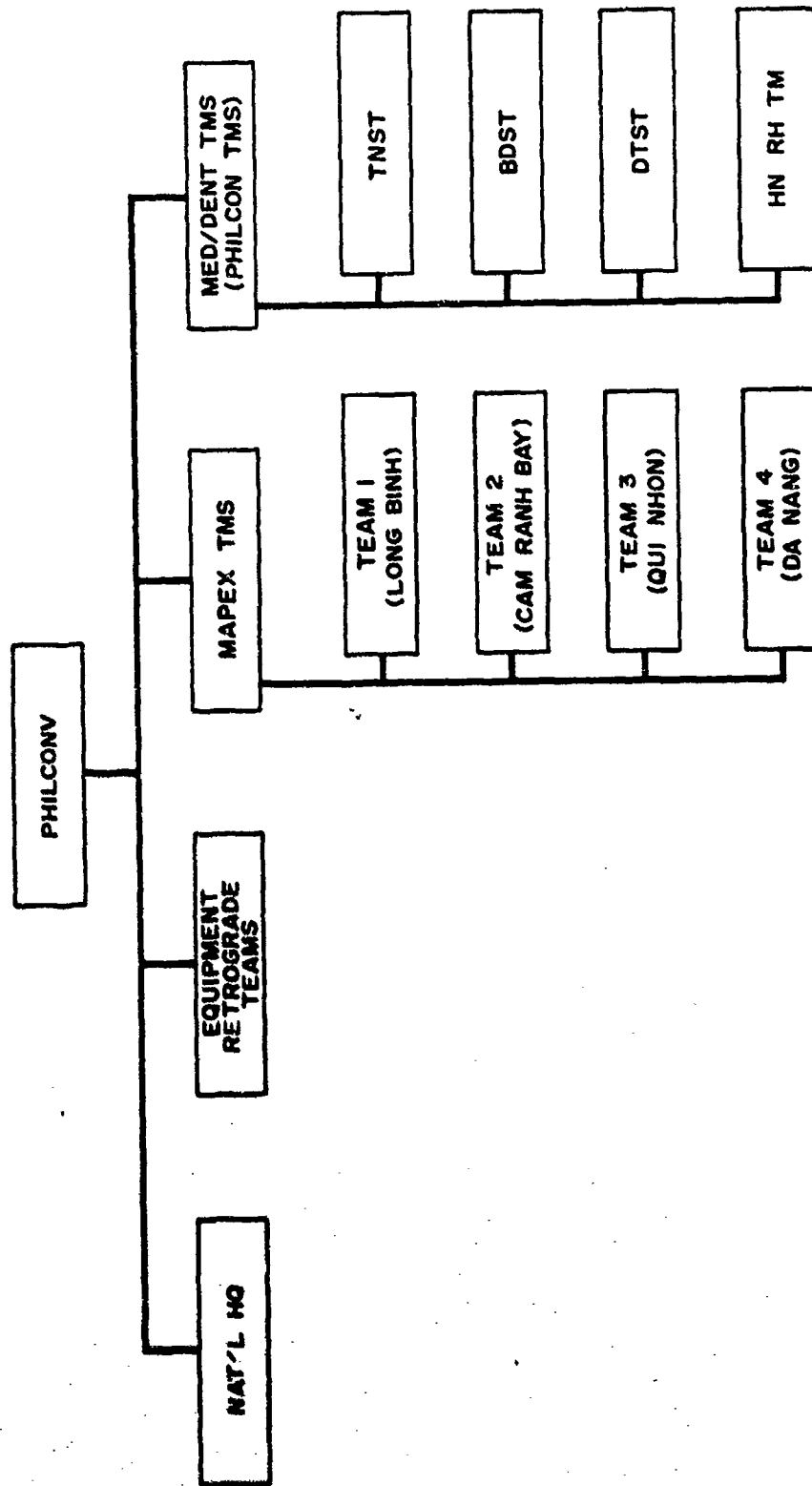
* PHILCON STRENGTH IS NOT INCLUDED IN PHILCAGV T/O TOTALS (SUPPORTED BY A SEPARATE ROP APPROPRIATION)

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FIGURE IV-12

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PHILCONV ORGANIZATION



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FIGURE IV-13

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construction equipment and \$1.5 million annual support provided by the US. When a new TOE was approved in February 1969 (See Figure IV-12) little press or public attention was noted and there were no significant swells of anti-PHILCAGV feelings. Then in March, the Nacionalista House caucus voted to withdraw PHILCAGV and send in its place a "Medical Contingent". At about the same time "ground preparing" approaches were being made to US officials for complete PHILCAGV financing by the USG which confronted the US with the question: Should the US pick up the entire cost of PHILCAGV; if not, was the US prepared to see PHILCAGV pull out. 34 SECSTATE believed the US should not underwrite the total cost of PHILCAGV. To do this would make difficult any improvement of the force and subject the US to a sort of "ransom" for continuance of the force in RVN. A review of the situation showed that the PHILCAGV had done a "passable job" on the construction jobs completed. More could have been done, and ARVN or US resources could have accomplished the same work. The security and artillery battalions added nothing to the offensive capability of friendly forces as the battalions were not assigned missions in MACV Operations Plans. And while the force provided some degree of security to the population of the local area in which it worked (vicinity of Tay Ninh City) it also made demands upon scarce military equipment. However, since PHILCAGV forces engaged in combat only in self-defense, the area of security did not extend beyond the immediate vicinity of base camps and work sites.

Ay Should PHILCAGV be pulled out, an increased pressure from the GVN could be expected to rid RVN of Filipino TCNs in the civilian work force. In mid-April the US Embassy position was:

***On balance, therefore, we feel that we should not ourselves take any initiative to maintain PHILCAG in Viet Nam. If we relent and acquiesce to the Philippine demands that we pick up the entire check, we will only serve to make it impossible to demand that PHILCAG improve its performance, since one does not preface an effort to shape up a unit by begging them to stay. 35

(S) SECSTATE noted the Saigon Embassy's position but hoped, "for a continuation of the present situation". It was noted further that 1969 being an election year in the Philippines the PHILCAGV might not become a focal point if the US did not contribute by clarifying the choices available to them. 36

(U) On 5 Jun, the Philippine Senate passed its version of the national budget including funds for PHILCAGV but limiting the funds to support of "phased withdrawal".

(C) As the ROP presidential campaign developed, the PHILCAGV became a political issue of import and, on 4 Oct, the Philippine President, in a general press conference, announced the unit would be withdrawn "probably after the election" which was to take place 11 Nov. No elaboration was forthcoming except to say the withdrawal was tied to exhaustion of funds. 37 One day after the election, in a press conference, the President said he was calling a meeting the following day to discuss a plan to maintain a small medical team in RVN. He indicated he would not ask Congress for further funding. At the same time, there was a great deal of speculation

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in regard to the forthcoming Symington Subcommittee hearings, probably forcing the Philippine President's hand.³⁸ On 14 Nov, the following note was received at the US Embassy in Manila:

Excellency: I have the honor to inform you that the Philippine Government has decided to withdraw the Philippine Civic Action Group (PHILCAG) from Vietnam.

This decision is taken pursuant to the recommendation of the Foreign Policy Council.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration. Signed Carlos P. Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs. 39

(C) The greatest immediate problem caused by the withdrawal of the Philippine force was the effect it might have on other third country contributors (TCCs). The first effects were noted in Thailand on 20 Nov when their Foreign Minister discussed the withdrawal with the US Ambassador, expressing bewilderment that the Free World Allies were not consulted prior to the Philippine decision to withdraw and further indicating that the future of TCC forces should be a subject for timely discussion with GVN and consultation with other Allies. Present also was the possibility of TCCs feeling that the US had indeed been informed prior to the precipitous GOP action. 40

(C) The redeployment planning of the Philippine force began on 25 Nov with the first increment of two advance parties being airlifted by US aircraft on 1 Dec. The second was airlifted one week later, again by US aircraft. As the main body of PHILCAGV departed 13-15 Dec, the base camp at Tay Ninh was transferred to the 25th Inf Div. The GOP indicated that the rear party of approximately 160 personnel would depart RVN sometime in 1970. The remaining Philippine Contingent (PHILCCN) (See Figure IV-13) had preceded PHILCAGV by two years and was actually an independent unit attached to the larger force. It would have a total authorized strength of 56 personnel, consisting of four medical health teams, and would operate in the provinces of Binh Duong, Binh Tuong, Tay Ninh, and Hau Nghia. 41

(U) In discussing the value of PHILCAGV during its stay the RVN President made the following remarks:

PHILCAGV has greatly contributed to the revolutionary development program of the Republic of Vietnam. Their untiring efforts also helped bring under government control many people previously living under Communist rule and given them confidence in the national cause.

(U) During its stay in RVN, the PHILCAGV performed the following activities: 42

1. Engineering Civic Action Program (ECAP):

- a. Roads - 116.4 km
- b. Bridges - 11

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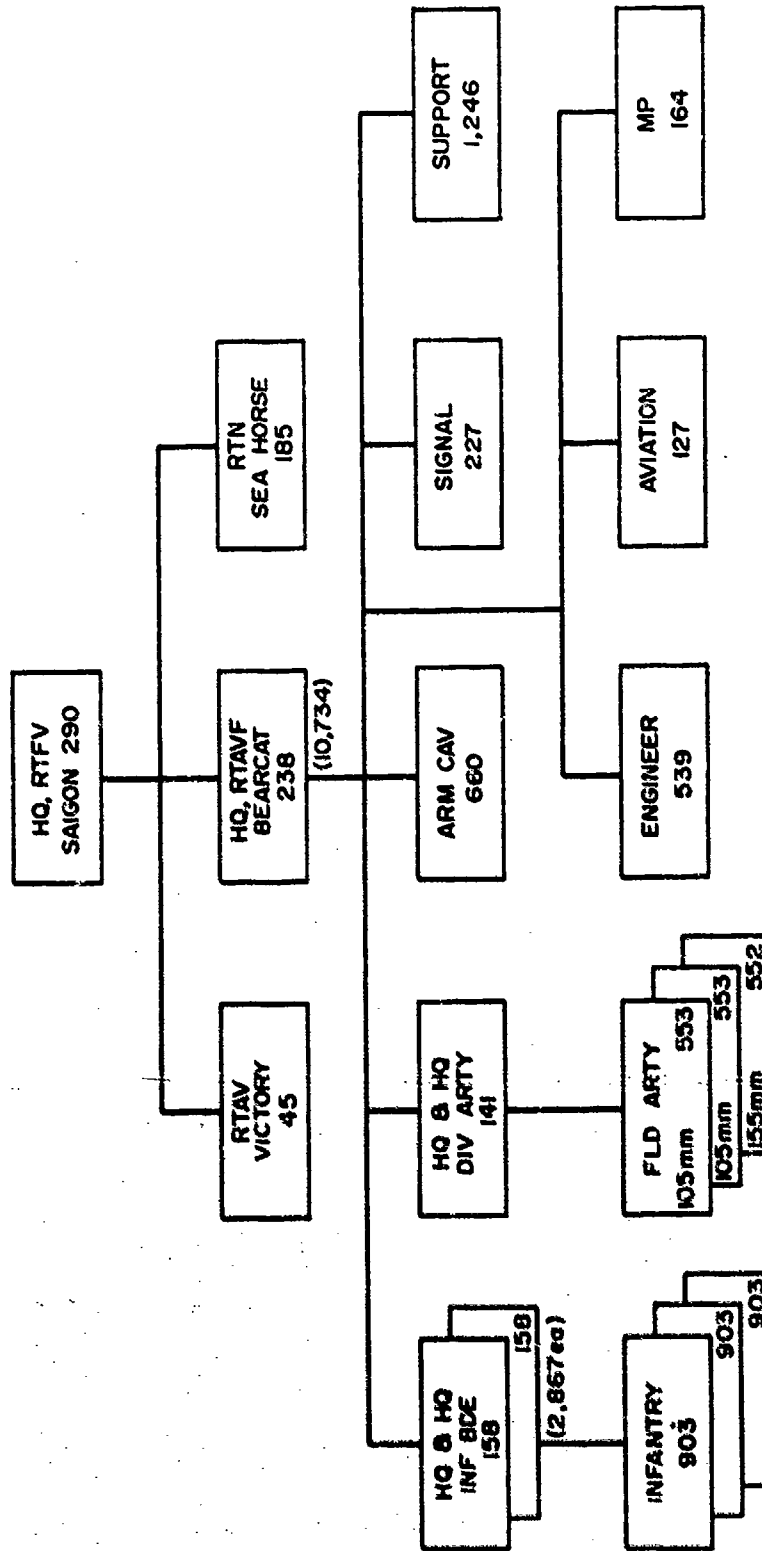
- c. Buildings - 169
 - d. Towers - 10
 - e. Culverts - 194
 - f. Forest Clearing - 778 Hectares
 - g. Community Projects - 2,225 Hectares
 - h. Refugee Centers - 54
 - i. Demonstration Farms - 10 Hectares
2. Miscellaneous Environmental Improvement Program (MEIP)
- a. Rehabilitation, repair and minor construction:
 - Air strips - 2
 - Roads - 94 km
 - Buildings - 47
 - Outposts - 12
 - Wells - 245
 - b. Education and training:
 - Equipment and Maintenance - 32 persons trained
 - Health Education - 138 persons trained
 - Vocational Training - 217 persons trained
 - c. Refugee Resettlement
 - Families resettled - 1,065
 - d. Relief distribution:
 - Food boxes - 162,623 lbs
 - Hamlets sponsored - 14
3. Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP):
- a. Medical missions - 724,715
 - b. Dental missions - 218,609
 - c. Surgical missions - 35,844

Thailand

Thailand is situated near Vietnam and it will be the next target of the Communists, as they have already proclaimed. That is why Thailand realized the necessity to send military units to help oppose Communist aggression when it is still at a distance from our country. The government has therefore decided to send a combat unit, one battalion strong, to take an active part in the fighting in South Vietnam in the near future. 43

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ROYAL THAI FORCES VIETNAM



STRENGTH RECAPITULATION

HQ, RTFV	290
RTAVF	10,734 (11,270)*
VICTORY	45
SEA HORSE	185
TOTAL	11,254 (11,790)

* INCLUDES 5% OVERSTRENGTH

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FIGURE IV-14

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(C) With this announcement in 1966 the Royal Thai Government had begun its active support of the war effort in RVN.

A3

[Redacted] The first increment had closed in July 1968 with the second to arrive in-country eight months later. Each increment would include three maneuver battalions for a total of six battalions in the division.

(S) The second increment of the Thai division known as the Black Panther Division (5,704 personnel) began deployment to the RVN in January and completed deployment on 25 Feb.

A3

[Redacted] The division, located at Bearcat, was under the operational control of CG, II FFORCEV. 44

(C) The third increment (approximately 5,500 personnel) of the RTAVF deployed to RVN during July-August, to replace the first increment which returned to Thailand. The third increment closed at Bearcat on 12 Aug. The replacement brigade deployed with one 105mm artillery battalion and one 155mm artillery battalion (-), and assumed the designation of 1st Bde. In addition, the headquarters of the RTAVF completed its annual rotation at this same time. Upon completion of the rotation, there was no appreciable change in the overall strength of the RTAVF in RVN.

(C) Concomitantly, plans for the call up and training of the fourth increment of the RTAVF were being formulated. Cadre training began at mid-August, and individual training began in mid-September. 45

A3

(S) In November, [Redacted] unified concept was adopted for rotation of the second and fourth increments of the RTAVF. Airlift was agreed upon as the most suitable method for rotating personnel considering tactical/operational requirements related to maintenance of combat readiness, unit integrity, and personnel security. The need for rapid redeployment of small units and efficient personnel processing were the bases for adoption of airlift. Sealift was determined the most suitable transportation mode for connex boxes.

A3

(C) In December the combined effects of the PHILCAGV withdrawal and publicity given the Symington Subcommittee news releases were felt in Thailand as elsewhere. There were charges and countercharges regarding the relative expenditures of funds supporting the Thai Black Panther Division in RVN. The US had welcomed the decision of RTG to contribute troops in RVN and was willing to facilitate it by logistics support and payment of certain allowances to Thai forces related to their overseas assignments. Also there was some increase of military assistance to offset any reduction in Thai military capabilities resultant from the deployment in RVN. 47 On 19 Oct, the Bangkok press reported that some 20 government party members of parliament had signed a letter to the Prime Minister urging withdrawal of Thai troops. The

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rationale was: 1) an improved situation in RVN as a result of the US Vietnamization program and other aid, evidenced by US cutbacks; 2) the fact Australia and the Philippines had announced intentions to withdraw troops; and 3) the difficult domestic economic and security problems. No mention was made of the subsidy and mercenary issues of the previous few days. No timetable was mentioned and the letter was primarily a political effort intended to pre-empt any opposition criticism. 48 On 21 Dec, the Foreign Minister told newsmen he had considered withdrawal of Thai troops in RVN "because the United States recently issued another announcement regarding further withdrawals". Further, he stated he had discussed this with the RVN Foreign Minister, and that the subject had been under consideration for some time. The Foreign Minister was quoted, saying:

Before any action can be taken we will have to consider it thoroughly and carefully from all angles. We must not do anything or reach any decision in a hurry, neither must we follow blindly in anybody's footsteps. 49

Two days later in an apparent reversal of policy which probably stemmed from a cabinet meeting aimed at developing a single RTG position, the Deputy Prime Minister was quoted in denial of Thai intentions to withdraw troops.

Thailand will not pull any of her fighting men out of South Vietnam. ***Thailand has never contemplated such a move. ***The operation of Thai troops in South Vietnam is considered more advantageous than withdrawing them. If we plan to withdraw, we would have to consult with GVN since we sent troops there in response to an appeal from them. It is true that several countries are withdrawing troops from South Vietnam but our case is different. 50

Spain

(U) The Spanish Medical Mission, Vietnam (SMMV) had been established in 1966. The SMMV provided medical aid to the Go Cong Province Hospital on a rotational basis. Figure IV-15 shows the organization of the mission. Operational direction was provided by RVN Ministry of Health. Administrative and logistical support was provided by USAID. There were no changes in personnel space strength or mission during 1969. 51

Third Country Nationals

(C) As early as February 1967, as a result of political pressure from GVN, the US Ambassador had felt obligated to formulate a policy statement concerning the employment of third country nationals (TCN) in RVN. In a message to SECSTATE the US policy, which was still in effect throughout 1969, had been stated:

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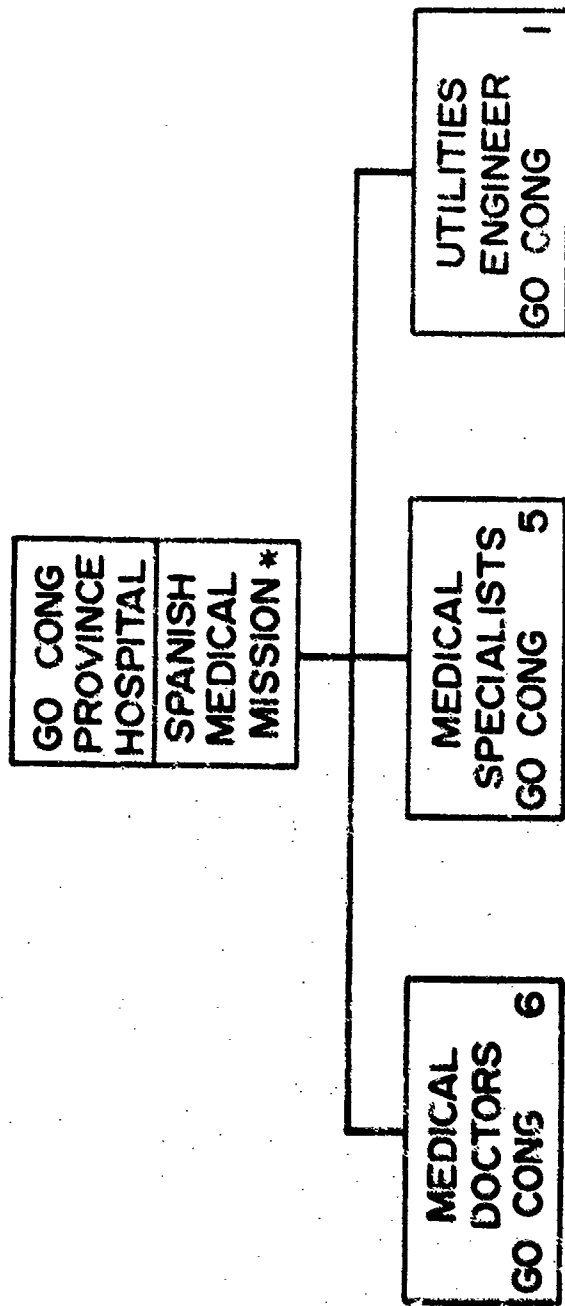
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SPANISH MEDICAL MISSION



*OPERATIONAL DIRECTION IS PROVIDED BY RVN MINISTRY OF HEALTH & ADMINISTRATIVE & LOGISTIC SUPPORT IS PROVIDED BY USAID.

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FIGURE IV-15

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It is US policy that:

1. Vietnamese workers have first claim on any jobs created in Vietnam by the American presence.
2. Workers from other countries are welcomed to Vietnam in limited numbers, not only to give practical assistance to their Vietnamese brothers in certain common struggle for freedom but also to dramatize their solidarity in the common struggle for freedom.
3. No foreign worker will be hired by any USG agency or their contractors to fill any job for which a qualified Vietnamese worker is available.
4. Foreign workers, even the necessary ones, can be hired only according to the laws and regulations of the government of Vietnam. This means, for example, that contractors cannot hire, or keep employed, third country nationals (TCN) without a valid permit issued by the GVN.
5. USG agencies and their contractors who hire TCNs should have programs to train Vietnamese for the jobs now held by TCNs. 52

(C) The use of TCNs as a labor source in RVN brought certain problems which, for several years, were overshadowed by the larger more immediate issue of simple national survival. However, with the strengthened RVNAF and improved military position the GVN had time to turn more attention to domestic problems. Thus at the beginning of 1969 the GVN became openly sensitive to the TCNs employed in their country. The money manipulation and growing black market operations likely sharpened GVN focus on an existing problem, but it must be noted that the presence of TCNs was a central issue in the last general election and it had appeared as an issue in many labor disturbances during the previous year.

(C) The TCN problems divided into three general areas: Numbers in RVN, wages paid, and black market/money manipulation activity. These problem areas were compounded by various factors. There were factions, agreements, considerations, regulations, and policies that operated to retain the status quo of the TCN in RVN. Finally, there were pressures to solve the TCN problems; e.g., USMACV, Congress, DOD, and GVN. GVN pressure, however, caused an opposite problem. Their pressure was to restrict TCNs by making it difficult to get work permits and visas, even for those TCNs that were really needed. 53

(C) At the beginning of 1969, there were 20,000 TCNs in RVN; many were essential and others could be replaced by trained Vietnamese. Some occupied positions for which little training of Vietnamese was necessary. There were approximately 13,000 TCNs employed by the US Forces, its contractors, and NAF activities, of which 96 percent were from ROK and KOP. The official GVN position was to minimize the presence of TCNs in RVN. The apparent position of the ROK was to introduce as many ROK TCNs as possible. The ROP seemed to be interested

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only in maintaining the status quo. Most TCNs were employed by cost-plus contractors, and TCNs in many cases were hired for reasons of expediency. Some firms even had TCNs employed as laborers, latrine orderlies and assistant barbers, etc. 54

(C) A MACV study indicated that the USG, through contractors, had paid up to \$50 million per year more than it should for TCN labor and it was suggested that costs could be reduced up to \$100 million per year by training Vietnamese replacements. Wages and benefits among the cost-plus contractors were not standard, varying as much as 100-150 percent for the same jobs. Wages and benefits of TCNs averaged about \$8,200 per year and were 5 1/2 times as much as those paid Vietnamese, skill for skill. 55

(C) A 1968 Embassy/USAID study had estimated 45 percent of TCN wages received (\$62 million per year) were deposited in banks outside the third country origin of the TCNs and were available for dollar manipulation. Records seized by Vietnamese customs police during raids on black market money changers consistently indicated substantial involvement in illegal currency exchanges on the part of both US citizen and TCN contractor employees. The most common type of transaction was for the employee to purchase piaster requirements from illicit sources with US currency or dollar instruments (most frequently a personal check drawn on a stateside bank). The currency violator would normally receive a rate of exchange nearly twice the legal rate. 56 (See: Chapter XIV, Discipline, Law and Order.)

(C) Some of the factors that compounded the TCN problem were attempts, particularly by the ROK and ROP, to trade acceptance of favorable civilian presence in RVN for concessions which would help the USG militarily or politically. In addition, the ROK and GVN had an agreement which permitted ex-ROK military forces to be discharged in RVN and to be employed there. Further political considerations grew out of the "Brown Agreement", which reportedly was a letter of understanding giving favorable treatment to ROK in providing goods and services to assist in RVN, to the extent that they were competitive with other Asian countries. 57

(C) On 1 Feb, the GVN instituted new procedural policies for importing TCNs. This new method was designed to ensure a single orderly approach to obtaining visas and work permits in lieu of various systems previously used. The GVN indicated that they would act on these applications within 20 days. By May the impact of delay in processing applications both before and after the start of the new policy, prompted OICC/RVN to request, "... MACV assistance at the highest possible level with the US Embassy to alleviate the problem area". In a letter to COMUS on 15 May, the OICC further outlined the difficulties civilian contractors were having in obtaining GVN entry clearances and work permits. It was noted that, "Since December 1968, the processing of contractor requests for labor permits and approval for entry visas have virtually come to a halt." USARV had called attention of COMUSMACV to "... serious and adverse impact..." of further delays in the issuance of visa and work permits to the third country nationals. 58

(C) The GVN had enacted a law 1 Jun 67 which required TCNs to pay a fee of \$VN 200 to obtain a work permit. No serious attempt had been made to collect this fee, primarily due to USG protest. In mid-September, however, the GVN amended this law to require a \$VN 1,000 fee, endeavored to collect it, and in some cases was successful. Immediate strong reaction based on the Pentilateral Agreement (See Annex I.) led to a redefinition of the law and precluded the GVN from further attempts to collect the work permit fee.

(C) From June to September, efforts were made at various levels of the USG and military echelons to solve the sensitive and potentially crippling problem. The MACV staff took several

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actions during the year which bore on this subject. A time-phased plan to reduce TCN wages and the development of TCN wage and classification guides were begun. A cost module was evolved which demonstrated that labor costs could be reduced \$80-100 million over a three year period by training Vietnamese to replace TCNs. Also MACV Directive 37-6 was promulgated 15 Sep as a positive measure to reduce dollar manipulation and restrict dollars available for manipulation. (See Chapter XIV, Discipline, Law, and Order.)

(C) On 4 Nov the GVN unilaterally issued to the press the following communique regarding its request to the USG to take steps to reduce the number of TCNs employed by US contractors:

At the request of the Ministry of Labor, the United States Embassy has agreed to discuss with the Ministry regarding the reductions in the number of foreign workers employed by United States Government contractors in Viet-Nam. The Ministry hopes that it will be possible to achieve substantial reductions in the number of such personnel as soon as possible, thus opening up new employment opportunities for Vietnamese nationals. The Embassy assured the Ministry of its full cooperation and has agreed to a thorough examination of this important matter.

At this same time, the US Civilian Manpower Committee was considering a plan which if implemented hopefully, would reduce the number of TCNs in RVN by approximately 80 percent by the end of 1971. If all members of the committee concurred in the proposed plan, there would be no more than 4,000 TCNs in-country on 31 Dec 71. COMUSMACV, on 15 Nov, directed the release of all TCNs employed by nonappropriated fund (NAF) activities by 31 Mar 70 except those employed by the Vietnam Regional Exchange who were to be released by 31 Dec 70. ⁵⁹

(U) The wage and classification guides for TCN employees of USG contractors in RVN was issued 1 Dec as MACV Manual 690-2. The job descriptions and evaluation guides contained in the manual were developed as an aid in determining the appropriate pay for positions occupied by TCNs. Pay levels were structured in the same manner as that used by the US Forces Classification System in RVN. This manual reflected the desire to standardize wage and job classification for TCNs, thereby helping to solve one more problem of the TCN in RVN.

CIVILIAN IRREGULAR DEFENSE GROUP

(S) The Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) was a paramilitary organization composed of civilians organized into companies and stationed in camps along the border or near VC infiltration routes. The VN Special Forces, advised by the 5th Special Forces Group Airborne (5th SFGA), was responsible for organizing, training, and employing the CIDG. The 5th SFGA also administered the financial and logistics support of the program which was funded by a special US appropriation (Parasol/Switchback funds). The mission of the CIDG was to conduct border surveillance operations, collect intelligence, interdict enemy infiltration routes, and lines of communication, and to expand GVN control in remote areas where such control was limited or non-existent. ⁶⁰

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(S) The lightly armed CIDG had been most effective when employed in reconnaissance in force operations and least effective in static security. It also had been employed effectively to block enemy withdrawal, to screen border areas, and to conduct search and destroy operations against enemy company-size and smaller units. The limitations of the CIDG were those of any paramilitary force: training and discipline were below the standard of conventional units, leadership was defective, it was handicapped by limited heavy firepower, and it lacked organic transportation. ⁶¹

(C) In May 1965, a US study group had formulated a detailed plan for converting the majority of the CIDG companies to RF companies. This change would result in the CIDG being more responsive to the central government. The JGS, recognizing the desirability of incorporating all military and paramilitary organizations into the RVNAF, agreed in principle but, recognizing that the unique role of CIDG remained valid for the immediate future, recommended that the conversion be voluntary. The concept was that gradually, as the areas in which CIDG units were operating became more suited for RF operations, the CIDG units would be converted to RF. The cadres would be absorbed into the RF under the same rules applied to cadres for religious sect units, i. e., appointments would be temporary pending completion of qualifying schools. ⁶²

(C) Disadvantages of the conversion would be a reduced resupply capability since 5th SFGA would no longer be supplying the camps, a decrease in pay to some unmarried personnel after the conversion, reluctance of the civilian members of CIDG to join the RVNAF, and increased pressure on those RVNAF deserters who had joined the CIDG. These and numerous other problems were experienced so that, by the end of 1966 which was the target date for completion of the conversions, only two camps had been converted. ⁶³

(U) For 1968, the 5th SFGA had established the following major program goals:

1. The improvement of the caliber of VNSF personnel and staff of the VNSF high command to develop VNSF competence to assume the control and functioning of the CIDG program. This would include the improvement of VNSF expertise in the fields of administration and logistics.
2. The improvement of CIDG training to generate an expansion of GVN influence in assigned areas of responsibility by the conduct of increased combat operations and an intensive counterintelligence program in conjunction with improved PSYOP and civic action efforts.
3. To apply sound command management techniques to on-going CIDG programs and plans to accomplish all missions of the 5th SFGA for the least monetary expenditures.

(C) A major objective for 1968 had been to increase the interdiction of VC/NVA routes and base areas. The increased strength authorization contributed to a 6.08 percent increase in enemy KIA rate and a 109.9 percent increase in enemy captured since 1967. The deployment of the Mobile Strike Forces (MSF) during the Tet Offensive and the abortive "August Offensive" had proved the effectiveness and value of the MSF concept. Camp Strike Force (CSF) personnel strengths had remained relatively stable since 1967 and the closing of CIDG camps, the reduction in the USASF participation in the subsector role, although moderately offset by the establishment of new camps, had resulted in a reduction of the total number of operations conducted in 1968.

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(U) Since 1 Jan 68, commensurate with the goal of bringing CIDG troops under the direct control of RVNAF and thereby eliminating CIDG as a separate US-sponsored military force, the 5th SFGA, in conjunction with the VNSF High Command, had converted four CIDG camps to RF status. Significantly, MACV procedures had been established to reimburse the resulting draw-down on PARASOL/SWITCHBACK assets for certain items. In consonance with stated objectives, two CIDG camps, Ben Soi and Kinh Quang II, had been transferred to RVNAF control--VNSF. These transfers represented the goal of the program-- to help train the VNSF to lead, fight, and command without advisors.

(C) The command goals for 1968 also had envisioned improved training for the CIDG; in particular, the MSF/CSF elements. The sub-program of training 100 percent of the CIDG in basic training and a 3-7 week refresher program at a corps training center had not been achieved only in that most basic and refresher training for MSF/CSF had been conducted at the CIDG camp sites as in 1967. Significantly though, there had been a 17 percent increase in CIDG trained at the Corps Training Center in 1968. The sub-program goals of establishing a bilingual MSF/CSF basic training and refresher program of instruction had been completed as well as improving the input and instruction at the VNSF training center for VNSF. The established goal of training 1,700 troops of the Combat Reconnaissance Platoons during 1968 had not been achieved mainly due to Tet attacks; some 1,049 troops had been trained during 1968 as compared with 1,566 trained during 1967. In addition, the first Camp Commanders Course had been completed during the year.

(U) During 1968, the CIDG AWOL rate had varied from 12 per 1,000 in January to 11.5 per 1,000 in October with little fluctuation during the intervening months. This had compared favorably with the overall RVNAF rate of 14 per 1,000. Prior to 1968 few awards had been given by the VNSF to CIDG personnel in recognition of valor. As a result of increased counter-part/advisor intensified reporting and awards management, the number of valor awards given to CIDG had risen significantly.

(U) In consonance with the established objectives of the VNSF medical program, the 5th SFGA operated four permanent-type CIDG hospitals and one large dispensary servicing 5,946 patients. The 5th SFGA medical personnel trained 353 indigenous nurses and 2,018 CIDG medical aidmen to help further the subprogram of establishing an indigenous medical program in-country. Over 3,840 MEDCAP missions were conducted in treatment of 824,318 persons as compared with 723,890 personnel in 1967.

(U) The command objective of improving VNSF expertise in logistics had resulted in the establishment of a 5th SFGA MASF Program Office to advise and assist the VNSF High Command in coordinating efforts to obtain authorized equipment level. This "self-help" approach had changed from the 1967 trend of USASF supplying VNSF equipment shortages and providing other support available through ARVN channels. 64

(S) The CIDG strength as of 1 Jan 69 was 42,451. These forces were organized into 272 CSF companies, 43 MSF companies, and 126 Combat Reconnaissance Platoons. These forces were based in 76 camps generally located in remote areas of RVN. Forty-four percent were ethnic VN, 42 percent were Montagnards, and the balance were Cambodians, Laotians, and Chinese. In October 1968, COMUSMACV, in forwarding the plan for Phase II RVNAF Improvement and Modernization, had indicated that CIDG would be reduced from an authorized level of 48,000 to about 24,000 in 52 camps. Then, in February, COMUSMACV stated that with the current emphasis on Phase II Improvement and Modernization, it was important that the concurrent reduction of CIDG to the Phase II force level be started. The Phase II CIDG posture was

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predicated upon the threat postulated for Phase II wherein the CIDG camps would be organized and oriented towards a border surveillance mission. However, the current tactical situation throughout RVN dictated that it would be best to retain as many as possible of the trained CIDG force under RVNAF control. It was considered desirable to convert CIDG in selected camps to RF rather than effect a general demobilization. A reduction from the then current strength to the Phase II level would involve 18,000 personnel. This figure was based on the estimation that 5,000 CIDG personnel would be unsuitable for service in the RVNAF.

(S) The MACV concept for reducing the CIDG to the 24,000 strength level was to convert to RF those interior camps whose presence would strengthen security and aid the pacification effort, and to retain as CIDG those camps that were located along the border or whose forces could be moved to border locations when the tactical situation permitted. In addition, during this transition phase, it would be desirable to retain the maximum number of MSF companies in CIDG. In order to reach the 24,000 strength level, 19 camps would be converted to RF and all camps no longer required would be closed. ⁶⁵

(C) By mid-year six camps had been converted and a combined plan had been developed by MACV/JGS for the reduction of the CIDG to a strength of approximately 26,000 personnel by converting 13 interior camps to RF and closing one camp. The reduction/conversion plan was approved by COMUSMACV on 4 Jul. Implementation of the plan was awaiting approval of an increase of 10,297 RF spaces requested as a part of the MACV recommendations on the GVN Mid-way proposals. The conversion was expected to be accomplished within nine months after approval of the RF space increase. Three months lead time would be required before the initial camps could be converted and the remainder of the 13 camps would be converted over a six month period. ⁶⁶ The planned disposition and strength of the CIDG forces after the reduction/conversion is shown below.

CIDG - Planned Disposition and Strength After Reduction/Conversion

		I	II	III	IV	
		CTZ	CTZ	CTZ	CTZ	SFOB
Camp Strike Force	Companies	27	36	27	24	2
	Approx Strength	3,564	4,752	3,564	3,168	264
Combat Recon Platoons	Companies	27	36	27	24	1
	Approx Strength	918	1,224	918	816	34
Mobile Strike Forces	Companies	3	6	3	4	11
	Approx Strength	552	1,104	552	736	2,096
Other Units	Strength	438	594	498	466	
Sub Totals	Strength	5,472	7,674	5,532	5,186	2,394

GRAND TOTAL 26,258

(C) SECDEF approval of an increase of 10,297 RF spaces, required to implement the plan, was received 20 Aug. On 15 Sep, J3 conducted a US planning conference to discuss details of the plan, conversion procedures, and lessons learned from previous conversions. Major commands, 5th SFGA, and the MACV staff were represented.

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(S) On 6 Oct, COMUSMACV confirmed by message implementation of the plan to convert 14 CSF CIDG camps. The approved schedule of camp conversions, and the number of RF units to be formed at each camp, was as follows:

1. Date of Camp Conversion - 31 Jan 70.

a. II CTZ

Mang Buk: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (511 pers)
Trung Dung: Ten RF companies and two Group Hq (1,268 pers)

b. III CTZ

Dong Xoai: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (511 pers)
Chi Linh: Will be closed 31 Jan 70

c. IV CTZ

My Da: Six RF companies and one Group Hq (757 pers)
Kinh Quang II: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (511 pers)

2. Date of Camp Conversion - 31 Mar 70

II CTZ: An Lac: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (511 pers)

3. Date of Camp Conversion - 30 Apr 70

a. III CTZ

Bunard: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (511 pers)
Minh Thanh: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (511 pers)

b. IV CTZ

My Dien II: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (511 pers)
My Phuoc Tay: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (634 pers)

4. Date of Camp Conversion - 31 May 70

a. II CTZ

Plateau GI: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (511 pers)
Nhon Co: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (511 pers)

b. III CTZ

Duc Phong: Four RF companies and one Group Hq (511 pers)

The "B" Camp at Song Be could be closed after the conversion of Camp Duc Phong on 31 May 70.

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(S) No firm schedule had been determined for the conversion of the MSF and planning was to be predicated on the basis that these conversions would take place between 1 Mar and 30 Jun 70. The reduction was to be from 35 to 19 MSF units. Where MSFs were not to be converted or retained, they were to be recruited into other understrength CIDG and RVNAF units, or demobilized. ⁶⁷

(S) On 1 Nov, COMUSMACV met with C/JGS and CG II CTZ in regard to combat activity in the Bu Prang and Duc Lap area. The C/JGS indicated that the CIDG personnel looked upon themselves as US forces and CG II CTZ indicated that ARVN and CIDG did not mix. In view of these opinions, COMUSMACV indicated that it was essential to accommodate the Vietnamese thinking. He therefore directed total US disengagement from the CIDG effort and that it "...be turned over to the RVNAF." This was to include funding and was to be completed as soon as possible but in a responsible manner.

(S) Many factors were to be considered in determining whether to convert camps to RF or close them but two basic criteria were: (1) existence of a population base in a relatively secure environment from which an RF unit could be sustained, and (2) accessibility, preferably by land LOC, in order that it could be reinforced and supplied. Under this criteria, COMUSMACV asked his major field commanders to comment on the impact of closing CIDG Camps sometime during FY 71. ⁶⁸ The camps to be considered for closure under the above criteria were:

- I CTZ - None
- II CTZ - Plei Djereng, Trang Phuc, Dak Pek, Tieu Atar, Dak Seang, Plei Me, Bu Prang, Plei Klering, Plei Mrong, Ben Het, Duc Co.
- III CTZ - Duc Hue, Thein Ngon, Tong Le Chon, Katum
- IV CTZ - Thanh Tri, Cai Cai, To Chau, Bu Koai, Vinh Gia.

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CHAPTER V

MILITARY OPERATIONS

BACKGROUND

(U) Operations in RVN were conducted in physical and population environments that could scarcely have been more difficult if they had been created that way. The RVN had five physical characteristics of primary importance in the planning and implementing of operations.

1. Its nearly 66,000 square miles stretched almost 570 miles in length, but its width varied from 135 miles in the south to only about 45 miles in the north.
2. This elongation resulted in a disproportionately long coastline on the east, which required a heavy commitment of personnel and equipment to patrol it.
3. To the west there was also a disproportionately long land frontier. While the frontier to the north, across the DMZ, was recognizably hostile, the long western frontier had also to be considered hostile since the neighboring states of Laos and Cambodia were incapable of preventing the VC/NVA from freely using their territories.
4. Within RVN there were three distinct major regions, each imposing unique considerations for operations. These were the Mekong Delta, usually referred to simply as the Delta, the southern portion of the Chaine Annamitique, usually referred to as the Central Highlands, and the Central Lowlands. The Delta occupied the southern two-fifths of the country, and its fertile alluvial plains favored by heavy rainfall, made it one of the great ricegrowing areas of the world. The Central Highlands, with several high plateaus dominated the area northward from the Delta to the DMZ and continued on into NVN. The Central Lowlands (still so designated even though they were central only to pre-partition Vietnam and not to RVN) consisted of a fertile, narrow coastal strip along the eastern slopes of the Central Highlands.
5. Lying entirely below the Tropic of Cancer, the area had a hot and humid climate. The monthly mean temperature was about 80° F. (about 26°C.), and the annual rainfall was consistently heavy. The monsoons, blowing generally from the southwest in the summer and from the northeast in the winter, profoundly influenced the temperature and rainfall. The monsoons of Vietnam are discussed in detail in Annex B. The strength and direction of the wind, as well as the amount and timing of the rainfall, however, varied considerably from place to place because of differences in latitude and the marked variety of physical relief. The seasons were exactly opposite in northern RVN as compared to southern RVN.

(U) Although perhaps 85 percent of the RVN population of some 17 million were of Vietnamese ethnic origin, the population was not cohesive. On the contrary it contained forces that tended to splinter rather than to unify. Of the several minority groups, among the most important were the various highland tribes -- often referred to collectively as Montagnards (a term these simple, tough people detested) -- who numbered over half a million and lived primarily in the mountains and on the high plateaus. Another important minority was the Chinese, who

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DEMARCATION LINE



SCALE (M) 0 25 50 75 100 Miles
0 25 50 75 100 Kilometers



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- Military corps boundary
- Province boundary
- Da Lat Autonomous municipality

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FIGURE V-1

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totalled more than .75 million and lived mainly in the cities, where they were commonly thought of as merchants, contractors, managers, rice brokers, moneylenders, and operators of bars and gambling establishments. The third important minority was nearly half a million Khmers (akin to the principal population of Cambodia). These primarily lived in the provinces along the Cambodian border as farmers. The 85 percent ethnic Vietnamese shared a single trait with the minority groups. They were family-oriented, not nation-oriented. Their basic allegiance was to ancestors, not to the GVN, or any other geographic, political, or social grouping. The ethnic Vietnamese, as well as the minority groups, were, aside from normal geographic distinctions, further divided religiously and politically. The 42 so-called major political parties of RVN are discussed in some detail in Chapter II. It was estimated that 70 to 80 percent of the population were Buddhists, either by profession or by default. That is, by not professing adherence to any other faith; however, this could not be taken as an indication of solidarity. It was not unusual for a family to take a cross or rosary beads to worship at a Buddhist temple, and then return home to pay homage at a typical Confucian shrine. Professed adherence to more than one religion was not uncommon. The Buddhists, themselves, were formally divided at least into the Mahayana, or Greater Vehicle, and the Theravada, (sometimes called Hinayana), or Lesser Vehicle. The Mahayana Buddhists claimed 13 million adherents, while the Theravada minority, numbering perhaps about 2 million, included large numbers of ethnic Cambodians living in the Delta. In all, 16 Buddhist sects were recognizable. Two religions indigenous to the Delta, both founded in the 20th century, enjoyed important followings. The Cao Dai, the older of the two, was a self-styled reformed Buddhist sect. It was a synthesis of different beliefs drawing on a wide range of ethical teachings and writings, including those of Confucius, Jesus, and Victor Hugo. It claimed 2 million adherents distributed among the main body of believers and numerous dissident splinter groups. The Hoa Hao, like the Cao Dai, also identified itself as a reformed Buddhist sect, but unlike the Cao Dai, it, in fact, preserved a distinctive Buddhist coloration. Concentrated especially in the area between the Mekong and the Hau Giang Rivers, the Hoa Hao had an estimated membership of about one million. Catholic authorities claimed nearly two million adherents. Other organized religions represented in the RVN in tiny minorities included Christianity in its Protestant form, Hinduism, Islam, the Bahai faith, and the Church of Latter Day Saints. Thus operations in RVN had to contend not only with a disparate geography, a difficult climate, but also with an unusually fragmented population.

GROUND OPERATIONS

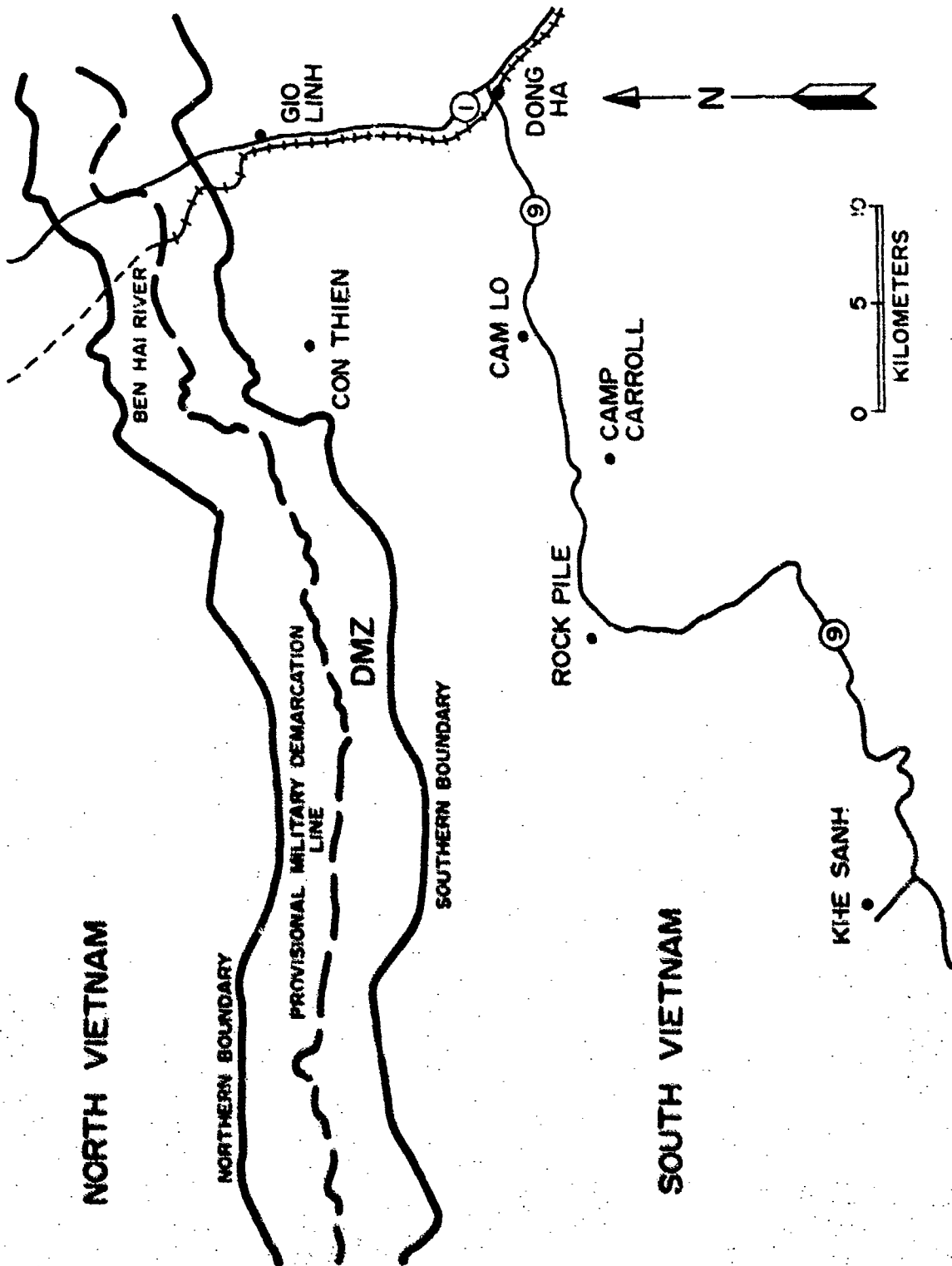
Introduction

(U) As in 1968 the major share of the RVNAF and FWMAF operational effort was devoted to the tedious and seemingly endless task of finding, fixing, and neutralizing small enemy formations. These formations became increasingly difficult to find as the year progressed. Literally thousands of 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 operations conducted precluded their being covered in detail in this history. Annex A contains a listing of operations which resulted in greater than 99 enemy KIA. The operations which were selected for inclusion here were representative of the ground action as it progressed through the year, or were of special significance within the various CTZs. The combat techniques which

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FIGURE V-2

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have been selected for inclusion do not purport to be all inclusive, but rather they describe some of the techniques which were in common use during the year.

Rules of Engagement

(S) During 1969, as in previous years, US/FWMA forces, when operating near a border of RVN, were subjected 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 Demilitarized Zone (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 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 COMUSMACV. The rules of engagement for the three border areas applied to US/FWMA forces only. However, in view of the political implications involved from the US point of view and because of the extent US forces were involved in RVNAF operations, US personnel in positions to influence RVNAF operations conducted near the border areas were directed to make every possible effort to assure that such operations were conducted under the US rules of engagement.

(S) The "Rules" were not to be construed as prohibiting commanders from defending their units against armed attack. Commanders were authorized and directed to take all necessary counteractions against VC/NVA forces in exercise of the right of self-defense and to defend their units against armed attacks with all means at their disposal. Nothing in the "Rules" was to be construed as granting authority to initiate operations in Cambodia or Laos to obtain objectives in RVN. The "Rules" were not to be applied toward widening the conflict in SEASIA. 1

The Demilitarized Zone

(TS) During 1969, no US ground forces were permitted to cross the southern boundary of the DMZ without specific orders from COMUSMACV, with the exception of squad-size patrols authorized CG III MAF by COMUSMACV into the DMZ south of the Provisional Military Demarcation Line (PMDL) (See Figure V-2). Platoon-size backup was also authorized to assist extraction. The ARVN patrols authorized by JCS could be used in this patrol operation. Commanding General III MAF was directed to provide patrol plans for the following day to the MACV Command Center by 1800 hours each day.

(S) Prior to returning fire against that believed to be originating north of the PMDL, all commanders were directed to ascertain positively without any doubt that such fire was actually, in fact, coming from north of the PMDL. Enemy artillery, mortar, and rocket fire was to be answered with heavy counter-battery fire and air attack until enemy weapons were silenced. In the event that surface to air missiles (SAM) or antiaircraft artillery (AAA) were fired at friendly aircraft over RVN, friendly forces were directed to destroy the enemy's weapons installations and immediate supporting facilities.

(S) 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 authorized and directed that commanders

concerned take whatever action was necessary to defend their commands south of the southern boundary of the DMZ, including counterattacks to destroy the enemy.

(S) 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 would take action necessary to defend their commands south of the southern boundary of the DMZ while simultaneously reporting the situation through command channels to COMUSMACV with request for further guidance or orders.

(S) Immediate pursuit was authorized into North Vietnamese territorial seas or air space in response to hostile acts and in pursuit of any vessel or aircraft where actions indicated, with reasonable certitude, that it was operating in support of the VC/NVA insurgency in RVN. 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.

(S) Reaction to enemy e from positions in the southern half of the DMZ against friendly forces would be immediate and the weight decisively destructive. Observation aircraft under 3d Mar Div control would maintain surveillance of the southern half of the DMZ, but always remain south of the PMDL (Ben Hai River). Enemy personnel and positions identified in the southern half of the DMZ were to be attacked promptly by fire and destroyed. ²

Cambodia

(S) Authorities and procedures were established to provide for the defense of RVN and for the security of US/RVN/FWMA forces in RVN. Except in unusual circumstances as demanded by operational requirements in RVN, action was to be avoided which would bring US forces into such proximity to the border as to make it likely that these authorities would have to be used. When possible, COMUSMACV was to be informed in advance of operations along the Cambodian border which might invoke the special authorities contained in the Rules of Engagement directive. Normal security/surveillance operations conducted by CIDG forces were exempt from this prior reporting requirement.

(S) In emergency situations, US forces were authorized and directed to take necessary counteractions in exercise of the right of self-defense against VC/NVA attacks directed at US/RVN/FWMA forces from locations inside Cambodia. An emergency situation was considered to exist when, in the judgement of the commander, actions by the enemy endangered his force to such an extent that immediate countermeasures had to be taken. Cambodian forces were not to be engaged except in self-defense, and no Cambodian villages or populated areas were to be attacked. Counteractions against VC/NVA forces could include:

1. Artillery and air strikes against enemy firing from the Cambodian side of the border against US/RVN/FWMA forces.
2. Maneuver by US troops, while actually engaged and in contact with VC/NVA forces, into Cambodia only as necessary for the preservation of the friendly force.

(S) Herbicide operations, defoliation, and crop destruction continued to be restricted near the border during 1969. Urgent requirements for defoliation near the border south of QL-13

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were to be considered by Headquarters MACV on a case-by-case basis. Defoliation operations north of QL-13 could be conducted within 1.5 km of the Cambodian/RVN border.

(S) Infrared light could be directed into Cambodia as required for effective surveillance. Clear light, however, could only be directed into Cambodia as necessary in the defense of friendly forces, but not merely to harass the populace. ³

Dak Dam

(S) One of the purposes for the rules of engagement was to reduce the possibility of deterioration of US/GVN relations with the more or less neutral neighboring states of Laos and Cambodia. The relations with Laos were of a special, but not delicate nature, since the Lao government was openly fighting in Laos the same enemy, the NVA, as the Allies in RVN. Cambodia, on the other hand, sought to maintain a semblance of neutrality, and the newly reestablished US mission in Phnom Penh was bombarded with formal protests from the Cambodian government for every alleged violation of Cambodian airspace, territory, or territorial waters. The protests were normally submitted pro forma, and were treated by the US and the GVN as such. Inevitably, a cause celebre evolved. In mid-November the Special Forces camp at Bu Prang in Western Quang Duc Province was in a state of siege. Three of its supporting fire bases had been either overrun or deliberately closed. The camp was receiving probes on the ground as well as indirect fire attacks. The situation could, at best, be described as serious. On 16 Nov artillery was observed firing from the vicinity of the Cambodian post at Dak Dam against the camp at Bu Prang. Subsequently the post and the firing positions were taken under fire by TACAIR. There was substantial damage to the post, to Cambodian vehicles, including an alleged ambulance, and there were casualties to Cambodian troops.

(C) Cambodian press, and politicians, as well as some foreign press articles criticized the US/GVN for the attack on what was alleged to be a well-known and clearly marked Cambodian installation. At year's end the case was still under investigation. ⁴

Laos

(S) The 1969 Rules of Engagement for Laos, while essentially the same as those for Cambodia, were slightly less restrictive. Authority was granted to employ artillery fires against valid military targets in Laos. All operations planned near the RVN/Laotian border were to be reported in advance to COMUSMACV.

(S) In emergency situations, US forces were authorized and directed to take necessary counteractions in the exercise of the right of self-defense against enemy attacks directed against US/RVN/FWMA forces from locations inside Laos. An emergency situation existed when, in the judgement of the US commander, the urgency for taking timely counteractions in self-defense of US/RVN/FWMA forces precluded obtaining prior approval. Such counteractions could include:

1. Artillery and air strikes against enemy forces firing from the Laotian side of the border against US/RVN/FWMA forces.
2. Maneuver by US troops, while actually engaged and in contact with enemy forces, into Laos as required for the preservation of the force.

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(S) In the execution of the above, Laotian villages were not to be attacked except:

1. When fire was being received therefrom; and
2. When, in the judgement of the US commander, the attack on a populated area was essential for the preservation of the force. ⁵

Holiday Stand Down

(U) Related to the Rules of Engagement were the cease fire periods normally held during the Christmas, New Year, Tet, and Buddha's Birthday holidays.

(S) Observing the number of truce violations during previous cease fire periods and the little apparent differentiation between the enemy's cease fire and noncease fire hostile actions, Ambassador Bunker and COMUSMACV in November 1968 were in agreement with President Thieu that, although a cease fire at Christmas 1968 and Tet 1969 would be necessary out of respect for the feelings of the Vietnamese people for whom these holidays were important, the periods should be as short as possible. The 1968 Christmas stand down was observed for 24 hours. No stand down was observed by US, RVN or FWMA forces during the 1969 New Year's period. ⁶

(U) Temporary cessation of offensive operations was observed 161800H - 171800H Feb 69. All units were instructed to be vigilant during the Tet period and alert to any type of enemy activity. RVNAF personnel were given a minimum of special leaves and substantial forces were kept at their posts at all times. Troops were further restricted from discharging fireworks or firing weapons in lieu of fireworks during Tet in order to prevent enemy infiltrators from attacks and sabotage. ⁷

(S) COMUSMACV was determined that the enemy would not gain an advantage, military or political, through attacks during the cessation. Allied forces were instructed to show utmost vigilance and prompt reaction in order decisively to defeat enemy initiated activity during the Tet cessation. ⁸

(S) The general rules for the stand down period were:

1. Enemy actions which impinged on friendly forces were not to be tolerated. Responses to such actions were to be decisive and overwhelming.
2. United States forces were not to initiate any air, ground, or naval offensive operations, however, each commander would take all actions necessary to carry out the inherent right and responsibility of a commander for self-defense of his forces. These actions would include, but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Illumination.
 - b. Defensive ambushes on routes of approach to friendly positions.
 - c. Intensified aerial reconnaissance and ground patrolling in areas containing potential enemy concentrations and along enemy LOC.

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d. Helicopter gunship cover for convoys and other movement.

3. Friendly forces in contact as a result of a VC/NVA attack were not to break contact or decrease the intensity of action until the VC/NVA forces withdrew.

4. All US forces were to be maintained in a high state of readiness before, during, and after the cessation period.

5. Harassing and interdiction fires were not to be conducted during the cessation period.

6. MARKET TIME and GAME WARDEN operations were to continue.

(TS) During the Tet cease fire:

1. Small unit patrols into the DMZ continued.

2. Effective rules of engagement for the DMZ continued.

3. ARC LIGHT strikes were not conducted in RVN but were continued in Laos.

4. Tactical air strikes continued in Laos with aircraft based outside of RVN.

5. Intensified aerial reconnaissance over NVN and Laos continued with armed escorts.

6. Search and rescue operations continued.

7. PRAIRIE FIRE and DANIEL BOONE operations, including support activities, continued.

(U) All normal operations were resumed at the conclusion of the cessation period.

(U) During the 24-hour stand down, 197 enemy-initiated incidents were reported. Of these, 84 of the incidents were considered significant (casualties occurred). As a result of the incidents involving US forces, eight US personnel were killed and 94 were wounded. Enemy losses during the period were 151 killed and 19 suspects detained.

(U) The US, FWMAF and RVNAF observed temporary cessation of offensive operations from 300600H - 310600H May 69 in observance of Buddha's Birthday.

(S) The general rules for the cessation were:

1. Enemy actions which impinged on friendly forces were not to be tolerated. Responses to such actions were to be decisive and overwhelming.

2. US forces would not initiate any air, ground, or naval offensive operations; however, each commander was authorized and directed to take all actions necessary to carry out the inherent right and responsibility of a commander for self-defense of his forces. These actions were to include, but not limited to:

a. Illumination.

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- b. Defensive ambushes on routes of approach to friendly positions.
 - c. Intensified aerial reconnaissance and ground patrolling in areas containing potential enemy concentrations and along LOCs.
 - d. Helicopter gunship cover for convoys and other movement.
3. Friendly forces in contact as a result of a VC/NVA attack were not to break contact or decrease the intensity of action until the VC/NVA forces withdrew.
 4. Commanders at all levels were to ensure that US forces were maintained in a high state of readiness before, during, and after the cessation period.
 5. Harassing and interdiction fires were not to be conducted during the cessation period.
 6. All normal operations were to be resumed at the conclusion of the cessation period.
 7. MARKET TIME, GAME WARDEN and Search and Rescue operations were to continue during the cessation period.
 8. All VC/NVA hostile acts and friendly responsive actions were to be reported immediately.
 9. No public comment was to be made concerning the cessation and/or these instructions. All inquiries were to be referred to Headquarters, MACV.

(U) Liberation Radio, in a Vietnamese language broadcast of 26 May, reported that the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN) had decided to cease military attacks throughout RVN for 48 hours in honor of Buddha's Birthday. The cease fire commenced at 290700H May and terminated 310700H May.

(U) During 1968, a cease fire for Buddha's Birthday had not been observed due to the enemy offensive during the period. ⁹

Ho Chi Minh Memorial Cease Fire

(U) On 4 Sep Radio Hanoi announced that President Ho Chi Minh had died at 0947 the previous day. The next day the Viet Cong Radio said that Communist forces in RVN would start a 3-day cease fire at 0100, 8 Sep to observe Ho Chi Minh's death.

All liberation people's armed forces in all areas in South Vietnam including the main armed forces, regional forces, peoples forces, guerrillas, and the armed security forces will cease military offensive for three days in order to join the whole people in mourning for President Ho starting at 1 a.m. September 8, 1969 until 1 a.m. September 11, 1969.

They warned that truce violators would be severely punished.

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(U) In Washington, U. S. officials indicated it would be up to the RVN government to say how it would respond to any cease fire. On 8 Sep the JGS, RVNAF and the USMACV issued the following joint statement:

The Communist announcement of a cease fire must be viewed in the light of the savage rocket attacks against civilians in Danang and other aggressive actions which have followed the announcement. It must also be viewed in the light of the known history of past Communist violations of cease fires which they themselves had proposed. Consequently, it is not our intention to talk about cease fires at this time.

The scale of our military operations in the past has been influenced by the scale of enemy military operations. During this period the scope of our military operations will likewise be influenced by the nature of the enemy military operations.

This joint statement somewhat softened the approach taken in the following statement by the President of the RVN the previous day:

So far, the Communists have never observed a truce, even a truce proposed by themselves. They have on the contrary capitalized on periods of truce to increase the killing of innocent people and their destructive attacks, as evidenced particularly by their offensives during the Tet holidays and the Christmas season in 1968, and during Tet and the anniversary of Buddha in 1969. Furthermore, recently the Communists have increased shelling to kill innocent people and military activities, in what they term as the expression of their sorrow for Ho Chi Minh and continuation of the proletarian and revolutionary achievements of their leader. Therefore, in order to assure effectively the protection and security of our compatriots, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam decides not to accept the three-day truce proposal of the Communists during the Ho Chi Minh. Moreover, this case cannot be considered as other traditional holidays. In the light of past experience during many previous truce period, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam calls on compatriots and popular forces to be vigilant in defending against increased Communist terrorism and sabotage during the days to come.

(S) Despite the joint JGS/USMACV statement, US forces were instructed that US military casualties should be kept to an absolute minimum during the period the enemy had designated for

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a cease fire, that there should be, in practice, no offensive ground operations except as necessary for security of forces, and that employment of tactical air and naval forces in RVN would be consistent with the instructions covering ground operations. The US advisors were forbidden to accompany their counterparts on planned offensive operations. B-52 missions were discontinued for the first two days of the cease fire period.

(U) Meanwhile, the RVNAF continued operations at a substantial level and the Communists began violating their own cease fire within an hour of when it was supposed to start and they continued offensive operations against US/FWMAF and RVNAF, and population centers at approximately the same level as before the cease fire. ¹⁰

(C) The level of enemy activity during the cease fire was evident from a review of his KIA casualties. ¹¹ These were as follows:

ENEMY KIA

CTZ	Attacks		Incidents	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
I	19	16	24	2
II	0	2	6	0
III	33	7	52	6
IV	0	0	29	0
Total	52	25	111	8

Christmas 1969

(U) In early December the GVN announced that it would observe Christmas and New Year's truces from 1800, 24 Dec to 1800, 25 Dec and from 1800, 31 Dec 69 to 1800, 1 Jan 70 Saigon time. On 5 Dec, after the GVN announcement, the VC announced they would observe Christmas and New Year's truces of three days each. The announcement of the clandestine "Liberation Radio" said the Christmas truce would begin at 0100, Saigon time, 24 Dec and end at 0100, 27 Dec. The New Year truce would start at 0100, 30 Dec, and end at 0100, 2 Jan. Both of the Communist command's unilateral cease fires would overlap the two 24-hour truces which had been announced by RVN President Thieu on 4 Dec. The clandestine radio said that during the two 3-day cease fire periods, all NFLSVN forces in RVN "must cease all military operations." As usual there was no mention of NVA troops observing a cease fire. ¹²

(U) On 6 Dec President Thieu refused to extend RVN's 24-hour Christmas and New Year's cease fires to match the 3-day stand downs declared by the VC. President Thieu said, "Only the Communist lackeys who want to lend a hand to the enemy in order to kill the soldiers and innocent people still believe in the Communists' goodwill to have a truce. We have to remember that during Christmas and New Year of the previous year, the Communists always proposed in a false manner to have a longer truce than our side's truce, with the unique purpose to violate in order to increase the killings of our soldiers and innocent people." The President cited four cease fires during 1967 and 1968 in which he said there were a total of 648 enemy violations. Thieu's office said, "the president thinks that for humanitarian purposes, the 24-hour period is sufficient." ¹³

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(S) US forces were authorized to observe truces from 2000, 24 Dec to 2000, 25 Dec and from 2000, 31 Dec to 2000, 1 Jan. ¹⁴

(S) On 11 Dec COMUSMACV issued the following instructions to VMAC, covering the Christmas (from 1800 Saigon time, 24 Dec to 1800, 25 Dec) and New Year (from 1800, 31 Dec to 1800, 1 Jan 70) cease fire periods, after warning that intelligence indicated that the enemy was capable of launching attacks against Allied forces or installations at any time and that the enemy had taken advantage of cease fire periods to launch attacks and to increase his resupply:

React decisively against enemy truce violations which impinge on friendly forces. Reactions to violations are to be decisive and overwhelming.

US forces are not, repeat, not to initiate any air, ground, or naval offensive operations. However, each commander is authorized and directed to take all action necessary to carry out the inherent right and responsibility of a commander for self-defense of his forces. These actions will include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Illumination.
2. Defensive ambushes on routes of approach to friendly positions.
3. Intensified reconnaissance patrolling in areas containing potential enemy concentrations and along enemy LOC.
4. Helicopter gunship cover of convoys and other movements.
5. Counter battery fire.

Friendly forces in contact as a result of an NVA/VC attack are not, repeat, not to break contact or decrease the intensity of action until the NVA/VC forces withdraw.

Commanders at all levels are to ensure that US forces are maintained in a high state of readiness before, during, and after the cease fire period.

Interdiction fires are not, repeat, not to be conducted during the cease fire period.

Resume all normal operations at the conclusion of the cease fire period:

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The following operations will continue during the cease fire period:

Market Time, Game Warden, Sea Lords, Search and Rescue operations.

Report immediately... all NVA/VC hostile acts during the cease fire period together with friendly responsive actions.

No, repeat, no public comment will be made concerning the cease fire and/or these instructions. Refer all persons making inquiries concerning the cease fire to this headquarters. ¹⁵

(S) COMNAVFORV directed that the employment of naval forces, including air, would be confined to normal patrols and waterborne guard posts in MARKET TIME, GAME WARDEN, SEA FLOAT, SEA TIGER, RSSZ, and all SEA LORDS barrier operations during the periods of cease fire. No troop insertions were to be initiated except in retaliation for enemy-initiated acts; however, Rung Sat Special Zone troop sweeps along Long Tau channel were considered defensive and necessary to ensure the defense of shipping. ¹⁶

(S) On 20 Dec COMUSMACV promulgated special operational instructions for the Christmas and New Year cease fire periods. The instructions covered US military operations in the DMZ, Laos, Cambodia, and NVN during the cease fire periods.

(TS) Small unit patrols were to continue into the DMZ, under the existing ROE. Tactical air strikes were to continue in Laos. Tactical air support was authorized to be flown from in-country bases to support certain operations. PRAIRIE FIRE and SALEM HOUSE operations in Laos and Cambodia also were to continue (See Annex F).

(S) ARC LIGHT strikes were not to be conducted in RVN during the cease fire periods. ARC LIGHT strikes were to continue in Laos during the cease fires. Search and rescue operations were to continue, as were certain naval operations. All normal operations were to be resumed at the conclusion of the cease fire period. ¹⁷

(C) As the case in all past cease fires, the VC/NVA actively violated the truces they had proposed. There were 61 major and 54 minor violations of the Christmas truce and the same number of violations of the New Year truce. The Christmas truce violations resulted in 21 friendly KIA and 101 enemy KIA. By contrast, the 1968 Christmas truce resulted in only 47 major violations and 86 minor violations, with a total of nine friendly and 33 enemy KIA. ¹⁸

In-Country Rules of Engagement

(C) Operations within RVN were controlled by MACV Directive 525-13, which had been published on 12 Oct 68 to provide specific rules of engagement for the conduct of the air and surface battles within RVN which were applicable to US/FWMAF and RVNAF. It prescribed that all practical means would be employed to limit the risk to the lives and property of friendly forces and civilians; and to avoid the violation of operational and national boundaries. It prohibited

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modification by subordinate commanders. It established itself as the basis for standing operating procedures for the conduct of artillery, tank, mortar, riverine, and naval gunfire as well as tactical air and armed helicopter support. It asserted that it was not the intent of the directive to restrict unnecessarily commanders from performing their assigned operational missions.

(C) Rules of Engagement in the RVN for use of Artillery, Tanks, Mortars, Naval Gunfire, Riverine Forces, and Air and Armed Helicopter Support was the title of a new MACV Directive 525-13, published on 9 Mar which superseded the directive of 12 Oct 68. The directive had the same purpose, but it included for the first time a definition for "in contact", and clarified and amplified the previous directive. The new directive was specifically applicable to all MACV staff agencies and subordinate commands. The salient portions are quoted as follows:

The nature of operations and the battle area in the RVN, and the frequent conduct of combined operations involving, US, FWMAF, and RVNAF, require that specific rules of engagement (ROE) be adhered to by all friendly armed forces.

All practical means will be employed to limit the risk to the lives and property of friendly forces and civilians, and to avoid the violation of operational and national boundaries.

This directive will not be modified by subordinate commanders nor will directives modifying or interpreting substantive rules in the directive be published by subordinate commands. Unit commanders are authorized to issue instructions to users, provided such instructions do not modify or interpret the substantive rules contained in this directive.

This directive will serve as the basis for standing operating procedures for the conduct of artillery, tank, mortar, riverine, naval gunfire, and tactical air and armed helicopter support.

It is not the intent of this directive to unnecessarily restrict commanders from performing their assigned operational missions.

Advisors will take all necessary advisory actions to encourage RVNAF compliance with these ROE.

Senior tactical commanders and senior advisors will:

1. In coordination with their RVNAF counterparts, insure that all units conduct their operations within the ROE for RVN as contained at Annexes A and B of this directive, and develop positive, practicable

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target clearance procedures to preclude error or misunderstanding.

2. Insure that all personnel engaged in fire support activities are fully cognizant of the contents of Annexes A and B, with specific emphasis upon procedures pertaining to clearance for fires and air strikes.

3. Require advisory personnel to insure that US fire support resources provided in support of RVNAF operations are employed within the ROE in this directive. If the requests of RVNAF units fall outside the provisions of this directive, advisors will take such action as necessary to suspend that US fire support which is in violation of the ROE.

The following definitions were provided:

Specified Strike Zone (SSZ). An area designated for a specific period of time by GVN/RVNAF in which there are no friendly forces or populace and in which targets may be attacked on the initiative of US/FWMAF/RVNAF commanders.

Urban Areas. Built-up areas where there is a heavy density of population and houses, including those suburbs immediately adjacent to built-up areas, i. e., Saigon, Danang, Hue, Nha Trang, etc.

Air Strike. An attack on specific objectives by fighter, bomber, or attack aircraft on an offensive mission, except that ARC LIGHT will be governed by MACV Directive 95-14 (S).

Close Air Support. Air action against hostile targets which are in close proximity to friendly forces and which require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces.

Strike Aircraft. Fixed wing aircraft of the fighter, bomber, and attack classification capable of conducting an airstrike.

In Contact. A unit is considered in contact when it is engaged with an enemy force, being fired upon, and returning fire. The supported unit commander is responsible for making the "in contact" determination.

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(C) An annex to the directive provided guidance concerning the control of artillery, mortar, tank, riverine, and naval gunfire support provided to the surface commander by US/FWMAF. The terms artillery and artillery fire as used in the annex included mortars and tank guns, and mortar and tank gun fire.

These rules of engagement apply to the conduct of the surface battle to include employment of artillery, tank, mortar, riverine, and naval gunfire by US/FWMAF/RVNAF in both offensive and defensive situations within the RVN. These rules also apply to the employment of US/FWMAF/RVNAF fire support resources in cross support missions for all forces.

Artillery, tank, and mortar gunnery techniques. Care and attention must be exercised continuously in the application of all gunnery techniques. The application of these techniques and the exercise of sound judgment on the part of all personnel involved in solving the gunnery problem and in exercising precise gunnery procedures will provide the best assurance against endangering friendly forces and civilians, or destroying or damaging property of friendly forces or civilians.

Naval Gunfire. Procedures applicable to the conduct and control of naval gunfire are contained in effective edition Operation Order 320A-YEAR, Commander Task Group 70.8, and in the case of Market Time, COMCOSURVFOR Operations Order 201-YEAR. Procedures applicable to the conduct and control of naval gunfire in riverine areas are contained in CTF 116 and 117 Operation Orders 201-YEAR.

Specified Strike Zones. Unobserved fire may be directed against all targets and target areas located within a specified strike zone, after notifying the appropriate US/FWMAF clearance authority.

1. The force commanders/SA, IV CTZ in their respective CTZ (or their authorized representatives) are the military clearance authorities.
2. The ARVN corps commander in each CTZ has the authority to designate, suspend temporarily, or cancel a SSZ. Notification of SSZ designation, temporary suspension, or cancellation will be originated by the ARVN corps commanders (for US/FWMAF through US command channels) to all commands operating in the CTZ, with a minimum of 72 hours notification in advance of a change in status. Requests for SSZ

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designation, temporary suspension, or cancellation will be submitted to the ARVN corps commander via appropriate command channels.

Uninhabited Areas Outside of SSZ.

1. Fire may be directed against VC/NVA forces in contact without obtaining province chief, district chief, sector commander, or sub-sector commander and US/FWMAF military commander's approval.
2. Unobserved fires may be directed at targets and target areas, other than VC/NVA forces in contact, only after approval by province chief, district chief, sector commander, or sub-sector commander and US/FWMAF military commander, as appropriate, has been granted.
3. Observed fire may be directed against targets of opportunity which are clearly identified as hostile without obtaining province chief, district chief, sector commander or sub-sector commander and US/FWMAF military commander's approval.
4. Approval by province chief, district chief, sector commander, or sub-sector commander and US/FWMAF military commander, as appropriate, is required before directing fire on targets of opportunity not clearly identified as hostile.

Villages and Hamlets.

1. Fire missions directed against known or suspected VC/NVA targets in villages and hamlets occupied by noncombatants will be conducted as follows:
 - a. Such fire missions will be controlled by an observer and will be executed only after approval is obtained from the province chief or district chief, as appropriate. The decision to conduct such fire missions will also be approved by the attacking force battalion or task force commander, or higher.
 - b. Villages and hamlets not associated with maneuver or surface forces will not be fired upon without prior warning by leaflets and/or speaker systems or by other appropriate means, even though fire is received from them, provided that friendly troops are not placed in jeopardy in the interim.

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c. Villages and hamlets from which hostile fire is being received, may be attacked without prior warning and without prior clearance if the attack is in conjunction with a surface operation involving maneuver of surface forces through the area, and if in the judgment of the surface commander, his mission or troops would be jeopardized by such warning or delay.

2. Surface commanders may initiate direct fire into villages and hamlets upon receiving larger caliber fire (including rockets and RR fire) from therein; however, response should be designed for self-protection and directed at the source of hostile fire.

3. The use of incendiary type ammunition will be avoided unless absolutely necessary in the accomplishment of the commander's mission or for preservation of the force.

Urban Areas.

1. Fire missions directed against known or suspected VC/NVA targets in urban areas must preclude unnecessary destruction of civilian property.

2. Fire support in urban areas will be governed by the following:

a. The decision to conduct indirect fire missions in urban areas is retained at corps/field force or NAVFORV level. Approval must be obtained from both the corps commander and the US field force level commander/CG, DMAC. All indirect fire missions will be controlled by an observer. The exception to this policy is the built-up areas of Saigon/Cholon/Gia Dinh City. CG 1. FFORCEV is authorized to delegate authority to CG, CMAC for employment of indirect fire in the built-up areas of Saigon/Cholon/Gia Dinh City. No further delegation is authorized.

b. Direct fire, flat trajectory weapons are well suited for attacking point targets in urban areas. Properly aimed and controlled, their use will reduce damage to urban property. The use of direct fire weapons e. g., tanks, Sheridan M551 and recoilless rifles, both 90mm and 106mm, is authorized in a direct fire role in urban areas at the discretion of the local ground force commander without the prior approval of the field force/corps commander or, in

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the case of Saigon/Cholon/Gia Dinh City, the CG of CMAC. Direct fire weapons will be used to the maximum, in the elimination of enemy strong points or fortified structures in urban areas. All types of munitions, except incendiary (white phosphorus), may be used in direct fire weapons including flechette, HEAT, beehive, and canister rounds.

c. Maximum use will be made of helicopters to maneuver troops and heavy weapons to roofs of key buildings and other locations to expedite cordoning.

d. Prior to firing in urban areas, leaflets and loudspeakers and other appropriate means will be utilized to warn and to secure the cooperation and support of civilian populace even though fire is received from these areas.

e. Incendiary type munitions will not be used except when friendly survival is at stake.

f. Riot control agents will be employed to the maximum extent possible. CS agents can be effectively employed in urban area operations to flush enemy personnel from buildings and fortified positions, thus increasing the enemy's vulnerability to allied firepower while reducing the likelihood of the destruction of civilian property. Commanders will be prepared to use CS agents whenever the opportunity presents itself.

g. The above stated procedures will not be deviated from except when, in the opinion of the responsible commander, the situation demands such immediate action that these procedures cannot be followed. Such situations include preservation of the force or the right of self-defense.

Religious Monuments/Buildings.

1. The enemy has shown by past actions that he takes advantage of areas or places normally considered as nonmilitary target areas. These areas are typified by those of religious or historical value to the Vietnamese. Where it is found that the enemy has sheltered himself in places of worship such as churches or pagodas and has installed defensive positions in public buildings and dwellings, the responsible senior commander in the area (brigade or higher) may order

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the attack to insure prompt destruction of the enemy. The responsible commander must identify positive enemy hostile acts either in execution or preparation. Weapons and forces used will be those which will insure prompt defeat of enemy forces with minimum damage to structures in the area.

2. The exception to this policy is the palace compound in the Hue Citadel. For this specific area, commanders should consider the employment of massive quantities of CS crystal.

(C) Another annex defined specific operational restrictions and rules of engagement for US rotary wing and fixed wing aircraft in the RVN.

All targets selected for an air attack will be approved by the province chief directly or through higher RVN authority. Air attacks in specified strike zones (SSZ) may be conducted without additional GVN/RVNAF clearance only after notifying the appropriate US/FWMAF military clearance authority.

1. The force commanders/SA, IV CTZ in their respective CTZ (or their authorized representatives) are the military clearance authorities.

2. The ARVN corps commander in each CTZ has the authority to designate, suspend temporarily, or cancel a specified strike zone. Notifications of SSZ designation, temporary suspension, or cancellation will be originated by the ARVN corps commander (for US/FWMAF through US command channels) to all commands operating in the CTZ, with a minimum of 72 hours notification in advance of a change in status. Requests for SSZ designation, temporary suspension, or cancellation will be submitted to the ARVN corps commander via appropriate command channels.

All pilots will endeavor to minimize noncombatant casualties and civilian property damage. Air attacks will not be executed where identification of friendly forces is in doubt.

All pilots will have knowledge of the disposition of friendly forces and/or civilians prior to initiating an air attack. This information may come from ground or air briefing.

For purposes of this directive, references to the forward air controller (FAC) also encompass and apply to the Marine Tactical Air Coordinator Airborne (TACA).

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USAF, USMC, and USN strike aircraft will normally be controlled by the following in the order of preference as listed:

- *1. US Air Force ALO/FAC or Marine TACA/FAC.
- *2. VNAF FAC/FAO.
3. USAF MSQ-77 (SKY SPOT) or USMC TPQ-10.

*Under VFR conditions, when a USAF, USMC or VNAF FAC is not available, a qualified Army Target Identifying Pilot (TIP) may designate the target to be struck and the flight leader of the strike aircraft will control the strike. The supported ground commander will acknowledge clearance for a TIP directed strike.

Commanders of units assigned armed helicopters and strike aircraft will insure that records of ordnance expended are maintained a minimum of three months. Records will include as a minimum:

1. Type and amount of ordnance expended on each target.
2. Coordinates of target.
3. Date and time of initial and final engagement of the target.
4. Unit supported.

In an emergency, when compliance with the provisions of paragraph 2e, above, is not possible, the following personnel may designate the target for strike aircraft:

1. The commander of a ground unit or US advisor engaged with enemy forces.
2. The US/FWMAF pilot of an airplane or helicopter supporting a ground unit, who has radio contact with the ground unit involved and can identify friendly positions in relation to enemy positions.
3. The US/FWMAF/RVNAF pilot of an airplane or helicopter required to operate within the vicinity of a hostile village or hamlet for the purpose

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of conducting medical evacuation or supply missions, and where enemy fire presents an immediate threat to the lives of the helicopter or transport crew.

Villages and Hamlets. Fixed wing aircraft close air support missions that involve strikes on hamlets or villages must always be controlled by a FAC and be initiated only after US/GVN/RVNAF clearance has been obtained. Armed helicopters involved in air attacks on hamlets and villages must always be in direct radio contact with the designated control agency of the responsible ground commander. The decision to conduct such air operations must also be approved by the attacking battalion ground task force or higher commander.

1. If the attack on a village or hamlet from which enemy fire is being received is deemed necessary, and is executed in conjunction with a ground operation involving movement of ground forces through the area, and if in the judgement of the commander his mission would be jeopardized by such warning the attack may be made without warning.

2. If the attack on a village or hamlet is not in conjunction with any immediate ground operations, the inhabitants must be warned by leaflets and/or loudspeaker system prior to the attack and must be given sufficient time to evacuate the area. Once the inhabitants of a pre-planned target area have been adequately warned that the area has been selected as a target and given sufficient time to evacuate the hamlet/village may then be struck without further warning.

Urban Areas. Air attacks directed against known or suspected VC/NVA targets in urban areas must preclude unnecessary destruction of civilian property and must by nature require greater restrictions than the rules of engagement for less populated areas. Therefore the following specific US/GVN/RVNAF clearance procedures and restrictions must be strictly adhered to:

1. Air attacks directed against urban areas must always be controlled by a FAC and be initiated only after US/GVN/RVNAF clearance has been obtained. The decision to conduct air attacks in urban areas will be retained at corps/field force level. Approval must be obtained from both the corps commander and the US field force level commander. This approval is required for all US air attacks to include those in support of RVNAF.

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2. The exception to this policy is the built up areas of Saigon/Cholon/Gia Dinh City. CG, II FFORCEV is authorized to delegate authority to CG, CMAC for employment of US tactical air and armed helicopters in the built up areas of Saigon/Cholon/Gia Dinh City. No further delegation is authorized.

3. Prior to subjecting urban areas to air attack, even when fire is received from the area, at least one of the following means will be used to warn the civilian population and to obtain their cooperation and support: leaflets, loudspeakers (air or ground), or notification through the appropriate civilian clearance authority or US/FWMAF military commanders.

4. The use of incendiary type munitions will be avoided unless destruction of the area is unavoidable and then only when friendly survival is at stake.

(C) Specific instructions for close air support to include interdiction day or night were given as:

ALO/FAC will:

1. Have thorough knowledge of the ground scheme of maneuver.

2. If possible, secure a VNAF FAC or RVNAF observer to assist in directing an air strike when in support of an ARVN unit. If a RVNAF observer is not available, an ALO/FAC is authorized to direct the air strike.

3. Maintain reliable communications with the ground unit and strike aircraft.

4. Make positive identification and mark the target. COMUSMACV may waive the marking requirement in the case of specially equipped aircraft.

5. Insure that strike pilots are aware of friendly locations in relation to target, characteristics of target area, and local weather conditions.

6. Use 1:50,000 or larger scale maps of target area, and photographs when available.

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Pilots of strike aircraft will:

1. Always be under the control and in direct radio contact, for a strike, with a FAC or designated control agency, airborne or ground.

2. Have visual contact with target or target marker.

3. Always ascertain the position of friendly troops (or civilians, when applicable).

4. Ascertain local conditions regarding weather, target area, and surrounding terrain characteristics.

5. Defend themselves against ground fire providing:

a. Source of fire can be visually identified.

b. The strike can be positively oriented against the source.

c. The fire is of such intensity that counteraction is necessary.

6. Utilize artificial illumination for night strikes.

7. A waiver may be granted for specifically equipped aircraft (i.e., TRIM, DIANE, TROPIC MOON, etc.), of these requirements stipulated in paragraph 3b (1), (2), and (6), above. Waivers will be granted by COMUSMACV on a case-by-case basis only.

(C) The following border restrictions for aircraft conducting assigned missions in the RVN were prescribed:

US/FWMAF military fixed wing and rotary wing type aircraft will not cross the demilitarized zone or Cambodian border unless specifically authorized by COMUSMACV.

All FAC operating in the vicinity of the border will have a 1:50,000 or larger scale map of the target area (e.g. 1:25,000). Maps, mosaics, and photographs will be made available to the pilots.

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Joint operations-intelligence facilities will be established and complete pre-strike briefings and post-strike debriefings will be conducted for strikes within 5,000 meters of the border, when practical.

Cambodian border restrictions which are additional to the above.

1. Strike aircraft within 5,000 meters of the Cambodian border will be under positive control of a FAC or MSQ-77/TPQ-10. The authority to waive this requirement is restricted to COMUSMACV or his designated representative.

2. All organizations responsible for planning or execution of missions within 5 km of the border will have posted in operations a 1:25,000 or larger scale map on which the Cambodian border is distinctly marked, on the RVN side, to the depth of 5 km. In addition, aircraft crews operating in close proximity to the Cambodian border will be briefed on the provisions of regulations relating to border operations and will have in their possession a suitable map which accurately portrays the border and the buffer zone.

3. Aircraft supporting border outposts (fire support, reconnaissance, supply, and transportation) are allowed to operate as necessary in the outpost area, but will neither cross nor fire across the border.

4. Appropriate radar stations will flight follow aircraft on missions within 5 km of the border within equipment capability.

(C) Religious monuments and public buildings were given special attention:

The enemy has shown by his actions that he takes advantage of areas or places normally considered as nonmilitary target areas. These areas are typified by those of religious background or historical value to the Vietnamese. Where it is found that the enemy has sheltered himself in places of worship such as churches and pagodas or has installed defensive positions in public buildings and dwellings, the responsible senior brigade or higher commander in the area may order an air attack to insure prompt destruction of the enemy. The responsible commander must identify positive enemy hostile acts either in execution or preparation. Weapons and forces used will be those

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which will insure prompt defeat of enemy forces with minimum damage to structures in the area. The exception to this policy is the palace compound in the Hue Citadel. For this specific area, commanders should consider the employment of massive quantities of CS crystal.

(C) The prescribed procedures for jettisons were:

Munitions will be jettisoned only in designated jettison areas.

During night or IFR conditions, aircraft will be under positive radar control while jettisoning, except during emergencies covered in paragraph 6d below.

During day VFR, drops will be monitored by radar whenever possible.

Aircraft may jettison munitions in other than designated areas during emergencies when there is an immediate threat of injury to the crew or damage to the aircraft. Every effort will be made to insure that munitions are not jettisoned so that they impact into or near inhabited areas.

(C) Specific instructions for armed helicopter engagements were:

US Army, US Marine, US Air Force, and US Navy armed helicopters will be marked "US Army", "US Marine", "US Air Force", or "US Navy" as appropriate.

For the purposes of this directive, an armed helicopter is defined as any helicopter that has mounted an ordnance delivery system.

Fire only when all three of the following requirements are satisfied:

1. In direct radio contact with and under the control of the designated control agency of the responsible ground commander.
2. The target or target marker can be visually identified.
3. Friendly and civilian positions are positively identified.

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Urban areas will be attacked only when directed by the responsible ground commander and then in accordance with the rules set forth in paragraph 2i of this annex with the exception of the FAC requirement. Such attacks when so directed will be governed by the restrictions set forth in paragraph 7c, above. Further, only point targets (i. e. specific buildings) will be engaged and these targets must be positively identified to the pilot. The engagement of area targets in urban areas is prohibited.

Targets of opportunity acquired in a specified strike zone may be engaged any time after notifying the appropriate US/FWMAF/RVNAF clearance authority.

Ordnance delivery systems in armed helicopters will be fired only when authorized by the aircraft commander.

Airborne test firing of weapons will be conducted only after obtaining permission from the appropriate clearance authority.

Pilots of helicopters are permitted to defend themselves against ground fire any time providing all three of the following requirements are satisfied:

1. The source of fire can be visually identified.
2. The attack can be positively oriented against the source.
3. The fire is of such intensity that counteraction is necessary.

(C) Air reconnaissance and aerial surveillance missions were subject to the following instructions:

Reconnaissance aircraft operating near the RVN/Cambodian border are not allowed to cross the border and penetrate Cambodian airspace.

Aerial reconnaissance flights along or near the Cambodian border are vital to the security of the RVN and US defense efforts. However, extreme care must be exercised in planning and executing in-country missions by reconnaissance aircraft of all services to insure that inadvertent overflights do not occur.

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US Army aircraft may be armed with target marking ordnance while on surveillance missions.

Commander, 7th Air Force, prescribes rules of engagement and restrictions for air to air combat in the RVN. These are published by that headquarters in Tactical Air Control Center (TACC) Operating Instructions (OI) No. 55-3, 30 Mar 66.

(FOUO) In addition to the formal rules of engagement, a 14 Oct 66 directive had called for restraint and the judicious application of force in combat to minimize noncombatant battle casualties. This directive was superseded on 2 Mar 69 by one with a similar purpose which was applicable to all US Forces, US Advisors of RVNAF forces in RVN, and the FWMAF as appropriate. The principal provisions were:

The use of unnecessary force and indiscriminate employment of weapons which lead to noncombatant casualties embitter the population, may make them become sympathetic to the VC cause, and can result in a more costly and difficult pacification program. The enemy can be expected to exploit noncombatant casualty incidents and property destruction by US Forces, FWMAF, and RVNAF.

Commanders at all echelons are to establish a balance between the force and weapons necessary to accomplish their missions and the safety of the non-combatant populace. This requires the exercise of restraint beyond that usually required of soldiers on the battlefield.

Commanders of US Forces will plan and conduct operations in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Consideration will be given to both military and psychological factors. Measures will be taken to preclude prestrikes in friendly populated areas, reconnaissance by fire into hamlets and villages, and uncontrolled harassing and interdiction fires.

2. Proper selection of landing zones; the careful planning and delivery of ordnance during air strikes; the careful execution of riverine operations; the proper employment of artillery and armed helicopters; and the configuration of strike zones to exclude populated areas, where possible, will prevent unnecessary loss of life and damage to property of noncombatants.

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3. Commanders will conduct continuing programs to emphasize both the short and long range importance of minimizing noncombatant casualties. Troop indoctrination briefings will be conducted prior to field operations when practicable.

a. Briefings will include location of non-combatant and friendly forces; measures designed to prevent mutual interference; measures for control of fire support; rules of engagement; identification and recognition signals; emergency procedures; and other appropriate measures.

b. Forward air controllers, armed helicopter commanders, and artillery forward observers will be briefed on areas to be avoided because of friendly forces or noncombatants.

4. Operations should be planned in coordination with province and district chiefs insofar as security for the specific operation permits.

a. A liaison officer from US combat forces conducting operations in a particular area should be positioned at the proper headquarters (sector, district, or province) for coordination.

b. US advisors may perform this function in the absence of other liaison personnel.

5. Qualified RVNAF liaison officers from appropriate RVNAF commands to US combat forces should be assigned for every significant operation when possible.

US advisors will continually encourage their counterparts to promulgate and implement these instructions for their own forces.

Implementing instructions and SOP's concerning this directive will be issued by major commanders and senior advisors.

Commanders will insure distribution to the lowest echelons and to other services as required.

Periodic reminders will be issued as deemed appropriate.

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Combat Techniques

(C) In the war in RVN, as in all wars, many special techniques had been developed and employed which had enhanced the effectiveness of combat operations against the enemy. Some of those developed and employed by US and ARVN combat units are described below. Examples of successful employment during 1968 are given. Employment of these techniques continued into 1969. 19

JITTERBUG Technique

(C) Description.

1. The JITTERBUG technique combined the best capabilities of infantry and air mobility to find, fix, and destroy the enemy with the least expenditure of time and resources.

2. As the operation commenced, a command and control aircraft, gunships and two light observation helicopters, one carrying an Airborne Personnel Detector (APD),²⁰ began to search the assigned area. Elements of an infantry company carried in five unarmed aircraft were on airborne alert over the area. A second five "slick"-loads²¹ of troops were held either on strip or airborne alert, ready to reinforce a ground contact. When the APD obtained a positive reading, CS gas was employed to force any enemy personnel in the area to reveal themselves. The light observation helicopters conducted low level runs to observe for movement. If enemy personnel were sighted, the first flight of five "slicks" was immediately inserted to engage them. As the situation developed, the second ground force could be inserted to block avenues of escape or to reinforce the contact. The remainder of the infantry company could be employed as a reaction force and inserted into the area by the 10 "slick" aircraft. If the contact was of sufficient size, other forces could be employed, and a PILE ON operation initiated. (See PILE ON operation this section.)

3. By employing only half of the force at one time, troop strength could be conserved and multiple targets could be searched, thus increasing the probability of attaining contact.

4. Although inserting only five troop-laden "slicks" at one time might have appeared to carry an undue risk, the additional support aircraft, two gunships and two light observation helicopters had considerable firepower immediately responsive to support the elements in contact.

(C) Resources Required. One infantry company employed as the airmobile unit with an additional company designated as a ready reaction force made up of 10 "slick" aircraft, one command and control ship, two gunships, two light observation helicopters, and an APD were required.

(C) Example of Successful Employment. On 10 Sep 68, a JITTERBUG operation had been conducted by the 2d Bn, 60th Inf northwest of Can Duce in Long An Province. Upon gaining contact, both five "slick" elements had been inserted. Additional elements of the 2d Bn, 60th Inf, plus two companies from other battalions had been used to surround and destroy the enemy. This action had resulted in 66 enemy killed and 10 captured.

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NIGHT HUNTER Operations

(C) Description.

1. A NIGHT HUNTER task force was composed of an AN/TPS-25 radar, an air cavalry element, a reaction force transported either by helicopters or boats, and supporting artillery. The command and control element, located at the ground surveillance radar direction center, included the brigade commander and S3 representative, direct support artillery battalion commander, commander or S3 of the supporting air cavalry element and a command element from the battalion controlling the reaction forces.

2. The command and control element directed the radar search pattern and analyzed sightings as they were acquired and plotted. The object was to detect, whenever possible, a target of sufficient size to warrant the employment of the air or waterborne forces. Small, isolated sightings were normally attacked only by artillery fire.

3. When a suitable target complex was acquired, the entire NIGHT HUNTER task force swung into action. At a coordinated time, an artillery time-on-target mission was initiated to deliver illumination and variable time-fuzed high explosive shells onto one or more of the sightings in the target complex. Illumination only was fired if the entire target complex fell within 500 meters of a populated area. The reaction force was maneuvered into an area adjacent to the target complex to engage enemy personnel attempting to flee the target area. The air cavalry element scrambled and was vectored into the target area so as to arrive simultaneously with the artillery time on target, thus maximizing the shock and surprise of the artillery attack and illumination. Targets acquired by the air cavalry element were subject to immediate attack by machinegun, grenade, and rocket fire. The artillery illumination continued, adjusted by the air cavalry fire team leader. If targets warranted, the ground forces were inserted to search and neutralize the entire area.

4. It was planned that the task force should stand down periodically to allow the enemy to regain some confidence in his ability to move undetected at night. When radar sightings indicated the enemy was again moving, the task force was activated and resumed operations.

5. The most profitable times to conduct NIGHT HUNTER operations were from 1930 to 2400 hours and 0330 to 0530 hours.

(C) Resources required were a command and control element; ground surveillance radar; air, water, and ground maneuver elements; gun boats, and supporting artillery. In order to conduct day and night operations on a continuing basis, a high aircraft availability rate was required.

(C) Examples of Successful Employment.

1. On a NIGHT HUNTER operation conducted on 31 Oct 68, the air cavalry element of the task force had been committed four times, had gained contact three times and killed 14 enemy.

2. The 1st Bde, 9th Inf Div had scored 47 enemy killed and 11 sampans destroyed in three NIGHT HUNTER operations conducted in Can Giuoc District, Long An Pro ince, from 31 Oct to 3 Nov 68. The 9th Div Arty AN/TPS-25 ground surveillance radar, elements of A/3 Sqdn,

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17 Air Cav, 2d Bn, 4th Arty (105mm towed), C/5-42 Arty (155mm towed) and elements of the 3d Bn, 39th Inf had been employed on these operations.

PILE ON Operations

(C) Description. The PILE ON operation commenced when a sizeable enemy force was located. Immediate action was taken to fix the enemy, to determine the extent of his positions, and immediately reinforce the friendly units in contact with sufficient ground forces to surround the enemy and insure that he could not escape. When these actions were accomplished, maximum fire power was employed to inflict the heaviest possible casualties. Next, an intensive sweep was conducted to mop up any remaining enemy elements. While basically a reinforcement operation, the PILE ON operated on the principle that maximum losses should be inflicted on any enemy force that was located positively, and that deferral of efforts to locate and destroy other enemy elements were required until this was accomplished. Such operation, of necessity, required taking units from other potentially profitable operations, but this operation was considered worthwhile when it was possible to surround, fix, and destroy a known enemy force. Numerous such operations were conducted successfully with as many as seven infantry companies inserted within a few hours, resulting in heavy losses to the enemy.

(C) Resources required were a battalion or larger maneuver force with supporting air and artillery. The number of combat elements to be employed depended upon the size of the enemy force located.

(C) Examples of Successful Employment.

1. On 7 Oct 68, at 0850 hours 5 km northwest of Trung Lap, in Hau Nghia Province, two companies from 2d Bn, 12th Inf, of the 25th Inf Div had engaged an enemy force identified as elements of the 101st NYA Regt, and had exchanged small arms and automatic weapons fire. As the contact developed, three companies from 3d Bn, 187th Inf had reinforced, and artillery had fired in support. The contact had continued until 1930 hours when friendly forces began a sweep of the area. At 0045 hours contact had been re-established, and artillery and light fire teams had resumed support. At 0430 hours contact had been lost again. Results were 145 enemy killed and one prisoner. Thirty-five rifles and two light machineguns were captured. Friendly losses were eight US killed and 13 wounded.

2. On 12 Aug 68, the 5th Bn, 60th Inf (Mech), of the 9th Inf Div, had contacted a large enemy force in a bunker complex 3 km west of Can Duoc in Long An Province. Seven companies from the 2d Bn, 39th Inf, 4th Bn, 47th Inf and the 2d Bn, 60th Inf had reinforced the contact. The battle area had been cordoned and air strikes, artillery, SPOOKY gunships, light fire teams and flare ships had supported the friendly forces through the following day. Enemy losses were 104 killed, 24 detained, three Hoi Chanh, and 21 individual and five crew-served weapons. Friendly losses had been 18 killed and 27 wounded.

SNATCH MISSIONS

(C) Description.

1. The SNATCH MISSION provided an effective means of locating and capturing or killing enemy soldiers and VCI in outlying areas.

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2. The mission was conducted by two airborne teams directed by a commander who controlled the operation from a command and control helicopter.

3. Each team was composed of one OH-6A helicopter, which scouted the assigned area of operations; an AH-1G Cobra, which provided aerial security, and a UH-1D helicopter, which transported remaining personnel including a 5-man armed reconnaissance patrol, one National Policeman, and an interpreter.

4. When the scout craft located individuals or groups whose presence or behavior was suspicious, the UH-1D landed. The armed reconnaissance patrol provided security while the National Policeman and interpreter checked identity papers, questioned the suspects, and searched for contraband. If the suspects could not be cleared, they were evacuated for further interrogation. If they were cleared, the mission was continued.

(C) Resources Required. One command and control helicopter; two UH-1D, two OH-6A and two AH-1G helicopters, 10 armed reconnaissance patrol members, two National Police and two interpreters were required.

(C) Examples of Successful Employment.

1. On 22 Nov 68, the 11th Armd Cav Regt missions had resulted in two confirmed enemy killed, possibly an additional four killed, and five small arms, 1000 rounds of AK ammunition and one grenade captured.

2. On 4 Dec 68, a similar mission conducted by elements of the 11th Armd Cav Regt had resulted in four enemy killed, two captured, and 11 detainees.

3. Based on information received from a Hoi Chanh, elements of the 25th Inf Div had conducted a SNATCH MISSION against a group of enemy gathered for a wedding. The operation had resulted in the capture of one senior communications liaison cadre (the bride), one assistant VC squad leader (the groom), and eight other VC (guests), including a district-level finance chief.

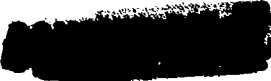
NIGHT SEARCH Operations

(C) Description.

1. The NIGHT SEARCH Operation had proved successful in the interdiction of enemy LOCs, particularly in areas not covered by artillery.

2. A NIGHT SEARCH task force consisted of one or two air cavalry troops and one rifle company. The air cavalry was organized with one command and control helicopter, two Cobra gunships, one UH-1D carrying a spotter team of snipers, one flareship and four UH-1D aircraft transporting an aero-rifle platoon. In addition, a C-47 flareship could be employed to provide illumination during periods of reduced visibility. This aircraft dropped flares 5-10 km from the target area to provide enough illumination to activate the starlight scopes.

3. The command and control element directed the spotter team to the target area. Utilizing M14 or M16 rifles mounted with starlight scopes and firing tracer ammunition, the spotter team located targets and marked them with tracers. The two Cobra gunships attacked



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the targets marked by the spotters. If the air cavalry troop commander determined that an insertion was necessary, the aero-rifle platoon was positioned to block the main avenues of withdrawal. The ground commander, who commanded either a battalion or a brigade, directed the insertion of the rifle company if the target warranted it.

4. A NIGHT SEARCH operation could cover an area of approximately 20 by 30 km without difficulty.

5. The snipers who made up the spotter teams necessarily were thoroughly briefed on the operation, had communications with the gunship pilots, and should have observed four or five such operations before being utilized.

6. The most profitable time to conduct this operation was from 1930 to 2400 hours and from 0330 to 0530 hours, when enemy transport activity was at a peak.

7. A modified NIGHT SEARCH operation could be conducted utilizing two Cobra gunships, and two UH-1D aircraft (one for the spotter team and the other as a flareship).

(C) Resources Required. One or two air cavalry troops were required. They were organized to provide a command and control helicopter, two Cobra gunships, one UH-1D helicopter, a spotter team, one flareship, and four UH-1D aircraft transporting an aero-rifle platoon, an infantry maneuver force with lift helicopters and a C-47 flareship if it was required by reduced light conditions. In order to conduct day and night operations on a continuing basis, a high rate of aircraft availability was required.

(C) Examples of Successful Employment.

1. During January the 1st Cav Div conducted 14 NIGHT SEARCH operations, killing 134 enemy.
2. In February, 31 NIGHT SEARCH operations resulted in more than 300 enemy killed.

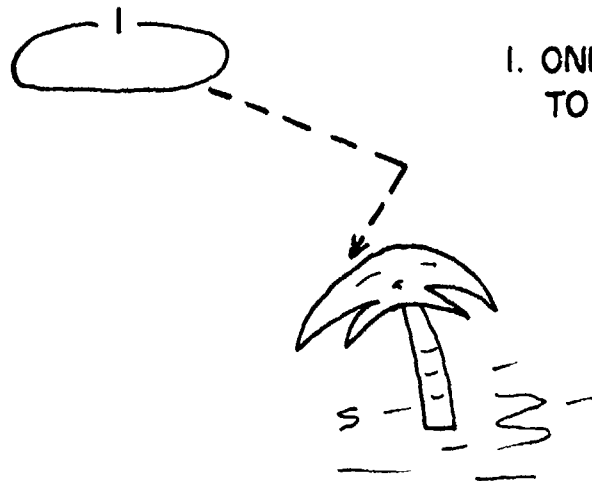
BUSHMASTER

(U) The BUSHMASTER operation involved an infantry company broken down into platoon size elements saturating and interdicting known enemy communications/liason routes. The BUSHMASTER was normally conducted in areas where the enemy was strong and where breaking down into less than platoon size elements usually invited unacceptable losses. The key to this type operation was reliable intelligence. There had to be significant enemy activity in the proposed location if the operation were to be successful. In a normal situation the BUSHMASTER force consisted of three mutually supporting ambush sites of platoon size. The command element was located at one of the sites.

(U) Planning for a BUSHMASTER operation was initiated at battalion level. An AO was chosen based upon latest intelligence such as POW interrogations, previous operations, agent reports, and patterns of activity developed by sensor sightings. The area for an infantry company covered approximately a 1 km grid square and could be of any shape. The BUSHMASTER force was usually inserted by helicopter during the last two hours of daylight. It could be inserted directly into its AO or adjacent to it with the troops infiltrating by foot. In areas where

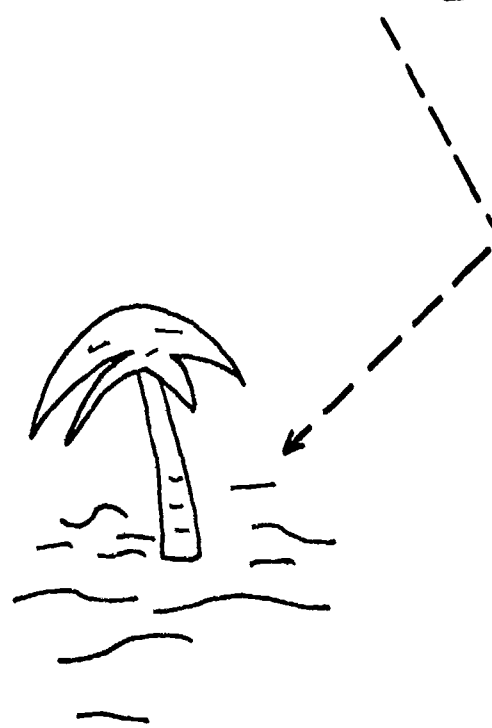
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CHECKERBOARD



1. ONE SQUAD MOVES TO VANTAGE POINT.

2. NO SIGHTING - PLATOON MOVES UP, WHILE.....



3. SCOUT SQUAD MOVES TO NEXT VANTAGE POINT.

4. ENEMY BUNKERS SIGHTED. SCOUT SQUAD LEADER MARKS TARGET WITH TRACERS OR SMOKE.



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FIGURE V-3

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there were large rivers, the BUSHMASTER force could be inserted by boat. The majority of BUSHMASTERS were designed to interdict LOCs such as critical waterways and routes of movement. However, one unit in the 9th Inf Div, the 4th Bn, 39th Inf, targeted its BUSHMASTER operations against enemy units elsewhere within their AO. This type of targeting proved to be very successful for them since enemy units within their AO still operated in large groups.

(U) If a unit was inserted into its AO during the hours of darkness, it could move directly to the proposed ambush sites. Should the unit decide to infiltrate on foot it would first stop in a day holding position. It was always assumed that the enemy had observed the unit during its movement to the AO. Therefore, it was necessary to stop during the day and wait until dark before moving to the ambush sites. This precaution prevented the enemy from knowing the exact location of the ambush sites. Normally the distance between the day holding position and the ambush location was 300 to 500 meters, while the distance between the individual sites would be 500 to 800 meters, depending on the situation. The following morning the BUSHMASTER force was extracted by helicopter. The force conducted air mobile or reconnaissance in force operations back to its forward support base on multiple axes.

(U) A successful BUSHMASTER operation depended on several factors. A clandestine insertion was of vital importance and could be achieved by conducting several false insertions before or after the actual drop-off. The necessarily decentralized control placed great demands on the ability of squad and platoon leaders, the individual soldier also had to be skilled and thoroughly briefed. Ambushes had to be located so as to complement and reinforce adjacent positions. The essentials of ambushing had to be stressed and forcefully applied. Cover and concealment, alertness during the hours of darkness, and the positioning of all available weapons were of critical importance. Indirect fire support had to be well coordinated to avoid the friendly troops who were located in the area.

(U) Long range reconnaissance patrols (LRRP) were frequently combined with a BUSHMASTER operation. This concept permitted the expeditious exploitation of the LRRP reconnaissance capability with the reinforcing by the BUSHMASTER element. In execution the LRRP was inserted with or left behind to join the BUSHMASTER force. The LRRP then deployed from the BUSHMASTER element. In this instance, however, when the LRRP discovered a target, it could call upon the BUSHMASTER force to deploy its elements to exploit the engagement more completely. The employment of the BUSHMASTER force to fix the enemy in turn allowed time for the deployment of larger units as the contact developed. The employment of LRRPs in this manner eliminated the need to extract the team after a lucrative target was detected and to prepare and deploy a reaction force, and conserved valuable time in the exploitation of targets. ²²

CHECKERBOARD

(U) The CHECKERBOARD was a technique in which squad-size elements or patrols steadily moved from one topographic feature to the next, in much the same way as the pieces are moved in a game of checkers (See Figure V-3). In seeking out the enemy, a rifle company deployed on multiple platoon axes. Each platoon sent forward a squad to a key vantage point. If no contact was made with the enemy, the platoon moved forward, while the squad moved ahead to the next terrain feature. Two squads could move out to cover successive terrain features with the platoon bringing up the rear. Other platoons in the area advanced concurrently. Depending on the terrain and the enemy situation, one or all rifle companies in a battalion could assume the checkerboard formation.

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(U) Movement of the CHECKERBOARD elements usually occurred at night. However, if mines or boobytraps were expected it was more practical to make the move in daylight.

(U) Once contact was made, units "checkerboarded" to the flanks and rear of the enemy. If necessary the contacting unit could seek merely to hold while awaiting reinforcements in the form of a "PILE ON" operation.

(U) The CHECKERBOARD concept envisioned quick and thorough coverage of a large area. Since the enemy was not accustomed to our maneuvering at night it contained an element of surprise. Authority to engage targets was delegated to the patrol leaders, and this fostered the initiative and ingenuity of the small unit leaders. The principal characteristics of the CHECKERBOARD were movement, flexibility, and quick reaction to targets of opportunity. 23

ARVN Tactics Employed in the Delta

BLACKHAWK Operations

(C) BLACKHAWK operations were ideally suited for the terrain in this tactical zone. Light observation helicopters (supported by gunships) reconnoitered known or suspected enemy locations. When a sighting was made the enemy was fixed in position by gunship fires and a waiting reaction force was inserted by slicks to further engage and destroy the enemy.

Reconnaissance in Force (Search and Clear)

(C) Perhaps the most common type of operation conducted by forces in the IV CTZ, formerly known as a search and clear operation, this tactic required a force deployed in a tactical formation, (dictated by terrain), to sweep through an assigned area on a predetermined route searching for enemy installations and cache sites. This operation is quite similar to the approach march or movement to contact employed in ARVN divisions. Success in this type of operation is primarily predicated on sound and timely intelligence, the element of surprise, adequate blocking forces, and effective supporting fires.

Cordon and Search

(C) The concept of this operation dictated that one element cordon a designated village or area to prevent both infiltration and exfiltration of enemy personnel, while a second element conducted a thorough search of the target area. To successfully conduct this operation, detailed planning, coordination, and execution were of the utmost importance. National Police Field Forces or Provincial Reconnaissance Units were required to be present under these conditions of search to ensure that personal property and possessions were not illegally confiscated. Cordon and search operations were generally targeted against the Viet Cong Infrastructure and Camp Strike Forces or Mobile Strike Group troops were seldom employed in this role because of the inherent problems of control and the possible repercussions of employing paramilitary forces against the civilian populace.

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Stay-Behind Operations

(C) This was a very common tactic employed throughout all CTZs. A unit would conduct an operation in an AO and, prior to departure, emplace one of its subordinate elements in an ambush position. This element was normally small enough not to be noticed by someone observing the parent unit, and large enough to be tactically sufficient until reinforced, should it become necessary.

Combat Reconnaissance Platoon Operations

(C) These operations were conducted throughout the Special Forces TAOR's. Each platoon consisted of 34 men and was targeted by the A Detachment Intelligence Sergeant. The platoons were assigned specific intelligence-gathering missions and were often employed as trail watchers on known or suspected infiltration routes. Information gathered by these units often served as the basis for reconnaissance in force or other type operations.

Saturation Patrolling

(C) This concept employed a number of platoon-size patrols operating in conjunction with one another in a designated area. Routes and the duration of each patrol were varied to preclude setting any pattern. This tactic was highly successful as a harassing interdiction measure.

False Landing Zones

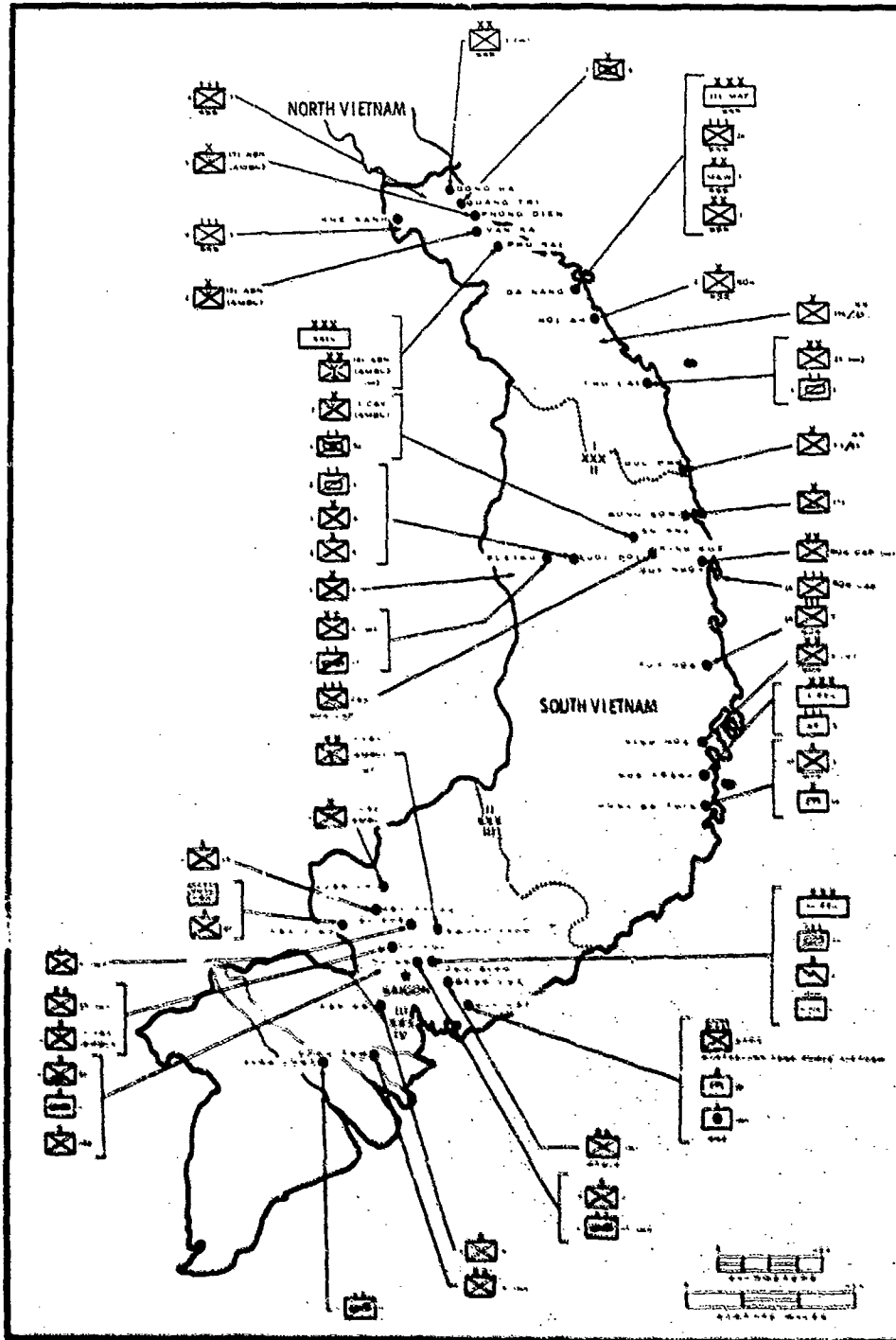
(C) The use of false landing zones proved its worth in several sector operations. The technique involved an air mobile lift with troops on board approaching low over a treeline and hovering low over the false LZ. The enemy then believed the troops had been inserted and reacted by running in the opposite direction. After an appropriate time lapse the helicopters lifted off with the troops still on board and dropped into one or two LZs in the vicinity of the retreating VC thus gaining immediate contact. A variation of this technique, which was used following the above described concept, was actually to insert troops in the first LZ. This concept was based on the assumption that the VC had learned a lesson from the original LZ false insertion and had reacted accordingly by moving into the original LZ believing they were moving away from the friendly troops. This technique met with some success but could not be used repeatedly in the same area.

Ambushes

(C) This was simply the practice of placing ambushes (day and night) throughout the AO to prevent the enemy from having free movement throughout the area.

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LOCATIONS OF MAJOR TACTICAL AND
SUPPORT ELEMENTS OF U. S. AND FREE WORLD GROUND FORCES IN VIETNAM 1/



1/ As of Jan 69. From Rpt(S), CSOC5-74, Subj; Army Buildup Progress Report (U), Gp-4.

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FIGURE V-4

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Riverine Operations

(C) This tactic involved the use of naval forces to insert ground troops into an area and provide support for the ground troops. Navy boats were also used to seal off the escape routes in this type of operation.

(C) All of the above operations proved to be very effective as long as the type operations varied within the area. If only one or two types of operations were conducted the enemy soon learned what to expect and how to turn it to his advantage.

Summary, RVN-Wide

(U) Enemy-initiated action during January was generally at a higher level than December, but his major units avoided contact as they refitted for possible future operations. Daily there were continued indications of enemy presence or activity within the DMZ (See Figure V-2). Allied forces retained the initiative and inflicted heavy logistical losses on the enemy with the discovery of significant munitions and food caches throughout the country.

(U) During the first three weeks of February, the enemy generally avoided contact, maneuvering his forces in preparation for his offensive. On 23 Feb in the early morning hours, the enemy conducted a series of over 100 country-wide indirect fire attacks including the first rocket attack on Saigon since 1 Nov 68. There were several concurrent ground attacks in remote areas with the heaviest fighting during the last week of the month in I and III CTZs. The enemy achieved no military objectives and many of his actions were pre-empted by aggressive Allied sweep operations.

(U) The enemy continued his offensive during the month of March with significant ground attacks occurring in remote areas of I and III CTZs. Allied-initiated sweep operations resulted in the majority of ground contacts and heavy casualties were inflicted on VC/NVA forces. The loss of hundreds of tons of arms and ammunition in Operation DEWEY CANYON had a major impact on the enemy's ability to conduct and sustain military actions in I CTZ. The enemy failed to achieve any significant military success in any part of the country.

(U) In April enemy activity was slightly lower than the previous month country-wide; however, several significant multi-battalion size enemy attacks were conducted against elements of the 25th Inf Div in III CTZ resulting in heavy enemy losses. Friendly forces continued to inflict significant materiel losses on the enemy in I CTZ with the discovery of large caches of weapons and munitions in Thua Thien Province.

(S) The month of May started with activity at a low level. However, during the night of 11-12 May 212 indirect fire attacks were launched by the enemy. Of these, 105 were considered significant. The wave of attacks subsided by the morning of 13 May. The absence of a second day lent credence to earlier predictions that the upsurge did not constitute the opening stages of the anticipated summer campaign. Instead, it appeared to be a ploy to support Communist diplomatic initiatives. Also in May Hill 937 became known world wide as "Hamburger Hill".

(U) During the first week of June, the enemy conducted a highpoint consisting of a number of coordinated, widespread indirect fire attacks throughout the country and some ground attacks.

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In the most significant ground action, 401 enemy soldiers were killed in two attacks against a 25th Inf Div fire support base (FSB) in Tay Ninh Province. Activity throughout the remainder of the month decreased and was generally light.

(U) The month of July saw enemy-initiated activity diminish even more. Limited, widely scattered attacks-by-fire and minor ground probes seemed about all the enemy cared to attempt.

(S) August started quietly, but on 11 Aug action picked up in III CTZ. Activity consisted mainly of scattered shelling, including a 2-round rocket attack on Saigon. In a 24-hour period beginning in the afternoon of the 11th there were 135 indirect fire attacks country-wide. Activity subsided on the 13th and remained at a relatively low level for the rest of the month. During the last week of the month elements of the 18th ARVN Div located three enemy caches of ammunition and food totaling 48 tons in eastern III CTZ.

(C) Enemy-initiated activity during the first week of September was light until the night of 4-5 Sep when there was a surge of activity, primarily in III and IV CTZs, characterized by ground attacks, attacks-by-fire against ARVN and US positions and installations. Activity continued light, partly due to typhoon DORIS and partly due to the Communist-announced cease fire in honor of the funeral of Ho Chi Minh. Friendly-initiated activity remained light and scattered in all four CTZs and consisted primarily of small unit contacts during pre-emptive operations.

(C) Early October was characterized by scattered attacks-by-fire and limited ground probes except in IV CTZ where there was a sharp increase in attacks-by-fire and minor ground attacks on 5 and 6 Oct. Friendly-initiated activity continued light and scattered throughout RVN and still consisted primarily of small unit contacts during pre-emptive operations. In Binh Dinh Province in II CTZ, friendly forces discovered several separate caches totaling 13 tons of rice and 22 tons of weapons and assorted ammunition. On 15 Oct, in Khanh Hoa Province, the Hong Kong merchant ship Kin Wah was sunk while at anchor in Nha Trang harbor, however, the main ship channel in the harbor was not blocked. As the month ended, friendly activity was characterized by small unit contacts as friendly forces searched for the enemy, although there was a slight increase in II CTZ activity.

(C) In November enemy activity continued at an increased level in II CTZ, with sharp increases in III CTZ on 3-4 Nov and in IV CTZ on 6-7 Nov. Enemy activity was characterized by increased attacks-by-fire and ground attacks. On 4 Nov, in Tay Ninh and Phuoc Long Provinces, elements of the 1st Cav Div (Ambt) at three FSBs received attacks-by-fire followed by heavy ground probes from unknown size enemy forces. The division experienced a 30:1 kill ratio in these engagements. On the same day elements of the 23d ARVN Div and the 22d ARVN Rgr Bn made a series of contacts with unknown size enemy forces. The second week of the month saw a sharp increase in enemy attacks-by-fire and limited ground attacks. There were significant contacts in the Due Lap-Bu Prang area in II CTZ and northern Quang Tri Province in I CTZ. During the period 11-15 Nov, elements of the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) were engaged in a series of contacts in Quang Tri Province. On 15 Nov the perimeter of Camp RADCLIFF at An Khe was penetrated by an unknown number of sappers. On 12 Nov in Quang Nam Province, a combined group of RF units made contact with an estimated enemy company. Results: enemy 71 KIA; friendly 2 KIA. On 14 Nov, in Quang Due Province near Bu Prang, elements of the 47th ARVN Regt engaged an estimated reinforced enemy company and experienced an almost 4:1 kill ratio. During the rest of the month activity remained at a low level, except in the Due Lap-Bu Prang areas where attacks-by-fire continued daily.

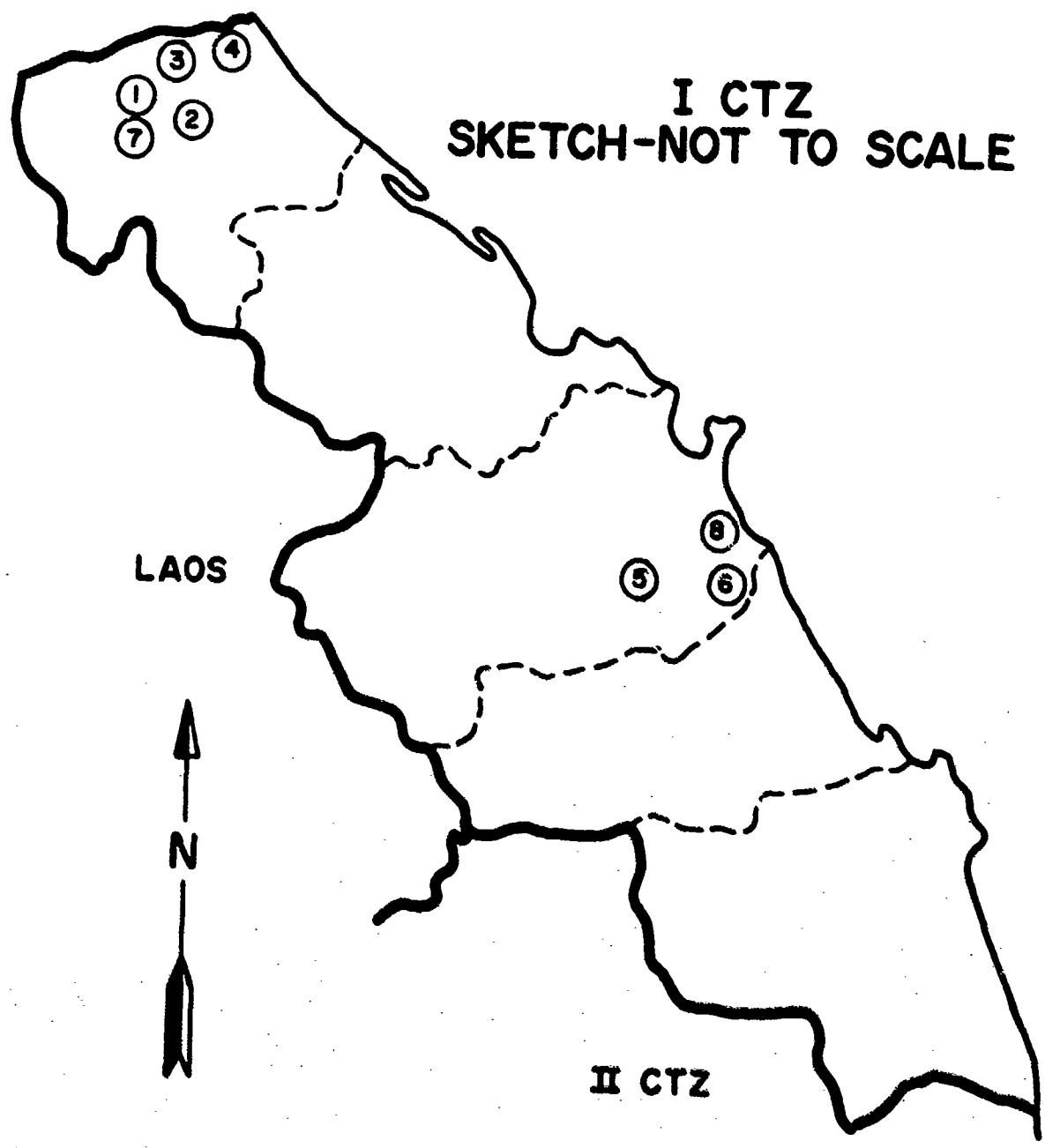
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**I CTZ
SKETCH-NOT TO SCALE**

LAOS

II CTZ

- 1. Rock Pile
- 2. Camp Carroll
- 3. Con Thien (A-4)
- 4. Gil Liah (A-2)
- 5. An Hoa Cbt Base (5th Mar)
- 6. LZ Baldy (7th Mar)
- 7. Vandegrift Cmbt Base
- 8. 2d ROK Bde

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FIGURE V-5

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(C) Except for the nights of 2-3 and 7-8 Dec the month was characterized by attacks-by-fire and limited ground probes. On the night of 2-3 Dec there was a brief surge of activity in III and IV CTZs, and on the night of 7-8 Dec there was a similar surge in Subregion 2 of III CTZ. On 3 Dec in Kien Tuong Province, two MSF companies, four RF companies, and seven PF platoons engaged an unknown size enemy force. In the day long contact the enemy lost 160 KIA, two detained, and 48 individual weapons, nine crew served weapons, and assorted other equipment captured. Friendly losses were 16 KIA and 27 WIA.

(S) Throughout the RVN friendly KIAs reached a 1969 total of 22,810, of which 6,727 were US, while enemy KIAs totalled 172,261, of which 88,903 were credited as US kills. (See Figure V-9 for year end deployments.)²⁴

I CTZ Ground Operations 25

(U) Smallest of the CTZs, both in area and population, I CTZ encompassed five provinces (See Figure V-5) and two geographical areas, the Highlands (inland) and the Central Lowlands (coastal area). The Highlands were that portion of the Chaine Annamitique paralleling the Laotian border. Elevations averaged from 400 to 1,300 feet with some peaks exceeding 2,000 feet. The area was narrow and very rugged. The southern half of the Central Lowlands contained extensive and fertile plains where two rice crops were grown yearly. The northern half of the coastal area was marked by several mountain spurs jutting into the sea and narrow lines of sand dunes backed by extensive, flat fertile areas.²⁶

(C) At the beginning of 1969, Allied forces in I CTZ were positioned as follows (See Figure V-4): the 3d Mar Div, the 1st and 2d ARVN Regts and the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), in Quang Tri Province; the 101st Abn Div and the 3d and 54th ARVN Regts in Thua Thien Province; the 1st Mar Div, the 26th Mar Regt, the 196th Lt Inf Bde, the 2d ROK MC Bde, and the 51st ARVN Regt in Quang Nam Province; and the 23d Div's 11th and 198th Bdes, and the 2d ARVN Div in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces.

(C) During January enemy activity throughout I CTZ increased slightly over that of December. Allied positions in the northern provinces continued to receive harassing mortar attacks. On 27 and 29 Jan the enemy utilized firing positions within the southern DMZ for the first time since 21 Dec. Enemy forces also conducted harassing attacks against ARVN positions south of Gio Linh and mining incidents on the Cua Viet River. PWs, ralliers, and agents continued to predict attacks against Hue and Quang Tri City. However, continued Allied sweeps in the area failed to detect any sizeable enemy force near those target areas.

(C) In central and southern I CTZ the enemy directed attacks against RF and PF units and attempted to avoid contact with major Allied units. Danang Air Base, Hoi An City, Dien Ban District Headquarters, and Marble Mountain received mortar and rocket attacks. On 28 Jan two PF groups in the Hoi An area received ground attacks. Elsewhere in Quang Nam Province, 2d Div elements were preoccupied with Allied operations TAYLOR COMMON and LANN RIVER. Both of these operations probably pre-empted enemy attack plans for early February in central I CTZ.

(C) In Quang Tin Province a PW captured 1 Jan from the 2d NVA Div, stated that his unit was awaiting orders to attack outposts southwest of Tam Ky City.

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(C) In Quang Ngai Province the enemy failed to conduct any significant offensive activity against military forces and appeared content to direct his efforts against civilian targets. Prisoners of War (PWs) and documents continued to reflect 3d NVA Div preparations for offensive activity against Quang Ngai City. Then, on 11 Jan, elements of the division forced approximately 800 people from Phu Hau Hamlet to move to an area to the west of Quang Ngai City. A cordon operation conducted around the enemy resulted in 46 enemy killed. This type of civilian harassment and terrorism was prevalent throughout Quang Ngai Province during January.

(C) In January the 3d Mar Div continued to be oriented on prevention of enemy infiltration through the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and the Laotian/Quang Tri Province border area. During the latter part of 1968, the division had developed a more mobile concept of operations in its AO in western Quang Tri Province, thereby permitting the Marine units, with their fire superiority, to meet any enemy threat without being tied down to a specific terrain or locale. Three operations were in progress in Quang Tri Province with two battalions of the 4th Mar Regt holding the westernmost TAOR in Operation SCOTLAND II. Initiated on 15 Apr 68, this multi-battalion search and clear operation had been centered in the area of the Khe Sanh combat base, and upon termination on 28 Feb 69 had accounted for enemy losses of 3,311 killed and 384 detained while the US losses were 463 KIA and 2,553 WIA. ²⁷

(C) Further east, in the Con Thien area, Operation KENTUCKY continued with elements of the 3d Mar Div carrying out their essential task of preventing enemy infiltration through the DMZ in central Quang Tri Province. Throughout the early part of January, VC/NVA forces continued to avoid major contacts with Allied forces. Their continual movement to avoid friendly forces or to search for food and supplies contributed to a decrease in the enemy-initiated ground attacks and attacks-by-fire in Quang Tri Province. Operation KENTUCKY was terminated on 28 Feb. During the 16 month operation, the Marine elements were supported by 2,771 tactical air sorties and 2,333 naval gunfire support missions. Enemy losses were 3,921 KIA, while friendly losses were 520 KIA and 3,079 WIA. ²⁸

(C) Operation DAWSON RIVER, a multi-battalion search and clear operation which had commenced on 28 Nov 68, was terminated on 27 Jan. The operation, under the control of the 9th Mar Regt, was centered in an area 23 km south of Cam Lo. Eighty-six enemy soldiers were killed at a loss of three US KIA and 50 WIA.

(C) The 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), continued its search and clear operation, MARSHALL MOUNTAIN, in conjunction with the 1st Regt, 1st ARVN Div. The operation, centered in an area 3 miles east of Quang Tri City, was terminated on 28 Feb after two and one half months. The enemy lost 78 KIA while US losses were six KIA and 105 WIA. ²⁹

(C) Operation NEVADA EAGLE, initiated on 17 May 68 in Thua Thien Province, continued in 1969 as the 101st Abn Div continued to seek and destroy or capture enemy personnel, materiel, and installations within its large AO, with emphasis on rice denial, interdiction of enemy movement and offensive sweeps along Route 547 and Song Bo. Upon termination on 28 Feb the troops had killed 3,299 enemy soldiers, detained 5,292, while friendly losses were 205 KIA and 1,822 WIA. ³⁰

(C) In Quang Nam Province, the 1st Mar Div had continued its successful Operation TAYLOR COMMON into 1969, conducting operations to capture or destroy enemy main forces, caches, and installations in the important An Hoa Valley leading to Danang. The Marine activity in this operation contributed to the security of Danang and the lines of communication (LOCs) by

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its spoiling effect on the enemy's plans. The presence of Marine units operating in and adjacent to revolutionary development (RD) areas contributed to the pacification efforts by creating a stable environment for internally-generated civic action projects. TAYLOR COMMON's scope of operations was reduced in mid-February with elements of the 3d Mar Regt returning to northern I CTZ. By denying the enemy his traditional sanctuary of Base Area (BA) 112, (See Chapter III), his offensive capability in Quang Nam Province was severely restricted. Numerous fire bases and combat operating bases had been constructed which facilitated operations in and west of BA 112. By mid-February the enemy's capability to stage and launch attacks against Danang from the BA 112-An Hoa area had been severely disrupted. Operations continued with elements of the 5th and 26th Mar Regts and upon termination on 8 Mar, 1,398 enemy soldiers had been killed, and 322 detained. The US losses were 156 KIA, 1,327 WIA. ³¹

(C) The 196th Lt Inf Bde had continued its search and clear operation, FAYETTE CANYON, into 1969 as a complement to Operation TAYLOR COMMON, with the mission of eliminating enemy forces, installations, and materiel in enemy BA 112 (See Chapter III). The operation was centered in an area 11 km southeast of An Hoa bordering the TAYLOR COMMON southern boundary. Upon termination of the 11 week operation on 28 Feb, the infantrymen had killed 326 enemy soldiers, detained 43 suspects; US losses were two killed and 17 wounded. ³²

(C) Operation HARDIN FALLS, a multi-company search and clear operation, conducted by elements of the 198th Lt Inf Bde and the 1st Sqdn, 1st Cav, had continued into the new year in an area centered 12 km southeast of Hoi An. The three month operation, characterized by light and scattered enemy contacts, was terminated on 28 Feb with 78 enemy KIA and 17 detained. The US losses were one KIA and 14 WIA. ³³

(C) Another significant 23d (Americal) Div operation in the southernmost I CTZ province, Quang Ngai, had carried over into the new year. Code-named VERNON LAKE II, it was centered just 19 km south of Quang Ngai City, having been initiated 2 Nov 68 as a follow-up to Operation VERNON LAKE I. It ended on 28 Feb after 455 enemy had been killed and 181 suspects detained, US losses were 23 KIA and 158 WIA in the fierce fighting. ³⁴

(C) On 13 Jan, a significant operation in support of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC) was initiated in Quang Ngai Province. Marines of the Seventh Fleet Special Landing Forces (SLF) launched amphibious Operation BOLD MARINER against enemy forces occupying the Batangan Peninsula, 12 miles south of Chu Lai. Preceded by a 12 Jan amphibious demonstration off the coast of Mo Duc (13 miles to the south), BOLD MARINER was the largest amphibious operation yet executed in the war--both SLF Alfa and Bravo were assault-landed. Also committed was a two-battalion, US Army task force in company with Operation RUSSELL BEACH, along with various RVNAF and other GVN agencies.

(C) BOLD MARINER commenced with BLT 2/26th Marines assault landing in the north by helicopter and surface means, and BLT 3/26th Marines going in by helicopter to the south flank. Concurrently, the 23d (Americal) Div's TF COOKSEY maneuvered to seal off the extreme southern boundary of the operating area. The subsequent scheme of maneuver was a deliberately-executed contraction of the cordon to the south and east to force the enemy toward the sea. Patrol craft of the US Navy and Coast Guard blocked seaward egress. With little resistance the cordon was tightened quickly. All Vietnamese civilians found in the area were delivered to an administrative center to be fed, housed, medically treated, and screened for possible VCI membership. The numerous tunnels, caves and trenches, once searched, were then destroyed. By 24 Jan as the cordon contracted, BLT 2/26 returned to its amphibious shipping. Meanwhile BLT

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3/26 executed an over-the-beach withdrawal to amphibious shipping on 9 Feb, while 23d (Americal) Div forces remained in the area until 21 Jul to support GVN completion of pacification and establishment of orderly governmental processes in the Batangan Peninsula. As a result of Operation BOLD MARINER/RUSSELL BEACH, nearly 12,000 Vietnamese were returned to GVN influence after more than two decades of VC control; 211 of them were identified as VCI and taken into custody, while 158 of the enemy had been killed. ³⁵

(U) One of the most successful blows to Communist logistical efforts ever delivered by Allied forces in RVN ended at 1800, 18 Mar as the 9th Mar Regt (Reinf) officially terminated Operation DEWEY CANYON. The operation was launched on 22 Jan into enemy strongholds north of the A Shau Valley. It uncovered the largest enemy munitions and arms caches of the war to date. Altogether, 525 tons of enemy weapons and ammunition were seized in the mountainous jungle area near the Laotian border. The most valued prize was 12 Russian-made 122mm field guns, the largest enemy artillery ever captured in Vietnam. Numerous anti-aircraft guns, with almost 27,000 rounds of ammunition were also among the 215 crew-served weapons seized. In addition, 1,126 enemy rifles -- most of which were still in Chinese and North Vietnamese shipping containers -- were captured. The record-setting seizure also contained more than 45,000 grenades of various types, some 58,000 rounds of various-size mortar ammunition, more than 3,500 rounds of rocket and artillery ammunition and tons of small arms ammunition. Other types of ordnance uncovered included 3,100 rounds of recoilless rifle ammunition, nearly 13,000 RPG rounds, and more than 5,000 pounds of explosives.

(U) Operating in an area not previously entered by Allied forces and long considered an NVA sanctuary, the successful conduct of Operation DEWEY CANYON resulted in 1,355 enemy KIA and 14 captured. Marine losses were 121 killed and 616 wounded and evacuated. Another 187 Marines received minor wounds.

(U) During the initial stages of the operation advances were made into the upper A Shau Valley with relative ease. Fire Support Bases RAZOR and CUNNINGHAM were established about 4 1/2 miles from the Laotian border to support infantry operations in the area. However, shortly after the Marines moved into the jungle, operations were temporarily curtailed by a nine day period of bad weather. Consequently, initial contact with the enemy was mainly in small squad-sized actions. To offset the effect of this inclement weather, Marine air planners developed special flying tactics prior to the opening phases of Operation DEWEY CANYON. These proved invaluable during periods of heavy fighting when weather made close air support hazardous. Using the same radar-controlled system, Marine helicopters and fixed wing aircraft para-dropped supplies to the ground forces during even the worst weather. Helicopter pilots continued medical evacuations throughout the operation despite the weather. Helicopters, flying under severe weather conditions, made more than 13,000 sorties and delivered in excess of 3,000 tons of supplies and carried nearly 19,000 passengers in support of the operation. This ability to keep the maneuvering forces resupplied was a major factor in the success of the operation. Although hampered at times by the heavy monsoon weather, more than 560 combat sorties were flown by the Marines and 51 by the AF in support of Operation DEWEY CANYON. These strikes resulted in the destruction of 35 trucks, 144 bunkers, and six 122mm guns.

(U) After the initial period of bad weather, the tempo of the operation picked up in the fourth week. Driving toward the Laotian border, the Marines pushed out from FSBs in a near classic regimental envelopment. Intelligence reports indicated that the NVA were prepared to defend against helicopter assaults with extensive anti-aircraft gun defenses. Therefore, the Marines stuck to the ridgelines, traversing some of the most rugged jungle terrain in RVN on

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foot. The ground assault on the enemy's perimeter rendered the enemy's air defense system useless. The enemy's reaction to the operation included two unsuccessful attacks on friendly FSBs. These cost the enemy 67 KIA.

(U) On 23 Feb, an estimated NVA battalion entrenched in an extensive bunker complex sought to stop the advance. Two companies of Marines, supported by artillery and air strikes, dislodged the enemy forces. Enemy KIA in this action were 105. ³⁶

(TS) Of major significance, an incident occurred on 21-22 Feb in the vicinity of the Laotian/RVN border during DEWEY CANYON, when Company H, 2d Bn, 9th Mar Regt moved from RVN into Laotian territory and established a position at YD 140028. At 220240 local time, elements of the company ambushed an NVA truck convoy on Route 922 in Laotian territory. Following this encounter the company repositioned itself in RVN. In response to requests for permission to conduct further operations in BA 611 in Laos, COMUSMACV on 24 Feb authorized CG, III MAF to conduct operations south of the Laotian border to the 02 EW grid line. Elements of the 9th Mar Regt conducted extensive search and clear operations within the authorized area for the remainder of February and during early March. ³⁷

(C) Throughout I CTZ during the first three weeks of February, enemy-initiated activity was generally light. At 0100 hours on 23 Feb, enemy forces launched an offensive with wide-spread indirect fire attacks and limited ground probes against targets throughout the southern part of the CTZ. During this period, enemy offensive activity was conspicuously low in comparison in the two northern provinces. However, between 1 and 3 Feb there were seven enemy indirect fire attacks in the Hue area and the surrounding Thua Thien lowlands.

(C) On 2 Feb, the enemy employed 122mm artillery against Allied forces in southern Quang Tri Province. This was the first enemy artillery fire received in I CTZ since the 1 Nov bombing halt. Operation DEWEY CANYON met stiff resistance from NVA troops in a major logistics area. From 16 to 22 Feb over 220 enemy were killed and large numbers of enemy weapons, some vehicles, and engineering equipment were captured. On 27 and 28 Feb, USMC elements participating in Operation DEWEY CANYON discovered two major enemy ordnance caches. Other enemy equipment recovered in the area included four Soviet 122mm field guns, the first ever captured in the war.

(C) The discovery of these large caches was recognized as a contributing factor in the enemy's inability to sustain a prolonged offensive in the northern I CTZ area. This failure by the enemy to mount a significant offensive led DEPCOMUSMACV to remark at a Command and Staff briefing on 23 Apr 69, "The Battle of Hue was fought this year in the A Shau (Valley)." ³⁸

(C) In southern I CTZ the primary enemy targets in the offensive were US and ARVN forces and installations in the Quang Nam lowlands, the An Hoa industrial complex, Tam Ky City, the Tien Phuoc CIDG Camp, and Quang Ngai City. PWs identified four NVA regiments and virtually all Local Force units in contact in central I CTZ.

(C) In Quang Tin Province, Local Force units suffered the brunt of the attack. A similar situation occurred in Quang Ngai Province, except in the area west of Quang Ngai City where elements of the 3d NVA Div were engaged.

(C) At the close of the month a decrease in enemy offensive action was noted, but intelligence revealed that increased offensive activity was again to take place in March.

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(S) In mid-February intelligence sources indicated that enemy forces in all CTZs were in advanced stages of preparations for possible offensive activity and there were continuing indications that enemy units were moving toward possible targets. Allied forces were warned to expect attacks on provincial and district capitals as well as selected military targets. ³⁹

(C) The enemy's Post-Tet Offensive began at about 0200 on 23 Feb, with a series of indirect fire attacks against US military positions, Allied installations, and district towns. Enemy actions on 23 Feb were predominately standoff attacks with probes by ground forces. Ground combat during the first week of the offensive was moderate to heavy with most action in I CTZ coming south of the Hai Van Pass.

(C) As the offensive began, the enemy's primary targets were the Quang Nam lowlands, An Hoa, Tam Ky, the Thien Phuoc Special Forces Camp and Quang Ngai City. On 23 Feb the Danang complex received a mortar/rocket attack that caused considerable material losses at the Danang Air Field (10,000 gals fuel destroyed, one aircraft damaged), at the ARVN ammunition dump (6,000 tons of ammunition destroyed), and at the Marble Mountain Air Field (19 helicopters and five vehicles damaged).

(C) In Quang Tri Province, northwest of the ROCKPILE in the SCOTLAND II AO on 23-25 Feb, Marine FSBs RUSSELL and NEVILLE (elements of 2d Bn, 4th Mar Regt) came under enemy attack. The enemy breached the perimeter of FSB RUSSELL but was driven out. Seventy-one enemy were killed in the two attacks, with US losses of 36 KIA and 105 WIA. ⁴⁰

(C) In Quang Tin Province on 23 Feb, a troop of the 1st Sqdn, 1st Cav attacked an enemy unit 2 km north-northwest of Tam Ky, killing 75 enemy without US loss. Five km south of Tam Ky two days later, two troops of the same squadron, while on a sweep, attacked another enemy force in a running battle resulting in 157 enemy soldiers KIA while US casualties were two killed and 13 wounded. ⁴¹

(C) In a significant action just south of the DMZ, elements of the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) in two separate contacts on 28 Feb northwest of Cam Lo, killed 77 enemy soldiers in bunker complexes while US casualties were two KIA and 24 WIA. ⁴²

(C) In spite of the intelligence, enemy activity during March decreased from that experienced in the initial phase of the offensive which the enemy launched in late February. In the northern provinces, Allied positions continued to receive harassing indirect fire attacks. Nine of these attacks were launched from within the southern DMZ. Continuing enemy use of and infiltration through the DMZ was confirmed by identification of elements of the 27th NVA Regt south of the DMZ. Enemy ground activity was characterized by sporadic but aggressive contacts involving enemy units of company size and smaller. In contacts on 27 and 28 Mar, friendly forces killed 188 members of the 27th NVA Regt northeast of the ROCKPILE.

(C) Enemy activity was primarily in reaction to friendly operations in western Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. USMC forces in Operations MAINE CRAG and DEWEY CANYON discovered a series of significant caches in western Quang Tri Province. Significant enemy offensive activity was limited to scattered indirect fire attacks throughout the coastal area, with emphasis on the Phu Bai/Phu Loc area during the period 22 through 28 Mar. In central I CTZ, significant enemy activity from 1 to 19 Mar was limited to indirect fire attacks and ground probes against the An Hoa Combat Base by the 1st VC Regt, 2d NVA Div. Similar pressure was maintained on the Thien Phuoc CIDG camp by the 3d NVA Regt, 2d NVA Div.

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(C) The 3d NVA Div, while avoiding major contacts, remained deployed in the vicinity of its primary objectives in Quang Ngai lowlands. During the early morning hours of 19 Mar, the enemy launched a total of 27 indirect fire and 13 ground attacks against selected military and civilian targets in central and southern I CTZ. Primary targets were in the areas of Danang, Hoi An, Tam Ky, Chu Lai, and Quang Ngai City. Cumulative results were 42 friendly killed, including 17 civilians; 194 friendly wounded, including 60 civilians; and 164 enemy killed. During the period 25 through 30 Mar enemy forces suffered more than 300 killed in a series of contacts with ARVN forces 17 km west of Hoi An. Elsewhere in central and southern I CTZ, a decrease in enemy offensive action was noted at the end of the month.

(C) After the initial week of the enemy offensive in I CTZ, enemy ground action decreased to a relatively low level. Attacks-by-fire against Allied positions in the DMZ area and against coastal population centers in the southern three provinces continued.

(C) The city of Hue in Thua Thien Province came under indirect fire attack on 10 Mar when 15 122mm rockets hit the city, killing two children and wounding five civilians. The number of significant indirect fire attacks against US installations diminished in early March, but increased again in mid-March.

(C) Late March found the enemy continuing to harass Allied positions with indirect fire attacks and ground probes up to company size. Enemy ground activity was directed against Allied operations in progress in western Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. In the southern three provinces, enemy forces conducted indirect fire attacks against Danang Air Base, Chu Lai, and other Allied bases. Limited enemy ground attacks were launched southwest of Tam Ky. Friendly operations in late March also resulted in significant contacts near the DMZ by US forces and in the Hoi An area by US and ARVN forces. Intelligence indicators continued to note the enemy's ability to launch ground attacks against selected targets in I CTZ. ⁴³

(C) As the enemy offensive continued, Operation MONTANA MAULER commenced south of the DMZ on 23 Mar in an area centered 7 km northeast of the ROCKPILE in Quang Tri Province. The 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) conducted reconnaissance-in-force operations to locate and destroy enemy forces in its AO. On 27 Mar, while sweeping an area 10 km northwest of Cam Lo, the troopers engaged an unknown size NVA force and using tanks and APCs killed 120 NVA soldiers before the enemy withdrew. The US casualties during the eight hour battle were 14 KIA and 30 WIA. The operation terminated 3 Apr with 271 enemy killed and US casualties of 38 KIA and 218 WIA. ⁴⁴

(C) As Operation SCOTLAND II was being phased out during the latter part of February, Operation PURPLE MARTIN commenced on 23 Feb in northwest Quang Tri Province to deny enemy forces entry into RVN from the western part of the DMZ and the Laotian border. Elements of the 4th Mar Regt were tasked to find and destroy enemy units, base camps, and supply caches within the area bounded on the south by Route 9, on the east by the XD 79 N-S grid line, on the north by the DMZ, on the west by the Laotian border. Upon termination on 8 May, 252 enemy had been killed at the loss of 79 US killed and 268 WIA. ⁴⁵

(C) The 4th Mar Regt immediately opened Operation HERKIMER MOUNTAIN on 9 May in essentially the same AO covered by Operation PURPLE MARTIN. Extensive small unit patrols were conducted in the mountainous jungles northwest of Vandegrift Combat Base. The mission of the regiment continued to be interdiction of enemy infiltration routes leading into RVN and prevention of enemy forces from massing troops or supplies in the thick jungles of the area.

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Contact was light and scattered throughout the operation which covered the far northwestern corner of Quang Tri Province. Upon termination of the multi-battalion operation on 16 Jul, 137 enemy soldiers had been killed, 66 detained and 40 weapons captured. The Marine units lost 25 killed and 219 WIA. ⁴⁶

(C) As Operation HERKIMER MOUNTAIN terminated on 16 Jul, the 3d Mar Div initiated Operation GEORGIA TAR in the same AO 15 km north-northeast of Khe Sanh in Quang Tri Province. Elements of the 9th Mar Regt were tasked with the mission to search and clear the area of enemy forces, supplies, LOCs, and routes of infiltration. ⁴⁷

(C) Marines from the 2d ROK Mar Bde, supported by US TACAIR and artillery, launched a drive against Communist forces in an area 24 km south of Danang in Quang Nam Province. After three weeks of heavy fighting, the Marines had swept through the enemy stronghold on Phu Trang Island. The operation, named SEUND YONG 9 (VICTORY DRAGON IX) was initiated 1 Mar when the Marines, moving behind columns of tanks and APCs, began pushing through thick jungles and over swamps and marshy plain. The drive cost the enemy 328 soldiers killed, while Korean losses were four killed and 58 wounded.

(C) In northern Quang Tri Province along the DMZ in an area centered 7 km northwest of Cam Lo, Operation VIRGINIA RIDGE was initiated on 1 May by the 9th Mar Regt to exploit recent enemy contacts made by ARVN forces in the area. The concept of operations was to conduct search and clear operations to destroy enemy forces and supplies and to prevent enemy infiltration and interference with the rice harvest then in progress. The multi-battalion operation ended 16 Jul after netting 560 enemy soldiers killed and 175 weapons captured. The US casualties were 108 killed and 490 wounded. As Operation VIRGINIA RIDGE terminated, Operation IDAHO CANYON immediately commenced with the 3d Mar Regt in the same AO 7 km northwest of Cam Lo in Quang Tri Province with the mission to search and clear the area of enemy forces, supplies, LOCs, and routes of infiltration. When this operation was terminated on 25 Sep it had been supported by 1,285 tactical air strikes and 247 naval gunfire missions. The final results were: enemy - 565 KIA, 5 detained, 2 ralliers, and 155 individual and 48 crew served weapons captured; friendly - 95 KIA and 450 WIA. The successful employment of two operations one on the heels of the other in the same AO clearly illustrated not only the value of the area to the enemy, but also the weakness inherent in trying to control territory by the clear and search tactic. ⁴⁸

(C) As NEVADA EAGLE terminated on the last day of February in Thua Thien Province, the 101st Abn Div (Ambl) immediately commenced Operation KENTUCKY JUMPER on 1 Mar in the same AO continuing with the same mission. This multi-battalion operation continued until 14 Aug. Enemy losses were 317 killed in the five and one half month period. In addition, 55 crew-served and 254 individual weapons were captured. US casualties were 61 killed and 409 wounded of whom 355 were evacuated. The operation was supported by 2,663 tactical air sorties and 409 naval gunfire missions. ⁴⁹

(U) On 28-29 Mar, approximately one year after the enemy's major offensive of Tet 1968, an ARVN Regional Force (RF) company found a tunnel complex containing 102 civilian bodies in an area 13 km east of the city of Hue in Thua Thien Province, the scene of some of the most violent fighting of the offensive. Other graves were discovered during the following weeks in the desolate coastal sand flats east of Hue, and by the end of May, over 850 bodies were exhumed from the trench-like graves. Although many victims had been shot by the VC/NVA execution squads, most of them had apparently been bludgeoned to death, many with their hands tied behind

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their backs. Some ARVN soldiers were among the murdered victims, but most were civilians, men, women, and children. Intelligence reports indicated that there were probably many more graves in the area, since nearly 2,000 persons had been missing from Hue as a result of the violent 1968 Tet fighting. These intelligence reports proved quite correct when in November the remains of 270, and possibly as many as 660, more victims were discovered in mass graves near Phu Thu, Thua Thien Province. By the year's end more than 1,500 bodies had been discovered. 50

(C) On 18 Mar, the 23d Inf (Americal) Div commenced three named operations in its AO in the southern province of I CTZ. The division, the 2d ARVN Div, and provincial units were tasked to carry out unilateral and combined operations to find, fix, and destroy enemy Main Force and Local Force units operating in each zone. A series of multi-company and multi-battalion combined operations were to be conducted with the aim of improving the overall effectiveness of ARVN and Provincial Forces.

(C) Operation FREDERICK HILL, with the 196th Inf Bde and the 5th ARVN Inf Regt participating, was centered generally in the central and northern part of Quang Tin Province.

(C) Operation GENEVA PARK, with the 198th Inf Bde and the 6th ARVN Inf Regt participating, was centered in an area including the southern part of Quang Tin Province and the northern half of Quang Ngai Province.

(C) Operation IRON MOUNTAIN was centered generally in the southern part of Quang Ngai Province with infantrymen from the 11th Inf Bde and the 4th ARVN Inf Regt participating. 51

(C) As the enemy left his base area sanctuaries, his supply lines were extended and he placed himself into a strategically vulnerable situation. COMUSMACV recognized this as an opportune time to penetrate the enemy's key base area sanctuaries in selective, time-limited operations.

(C) On 1 Mar, Allied forces again entered the A Shau Valley, as the 2d Bn, 502d Abn Inf commenced Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER in the southern end of the enemy's important logistical base. The reconnaissance-in-force operation had the mission of interdicting Highway 548 at the Laotian border and destroying enemy supplies, equipment, and forces in the area. More than 100 tons of enemy ordnance, signal equipment, and medical supplies were uncovered by the 101st Abn Div (Ambl) troopers in one of the largest caches found in I CTZ during 1969. After first discovering 13 trucks on jacks and with engines and tires removed and buried nearby, the troops searched further. In addition to weapons and munitions discovered in the well constructed, jungle canopied, and well used logistical depot, signal equipment, including telephones, switchboards, and radios, were found. Also found in this significant cache were large amounts of chloroquin, penicillin, and cod liver oil, as well as other medical equipment and supplies. When the operation terminated on 8 May, 176 enemy soldiers had been killed while US losses were 72 KIA and 259 WIA. 52

(C) With the 9th Mar Regt's Operation DEWEY CANYON in BA 611 and the 101st Abn Div's Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER in the A Shau Valley clogging his primary line of communication to the south, the enemy was obliged to seek an alternate avenue of action. Marine reconnaissance teams and helicopter-inserted patrols, beginning in early March, began to report a sizable increase in truck traffic on Route 616, an enemy constructed extension of Route 926 from Laos across southwestern Quang Tri Province. Moreover, this area of the northernmost

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province gave the enemy an obvious advantage as, situated in difficult terrain and surrounded on three sides by Laos, it offered a margin of security from flanking attack. Reconnaissance elements watched as the enemy built up a logistics complex in the area south of Khe Sanh. On 15 Mar the 3d Mar Regt commenced Operation MAINE CRAG, and swiftly advanced to the huge Communist food and munitions cache in a hilltop depot 17 km south-southeast of Khe Sanh. Besides the 356 tons of rice, the cache included 9,044 rounds of 82mm mortar, 44 rounds of 122mm rockets, 587 rounds of 60mm mortar, 3,503 RPG rounds plus other assorted munitions and weapons. A few days later an element of the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), operating with the 3d Mar Regt, discovered another significant munitions cache which weighed more than nine tons and included more than 1,300 mortar rounds. On 5 Apr more enemy supplies turned up as the 3d Bn, 2d ARVN Inf found over 8.9 tons of munitions in the same area. The operation terminated 2 May, having accounted for 157 enemy killed and 52 detained. Allied losses were 21 killed and 134 wounded. ⁵³

(S) The III MAF large unit operations in central I CTZ continued to complement small unit and pacification activities by providing a multi-battalion screen across the southwestern approaches to the Danang complex--a continuing by-product of their respective operational missions. Enemy ground probes and attacks-by-fire against the hub of III MAF operations were curtailed but the enemy was still determined to traverse the lowland approaches in the An Hoa basin, despite being denied access to favorable attack positions.

(C) Operation OKLAHOMA HILLS, initiated on the last day of March, encompassed a detailed effort to locate and destroy enemy elements, his caches, installations, and fortifications, in suspected base areas and avenues of approach in an area centered 32 km west-southwest of Danang in Quang Nam Province.

(S) On 30 Mar, 1st Bn, 7th Mar Regt moved to blocking positions along QL-4 and the Vu Gia river, blanketing the southern boundary of the AO with small unit patrols, ambushes, and observation posts to intercept any enemy effort to utilize the area as an avenue for withdrawal or introduction of his troops. With the blocking force in position, the operation began on 31 Mar, employing the helicopter assault of three battalions (3d Bn, 26th Mar Regt and 2d and 3d Bns, 51st ARVN Regt) into the northwest and southwest portions of the AO. Simultaneously, the two remaining battalions of the 7th Mar Regt attacked to the southwest astride the high ground. With the suspected base camp area centered within the quadrangle formed by four mutually supporting FSBs, artillery fires could be massed on any enemy strongpoint within the search area.

(C) Although only small enemy units were encountered during the first weeks of the operation, a substantial base complex, laid out to provide a defense-in-depth and capable of quartering a reinforced regiment, was located and destroyed. Facilities found within these base camps included a hospital, capable of major surgery, and numerous aid stations.

(C) On 21 Apr, 1st Bn, 7th Mar Regt scored a decisive victory against one of the largest forces encountered during the entire operation. A 1st Mar Div reconnaissance team observed the enemy converging on a known crossing site of the Vu Gia river 10 km northwest of An Hoa. A squad ambush, on the north bank of the river, held its fire while artillery crews at An Hoa, Liberty Bridge, FSB RAWHIDE, FSB MUSTANG, and Hill 55 were alerted and trained on the river crossing. As other squads maneuvered to support the squad ambush, the 150 man enemy force began moving by sampan and by wading across the 300 meter river. As they moved past mid-stream, friendly fires were brought to bear on the confused enemy force. Although only 71 enemy bodies were found south of the river later, none of the enemy were observed to reach

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either river bank, and it was believed that all were either shot, blown away, or drowned in the strong current and were carried downstream.

(C) When Operation OKLAHOMA HILLS terminated 29 May, the combined operation had accounted for 596 enemy killed and 193 suspects detained while friendly casualties were 53 killed and 350 wounded and evacuated. ⁵⁴

(C) Enemy activity during April was lighter than that experienced in late March. In the northern provinces, Allied positions continued to receive harassing indirect fire attacks. Several mortar attacks were launched from within the southern DMZ. For the third successive month, enemy ground activity was characterized by sporadic but aggressive contacts of up to company size. Nine contacts occurred during the period from 21 to 29 Apr northeast of the ROCKPILE and south of the central DMZ area.

(C) To the south, enemy activity was primarily in reaction to friendly operations in western Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces, where friendly forces discovered a series of caches. Recovered were 20 tons of rice, 168 122mm rockets, 17,942 mortar rounds, 1,517 RPG and 245 recoilless rifle rounds, and 10,000 rounds of heavy machinegun and 200,000 rounds of small arms ammunition. Captured documents revealed that a serious rice shortage had hampered enemy forces throughout the area since January.

(C) On 25 and 28 Apr, friendly forces in the Khe Sanh areas were subjected to intense and precise enemy sapper attacks. Friendly cumulative results were: 17 killed and 89 wounded. The enemy sustained 64 KIA.

(C) In central I CTZ detainees from two NVA regiments revealed plans for renewed offensive activity in late April, but no significant attacks occurred. Captured documents indicated that food shortages and disruption of logistics efforts by Operation OKLAHOMA HILLS, central Quang Nam Province, probably pre-empted enemy offensive plans in the Quang Nam lowlands. Enemy-initiated activity in the Danang area was limited to four rocket attacks against Allied installations during the period from 16 to 25 Apr, resulting in three Vietnamese civilians killed and 31 wounded along with light Allied casualties.

(C) In southern I CTZ, significant enemy-initiated activity was limited to indirect fire attacks and ground probes in the Quang Ngai City and Duc Pho areas on the night of 16 Apr, as major enemy forces in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces remained out of contact.

(C) In Thua Thien Province Operation LAMSON 279, a combat clearing operation under operational control of the 54th ARVN Regt, terminated on 29 Jun. This operation begun 25 Apr, was conducted about 5 km east of the Hue/Phu Bai airport. At a cost of eight friendly killed and 64 wounded, 167 enemy were killed, 111 detained, and 138 small arms and four crew-served weapons were captured.

(C) Two battalions of the 1st ARVN Regt conducted Operation LAMSON 276 from 25 Apr to 30 Jun in the National Forest in the Thua Thien-Quang Tri Province border area south of Hill 118. This operation resulted in 27 friendly killed and 111 wounded, while the enemy casualties were 397 killed, four detained, and 527 small arms and 118 crew-served weapons captured.

(C) In Quang Tri Province some 4 km west of Thon Ba Thung Operation LAMSON 277 was conducted by units of the 2d ARVN Regt from 22 Apr to 30 Jun. This reconnaissance-in-force

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resulted in 97 friendly deaths and 250 wounded, while enemy losses were 541 killed, five detained, and 146 small arms and 37 crew-served weapons captured. 55

(C) In response to information obtained from later captured enemy documents exhorting enemy units to step up the campaign to restock diminishing rice stocks, the 5th Mar Regt on 7 Apr initiated Operation MUSKOGEE MEADOW, a multi-battalion, combined search and clear and rice denial operation in the fertile An Hoa basin in Quang Nam Province southwest of Danang. The Marines coordinated their search and clear effort with the rice harvest schedule. Generally, contact was light, but when the operation terminated on 20 Apr with the successful conclusion of harvest operations, over 171 tons of rice had been added to GVN storage bins. During the operation 162 enemy were killed while US losses were 16 killed and 121 wounded. 56

(C) The 5th ARVN Regt began Operation LIEN KET 54 on 20 Apr in eastern Quang Tin Province, some 20 km southwest of Tam Ky. The operation terminated on 26 Aug with the following results: friendly - 22 KIA, 72 WIA, two MIA, and three individual weapons lost; enemy - 297 KIA, eight detained, and 65 individual and 10 crew-served weapons captured. 57

(U) Enemy activity was light until the night of 11 May when the enemy conducted 92 indirect fire and 21 ground attacks. The majority were directed against US military installations and troop units. Although indirect fire attacks were experienced throughout the CTZ, all enemy-initiated ground attacks occurred in the southern three provinces. In the northern provinces, attacks-by-fire remained at a relatively high level, totalling 70 for the remainder of the month. 58

(U) In Military Region Tri-Thien-Hue, enemy activity continued to be primarily in reaction to friendly operations.

(C) In western Thua Thien Provinces, friendly units engaged elements of the 29th NVA Regt, identified by PWs and documents during Operation APACHE SNOW. Documents from the 29th NVA Regt revealed that the regiment had relocated from RVN to Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam, in July 1968 for replacements and retraining and returned to RVN in February 1969. Its mission was to protect supply depots and to restrict Allied incursions in western Military Region Tri-Thien-Hue. On 20 May US and ARVN elements occupied Hill 937 after overcoming stiff enemy resistance. The enemy sustained over 600 KIA. Most of the casualties belonged to the 29th NVA Regt; its combat effectiveness was seriously reduced.

(C) On 22 May, FSB ERSKINE received enemy artillery rounds. The enemy was unidentified, but they were probably elements of an NVA artillery regiment. This was the first enemy use of tube artillery in I CTZ since Operation DEWEY CANYON in March.

(C) In central I CTZ, indications that the enemy was preparing for offensive activity became available several days prior to 11 May. On 9 and 10 May, USMC elements near An Hoa cordoned a 400 to 600 man enemy force which was moving north. There were 23 friendly KIA and 58 WIA, and the enemy lost 213 KIA and five PWs. The PWs were from three NVA regiments. In the 11 enemy-initiated ground attacks in the area on 11-12 May, PWs were captured who identified the attacking forces as elements of an NVA sapper and a VC battalion and the 36th NVA Regt.

(C) In southern I CTZ significant enemy-initiated activity was limited to the week of 11-17 May, in which a total of 37 indirect fire and 10 enemy-initiated ground attacks occurred. The ground attacks primarily took place around Tien Phuoc, Quang Tin Province, where elements of

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the 1st VC and 3d NVA Regts, 2d NVA Div, were identified in contact with US and ARVN forces. There were three friendly KIA, 23 WIA, and the enemy suffered 181 KIA and two PWs.

(C) A PW captured on 28 May confirmed the presence of the 21st NVA Regt in northern Quang Ngai Province.

(C) During the last two weeks of May, a low level of enemy-initiated activity was experienced throughout the CTZ, with the exception of an increase in indirect fire attacks north of QL 9.

(C) Under the operational control of the 51st ARVN Regt, elements of that regiment together with elements from the 54th ARVN Regt, the 11th ARVN Cav, and three RF companies conducted Operation VU NINH 3 from 5 May to 7 Jul. The area of operations for this clearing operation was in the southeastern corner of Quang Nam Province about 6 km southeast of Hoi An. The ARVN forces lost 30 killed and 130 wounded; however, they killed 206 enemy, detained 220, and captured 73 small arms and six crew-served weapons. 59

(U) Operation HERKIMER MOUNTAIN, a multi-battalion search and clear operation involving elements of the 4th Mar Regt, 3d Mar Div, was terminated on 16 Jul. The operation started on 9 May and was centered in an area 15 km north-northeast of Khe Sanh, Quang Tri Province. Total enemy losses during the operation were 137 killed. There were 66 suspects detained and 40 weapons captured, of which six were crew-served. Marine casualties were 25 killed and 219 wounded, of whom 167 were evacuated. 60

(C) As Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER phased out, Allied forces again prepared to enter the A Shau Valley. Operation APACHE SNOW, a multi-regiment operation centered 43 km south-southwest of Quang Tri in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces, commenced on 10 May with two battalions of the 9th Mar Regt conducting interdiction operations in the southern Da Krong Valley; four battalions of the 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div (AmbI) and four battalions of the 1st ARVN Inf Div combining to conduct combat assaults into the northern A Shau Valley to destroy enemy caches, forces, and installations, and prevent exfiltration into Laos.

(C) The operation began with a heliborne assault into the thickly jungled mountains along the Laotian border west of the valley. The US forces also established a FSB at Ta Bat, an abandoned village in the valley's center. By placing themselves between the valley and the Laotian border, Allied forces attempted to trap Communist forces in the valley and cut them off from reinforcements waiting beyond the border. There was little contact the first day as the airborne troopers began sweeping eastward toward the valley.

(C) On 12 May, however, the 3d Bn, 187th Abn Inf ran into heavy RPG and automatic weapons fire from the enemy in deep bunkers on Hill 937 (Ap Bia Mountain). The bunkers were well designed with interlocking field of fire and scarcely visible silhouettes. The troopers held back, calling in artillery and TACAIR on the enemy positions. On 13 May, two companies attacked the northwest ridges of the hill. Encountering intense fire, they were ordered to fall back. Artillery and TACAIR again pounded the ridgeline with high explosives and napalm during the night and early morning. On 14 May, the full battalion was sent against the enemy's position; however, the commander of the lead company was wounded and the company's radio was silenced. Again a withdrawal was ordered and supporting fires called for. The 3d Bn, 187th Abn Inf was reinforced by three others, two from the 101st Abn Div (AmbI) and one from the 1st ARVN Inf Div, which were positioned to surround Hill 937.

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(C) On 18 May, after 36 additional hours of artillery and TACAIR strikes, two of the battalions attacked again, the 3d Bn, 187th Abn Inf moving southeast and the 1st Bn, 506th Abn Inf moving north. By mid-afternoon some of the platoons had reached the summit but a thunderstorm drenched the hill, visibility dropped to zero, and soldiers were unable to keep their footing in the mud. A fourth withdrawal was ordered. Finally on 20 May after heavy artillery bombardment of the mountain, all four battalions attacked and by mid-afternoon Hill 937 had fallen.

(C) The battle for Hill 937, named "Hamburger Hill" by a 101st Abn trooper during the grisly conflict, set off tremors of controversy that reverberated through the halls of Congress. Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) charged that it was "both senseless and irresponsible to continue to send our young men to their deaths to capture hills and positions that have no relation to this conflict." The commander of the 101st Abn Div (Ambl), described the battle as a "tremendous, gallant victory" and observed that "the only significance of Hill 937 was the fact that there were North Vietnamese on it. My mission was to destroy enemy forces and installations. We found the enemy on Hill 937, and that is where we fought him." During the 11-day assault on Hill 937, 44 US troopers lost their lives, 297 were wounded and one was missing in action, while 450 enemy soldiers were killed and one was detained.

(C) Operation APACHE SNOW was terminated on 7 Jun with the following results: 9th Mar Regt AO, 78 enemy KIA, one detained; 11 US KIA and 48 WIA; 101st Abn Div AO, 675 enemy KIA, three detained; US, 102 KIA, 579 WIA, one MIA. ARVN participation in the APACHE SNOW AO resulted in 224 enemy KIA, one detained; 22 ARVN KIA and 105 WIA. ⁶¹

(C) On 16 May, Operation LAMAR PLAIN commenced in an area 16 km southwest of Tam Ky in Quang Tin Province. The three battalions under control of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div (Ambl), had the mission to find, fix, and destroy VC/NVA main force units operating in the vicinity of BA 117 (See Chapter III) and posing a threat to Tam Ky City, the provincial headquarters. The 1st Bn, 501st Abn Inf and 1st Bn, 502d Abn Inf moved to Quang Tin Province to reinforce 23d Inf (Americal) Div elements in the Tam Ky area. The operation terminated on 13 Aug. Enemy losses during the three month period were 524 killed. In addition, 62 crew-served and 256 individual weapons were captured. US casualties were 105 killed and 332 wounded of whom 297 were evacuated. The operation was supported by 1,342 tactical air strikes. Elements of the NVA 2d Div were contacted during the operation. ⁶²

(C) As the 7th Mar Regt was terminating Operation OKLAHOMA HILLS, Operation PIPESTONE CANYON was initiated 26 May by the 1st Mar Regt to the east in an area centered 24 km south of Danang. Elements of the 51st ARVN Inf Regt and the 2d ROK Mar Bde operated in conjunction with the US forces to locate and destroy enemy forces, installations, and material on Go Noi Island some 12 miles south of Danang. This area had remained the hub of enemy staging and assembly activities in southern Quang Nam Province. Relatively close to Danang, the region was both ringed and traversed by an extensive system of rivers and streams and featured a labyrinth of tunnels, caves, and trenches. The island's advantage as a sanctuary was enhanced further by its long infestation with VC and guerrilla units, all skilled in planting mines and boobytraps. Previous operations in the area, notably ALLEN BROOK and MEADE RIVER had achieved significant results. Saturation patrolling of the periphery had succeeded in limiting VC mobility; however, it had not denied him the use of the island. Operation PIPESTONE CANYON was intended not only to eliminate the existing VC, but also to change the character of the area to make the denial more permanent. This was accomplished by a series of maneuvers which, in each case pushed the enemy back against a screening or blocking force. Once the

enemy was neutralized, land clearing equipment was brought in and the 6,750 acres of the island were razed. ⁶³

(S) Operation PIPESTONE CANYON terminated on 7 Nov, ending a five and a half month effort to sanitize central Quang Nam Province. The success of this undertaking can be measured partially by enemy losses; some 800 VC/NVA were killed, 40 others taken prisoner, and in excess of 400 weapons seized. In concert with this offensive, the massive engineer and land clearing effort was directed toward rehabilitating the area. Marine engineers upgraded and opened that section of QL-4, enabling traffic and cargo from Dai Loc and An Hoa to juncture with QL-1 at Dien Ban for the first time in more than five years. Simultaneously, Marine engineer elements and an Army land clearing platoon literally scraped the landscape clean of overgrowth and unwanted vegetation, allowing future resettlement and eventual cultivation of this prime rice-growing region. Once a favorite staging place for attacks on Danang installations, the area, virtually devoid of its former maze of concealment, fortifications, and infrastructure, held much less appeal to the enemy. ⁶⁴

(C) The 9th Mar Regt initiated Operation CAMERON FALLS on 29 May on the Laotian border in an area about 32 km west-southwest of Quang Tri City in western Quang Tri Province. The multi-battalion search and clear operation terminated 23 Jun having accounted for 120 enemy killed, while US losses were 24 KIA and 137 WIA. ⁶⁵

(C) Operation DARING REBEL, under the control of the US Seventh Fleet and not a MACV-named or coordinated operation, commenced on 5 May, when Marine Battalion Landing Team 1/26 (BLT 1/26) was landed on Barrier Island, approximately 32 km south-south-east of Danang in Quang Nam Province. With the mission of locating, destroying or capturing enemy forces, materials and installations within the AO, the Marines coordinated with ARVN forces and ROK Marines, who acted as a blocking force around Barrier Island and were not a part of the operation. Control of the Special Landing Force (SLF) remained with the Commander Seventh Fleet and was not passed ashore. Upon termination on 20 May, the operation had accounted for 105 enemy killed, while US losses were two killed and 59 wounded. ⁶⁶

(C) Enemy-initiated activity remained relatively light during June, with the only apparent coordinated activity occurring on 6 and 7 Jun in Quang Nam Province. On those dates, Danang City experienced seven terrorist and three indirect fire attacks, while enemy ground attacks occurred at five locations in the An Hoa area. In the remainder of I CTZ indirect fire attacks and enemy-initiated ground attacks were at a normal level. In the northern two provinces, enemy activity was characterized by 15 indirect fire attacks from the southern half of the DMZ. Also, the enemy launched six ground attacks on 17 Jun in the Gio Linh area. In these contacts the enemy suffered 160 killed and 10 detained. The prisoners identified their units as elements of an NVA regiment and an independent sapper battalion. In western Quang Tri Province, NVA elements significantly increased their activity. Friendly elements received at least 10 ground attacks, resulting in more than 220 NVA killed.

(C) To the south, the enemy conducted significant sapper attacks against FSBs BERCHTESGADEN, CURRAHEE, and TOMAHAWK on 14, 16, and 19 Jun, respectively. Prisoners identified the enemy forces as elements of the 29th and two other NVA regiments. The 29th NVA Regt, which sustained more than 600 killed at Hill 957 in May, was still in the A Shau Valley/Laotian border area.

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(C) In Quang Nam Province there were 12 enemy ground attacks in the vicinity of An Hoa, resulting in approximately 280 enemy killed. Prisoners captured in these contacts identified the attacking forces as elements of a sapper battalion and an NVA regiment. In other activity, documents indicated that elements of the 36th NVA Regt may have redeployed from the Go Noi Island area in an attempt to evade Allied forces committed in Operation PIPESTONE CANYON.

(C) In southern I CTZ the enemy continued to conduct indirect fire attacks and limited sapper-type ground probes in the Tien Phuoc and Duc Pho areas. Other significant enemy ground attacks occurred at four locations near Duc Pho, where elements of two regiments of the 3d NVA Div were identified in contact with Allied forces. Cumulative results of these attacks were: friendly, 15 KIA and 61 WIA; enemy, 42 KIA.

(C) The last 10 days of the month were marked by a reduction in enemy-initiated activity throughout I CTZ, with the exception of continued enemy attacks in western Quang Tri Province.

(C) Operation UTAH MESA, began 1 Jun and terminated on 9 Jul. It was a multi-battalion search and clear operation under control of the US 3d Mar Div's TF HOTEL. The combined elements from the 5th Regt, 3d Mar Div and 1st Bde, US 5th Inf Div (Mech) participating with units from the ARVN 1st Inf Div operated in an area from 6.4 km northwest of Khe Sanh, Quang Tri Province to 2 km southwest of Khe Sanh. Total enemy losses during the operation were 309 killed; seven suspects were detained; and 114 individual and 31 crew-served weapons were captured. US casualties were 35 killed and 178 wounded. ⁶⁷

(C) As Operation APACHE SNOW terminated, the 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div (Abnl) remained in the northern A Shau Valley and initiated Operation MONTGOMERY RENDEZVOUS on 8 Jun. The US forces, operating in conjunction with elements of the 1st ARVN Inf Div, had the mission of locating and capturing or destroying enemy forces, materiel, and equipment in the AO. The operation which terminated 15 Aug was centered in an area 28 miles west-southwest of Hue in Thua Thien Province. Enemy losses were 393 killed. In addition, 174 individual and 47 crew-served weapons were captured. US casualties were 87 killed and 408 wounded, of whom 378 were evacuated.

(C) The 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) again commenced search and clear operations on 19 Jun in the old MARSHALL MOUNTAIN AO, centered in an area 4 km southeast of Quang Tri City in Quang Tri Province. The new operation, code named IROQUOIS GROVE, was targeted on BA 101, with an additional mission to continue cordon and search operations in support of the GVN pacification program. The operation terminated 25 Sep having accounted for 134 enemy KIA; US losses were 13 KIA. Altogether 125 tactical air strikes and 46 naval gunfire missions supported the operation. ⁶⁸

(C) Enemy-initiated activity during July was characterized by widely scattered indirect fire attacks and limited ground engagements. In the month, the enemy conducted a number of indirect fire attacks from the southern half of the DMZ, while limiting his ground activity to company-sized attacks. On 9 Jul ARVN elements at three positions near Gio Linh were attacked by an unidentified enemy force resulting in 47 enemy killed. Six days later, US elements at three locations near Con Thien received eight indirect fire attacks totalling 34 rounds of 122mm rocket fire. There were no casualties or damage reported. In western Quang Tri Province, light enemy activity was reported. Operation UTAH MESA terminated on 9 Jul. A total of 314 enemy were killed during this operation. An enemy soldier detained during UTAH MESA identified his unit as an element of the 304th NVA Div.

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(U) In related activity on 19 Jul, 13 km south-southeast of VANDEGRIFT Combat Base, ARVN elements found 15 bunkers containing a cache of ordnance weighing 36.2 tons. Capture of this cache probably limited the effectiveness of the enemy in that area. To the south, the Dong Ta Training Center near Phu Bai received rocket attacks on 7 and 11 Jul resulting in light casualties. Allied elements also received at least four significant ground attacks, resulting in more than 90 enemy killed. In the remainder of I CTZ, documents and prisoners identified an element of the 29th NVA Regt, one of the NVA regiments in the A Shau Valley area. ARVN elements in the A Shau Valley received 250 rounds of 82mm mortar fire on 15 Jul and 30 to 50 rounds of 60mm mortar fire on 16 Jul.

(C) In four enemy indirect fire attacks near An Hoa on 24 and 25 Jul, USMC elements received 80 rounds of mixed 60 and 82mm mortar fire, resulting in light casualties.

(S) July marked the departure from I CTZ of the first increment of a scheduled 8,388 Marines (8,394 spaces) -- the III MAF share of the 25,000-man US troop redeployment -- as, following simultaneous loading at Danang and Cua Viet, the 1st Bn, 9th Mar Regt and associated units and detachments sailed for Okinawa on 14 Jul. The Marine redeployment involved the movement of a Marine RLT and a helicopter squadron to Okinawa, a fighter/attack squadron to Japan, and a Light Antiaircraft Missile (LAAM) battalion to CONUS.

(S) The pace of combat in I CTZ declined to its lowest 1969 level, as reflected by the 1,990 VC/NVA killed by III MAF action during July -- about half the number (3,836) registered in June and closely approximating January's 2,029 enemy killed, the previous monthly low. Also mirroring the slackened action I CTZ-wide was a sharp decrease in the enemy's activity, with the 10 ground assaults and 26 attacks-by-fire well below his average monthly effort.

(S) There was no lessening of III MAF pressure against the enemy, however, as 21 large unit operations and 12,013 counterguerrilla actions targetted enemy forces in both coastal and back-country areas, while combined action units contributed another 11,527 patrols and ambushes to the I CTZ campaign. In addition, the 7th Flt SLF successfully executed three pacification-oriented operations -- one in each of the three southernmost provinces of I CTZ. 69

(C) Enemy activity in I CTZ for the first 10 days of August consisted of widely scattered indirect fire attacks and limited ground probes. Most of the activity developed in areas just south of the DMZ and in the A Shau valley. Friendly-initiated activity also continued at a low level during this period, although there were two significant contacts near the DMZ. On 11-12 Aug enemy-initiated activity increased significantly. It was characterized by numerous indirect fire attacks, and an increased number of ground and sapper attacks. The majority of attacks occurred in southern I CTZ. On the night of 11-12 Aug the enemy launched rocket and mortar attacks against the Naval Support Hospital at Danang, the 1st Mar Div headquarters area west of Danang, Hue, and Hoi An. In the latter part of the month there was a significant increase in the interdiction of lines of communication by the enemy, while friendly initiated activity also increased as friendly units engaged the enemy prior to and following the enemy attacks on the night of 11-12 Aug.

(S) A series of sharp contacts in the An Hoa basin of Quang Nam Province, followed by a period of heavy fighting in the Que Son-Hiep Duc region of the Quang Nam-Quang Tin Province border area, distinguished III MAF operations during August. Triggered by a I CTZ-wide enemy attacks-by-fire and ground probes, a three-day attack by elements of the 7th Mar Regt took a toll of 255 NVA soldiers from 12-14 Aug. The Que Son-Hiep Duc battles also included

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7th Mar Regt participation as, deploying southward to the Que Son District, the regiment joined the 23d Inf (Americal) Div's 196th Lt Inf Bde in an assault against major elements of the 2d NVA Div. This action, with the bulk of the contact taking place between 18 and 25 Aug, cost the enemy over 1,000 troops by the end of the month.

(C) Highlighting the Que Son action was a 28 Aug example of Marine air/ground coordination. Detecting substantial enemy troop movement vacating the battle area via the Phu Loc Valley, a reconnaissance team initiated the organization of an air ambush -- a highly successful tactic which combined tactical surprise with the full range of aerial firepower.

(S) In sum, the enemy's abrupt offensive thrust was both short-lived and unsuccessful. Lacking the stamina to sustain the action, he lost nearly 3,000 VC/NVA to III MAF operations during August, along with another 2,100 to ARVN, ROKMC, and CIDG efforts.

(C) Despite the general lull in his activity throughout the rest of I CTZ during July and early August, the enemy continued to move troops and supplies through the central DMZ region, while maintaining screening forces in the area to protect this influx of men and material. Captured enemy documents and information gleaned from VC/NVA captives tended to confirm elements of the 33d Independent Sapper Bn displacing westward to reinforce other combat units along the central DMZ. This buildup of security forces was an attempt to bring pressure against III MAF and ARVN operations astride the enemy's jungle-shrouded, and mountainous infiltration corridor passing between Con Thien and the ROCKPILE.

(C) Additionally, the late-July deployment of 9th Regt, 304th NVA Div elements into north-central Quang Tri Province was confirmed, as III MAF and ARVN units both made contact with elements of that regiment. Apparently tasked to provide the bulwark of security in the region, the 9th fared no better than its predecessors, the 27th and 36th NVA Regts, which had been repulsed with heavy losses in March and April respectively.

(S) By end-August, the Marine portion of KEYSTONE EAGLE, the code name for the 25,000-man deployment from RVN, was concluded. A well executed, highly successful amphibious movement, the operational totals included the redeployment of 6,653 troops, 1,444 major items of equipment, and 293,911 cubic feet of cargo by amphibious shipping and another 2,013 personnel and 63 STONS of cargo by air.

(C) Combat operations in I CTZ during September were marked by a protracted absence of meaningful contact between major units. The 15 battalion-size or larger operations executed in the CTZ generated little in the way of sustained action, the heaviest fighting being triggered by a sapper attack against a Marine company near the ROCKPILE; the small unit patrols, ambushes, and company-sized actions which composed the counterguerrilla campaign seldom encountered enemy formations larger than platoon-size. Except for a 13 Sep battle against two NVA companies in northern Quang Ngai Province, combined action units likewise were not faced with large scale opposition. Clearly unwilling to commit major units to combat, the enemy placed increased reliance on sporadic shelling, sapper attacks, and other forms of harassment.

(S) The low level of action developed during September was reflected in the results of I CTZ offensive operations, which accounted for 2,865 enemy killed -- the smallest monthly total of the year.

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(S) Despite the continuing high level of propaganda, terrorism, and sabotage aimed at village and hamlet echelons, pacification progress showed no sign of faltering during September. That portion of I CTZ population considered secure rose another percentage point to 89.3 percent by the end of the month.

(U) Announced during early September, the III MAF portion of the second US troop redeployment from RVN involved the movement of the remainder of the 3d Mar Div, along with an appropriate slice of III MAW air support.

(C) Barrier Island, 34 miles southeast of Danang, in Quang Tin Province had seen Marine landings in May and June. Operation DEFIANT STAND was launched 12 Sep to rid the wedge-shaped island of the VC presence once again. While Marines of the SLF air assaulted to the inland side of the island, and patrol craft prevented either infiltration or exfiltration of the enemy, a battalion of the 2d ROK Marine Bde made an amphibious landing on the seaward side of the island. This landing conducted with amphibian tractors (LVT) and landing craft was the first amphibious landing in the 20-year history of the ROK Marine Corps. The two battalions tightened their cordon, and, a week later when the operation was terminated, the ROK Marines had killed 49 enemy and captured 117 individual weapons, while losing only one KIA and five WIA. In the meantime, the US Marines killed 244, detained six and captured one enemy individual weapon, while losing four KIA and 49 WIA. Elimination of this VC sanctuary reduced the threat of rocket and mortar attack against Danang and Hoi An, Quang Nam Province. 70

(S) The redeployment of the 3d Mar Div from I CTZ to out of country bases had started in the summer with the redeployment of the 9th Mar Regt. In late September the balance of the division was ordered redeployed, although the remaining two infantry regiments were committed in their TAORs. One regiment disengaged and stood down to an assembly area virtually overnight. This dramatic move would not have been possible without close cooperation and coordination among the units that were to shift their AOs to absorb the responsibilities that had been the 3d Mar Regt's and to screen the withdrawal. The major units involved were the 1st Bde, 5th Mech, the 101st Abn Div (Ambl), and the 1st ARVN Div. By the end of November a series of smooth working relationships were developed. The 1st Bde, 5th Mech was receiving excellent coordination and cooperation from the 1st ARVN Div forward command post, while also receiving excellent support from the 101st Abn Div (Ambl). For example, the 101st Abn Div (Ambl) provided five "slicks", four "guns", and three "hooks" on a daily basis to the 1st Bde, 5th Mech. The 101st Abn Div (Ambl) also was supporting the 1st ARVN Div with helicopters. The organic artillery battalion of the 1st Bde, 5th Mech established and operated the FSCC and was responsible for clearing all fires within the AO. The 108th FA Gp was responsible for clearing fires across boundaries, i.e., fires into the 101st Abn Div (Ambl) reconnaissance zone. The 108th FA Gp furnished 36 tubes in general support of the brigade, and also supported the 1st ARVN Div to some degree. This was essentially the arrangement that was in force during the time the 3d Mar Div was in the area. Patrols into the DMZ were under the control of the brigade, rather than XXIV Corps, and the brigade tried to keep three patrols in the DMZ at all times. Interference between ARVN and US patrols was avoided by strict adherence to boundaries. The ARVN patrolled to the east of the boundary, while the US forces patrolled to the west. To obtain intimate cooperation and coordination between the 101st Abn Div (Ambl) and the 1st ARVN Div, their respective G3 planning staffs assembled in one room with one map. They then came up with a coordinated plan for the entire combined AOs which utilized all 16 maneuver battalions, both ARVN and US. Both divisions then issued complementary operations orders. This procedure insured that the AO was covered and balanced to the best degree possible.

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(S) The RF companies were under subsector control, and the subsector reported to the 1st ARVN Div forward command post through a liaison officer. In November the 57 RF companies were working in the piedmont, away from the population in Thua Thien Province. The villages controlled the PF platoons.

(S) The 1st ARVN Div had 18 long range patrols, and the division and the 101st Abn Div (Ambl) were training US and ARVN teams together. The 101st Abn Div (Ambl) was sending lieutenants to ARVN companies for experience so they could teach the rest of the officers in their companies.

(S) The 108th FA Gp assigned liaison officers to the 101st Abn Div (Ambl), the 1st ARVN Div, and the 1st Bde, 5th Mech. The group also assigned a liaison officer to the 5th Bn, 4th Arty which was responsible for coordination with sector for fire clearances. 71

(S) October saw combat action in I CTZ decline to the lowest level in nearly three years, with the 1,085 enemy killed during III MAF operations being the smallest total counted since the 926 VC/NVA recorded in January 1967. The dearth of serious fighting extended CTZ-wide, as little other than brief, small unit engagements were recorded by US, ARVN, or ROK forces in any of the five provinces.

(C) A factor influencing this absence of major unit contact, as well as a sharp decrease in enemy-initiated activity, was the abrupt arrival of the northeast monsoon. Depositing record rainfalls during the first 10 days of October, the weather caused major disruption of enemy activities -- inundating his overland lines of communication and lowland supply stores and fortifications, thus forcing him to seek higher ground.

(S) The III MAF share of the second US troop redeployment proceeded on schedule, with RL-T-3 aboard six 7th Flt amphibious ships, sailing for CONUS between 2 and 7 Oct.

(S) October operations in the An Hoa basin, as throughout the rice producing lowlands of Quang Nam Province, were oriented primarily toward security for the ongoing fall rice harvest. The 5th Mar Regt, employing a long range reconnaissance screen south and west of the basin to maintain a close surveillance of trail networks leading to the area, not only foiled enemy attempts to siphon rice from the area, but also dealt a blow to enemy foraging patrols skirting the fringes of the basin, aiming for areas closer to Danang. In all, the 5th Mar Regt engaged in 118 contacts, killing 102 NVA and VC during the month; friendly losses were two killed and 55 wounded and evacuated.

(S) The bulk of the action generated by Marine ground and air units in the An Hoa basin took place during the final week of October when sporadic small unit contacts resulted in at least 84 enemy killed. In the most significant action, 1st Mar Div reconnaissance patrols, on the afternoon of 24 Oct, countered enemy traffic with artillery fire, killing 39 eastbound NVA, five miles north of An Hoa. Three 5th Mar Regt actions on 30 Oct accounted for an additional 35 enemy killed. Armed helicopters, covering the insertion of 2d Bn elements into an area 5 miles north of An Hoa combat base, attacked several small groups of enemy soldiers with rockets and machine gun fire, killing 20. Another element sweeping the area of another armed helicopter strike a mile to the south that morning, located seven enemy killed by air-delivered ordnance and claimed two additional enemy with small arms fire. Contact terminated that afternoon, as the element engaged an enemy squad and killed six NVA 3 miles north of the combat base.

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(S) A major contribution to countering enemy movement in Quang Nam Province was the introduction of the Integrated Observation Device (IOD) into the war during late October. This highly sophisticated, line-of-sight device utilized a laser range finder in conjunction with high-power binoculars and a Night Observation Device to locate and pinpoint (within five meters) enemy movement during daylight or darkness at ranges up to 30,000 and 1,200 meters, respectively. The primary value of the IOD was its range and azimuth accuracy which, when coupled with the Field Artillery Digital Automatic Computer (an aid to solving firing problems), produced a 70 percent probability of first-round-on-target hits by supporting artillery. (See Chapter XII.)

(S) Employed singly on key terrain outposts (one in each regimental operating area) for maximum observation over known infiltration routes and trail networks, the four Marine IOD teams accounted for at least 475 enemy killed, 26 bunkers and 39 structures destroyed, and eight secondary explosions during the one-month period ending 24 Nov. Typical of IOD results were those obtained during 7-15 Nov by the team at FSB RYDER, 9 mi southeast of An Hoa. Detecting numerous, varied-size formations, the team accounted for at least 83 VC/NVA killed during the eight days. Unable to perceive either adversary or the employment of long-range detection equipment, the enemy continued to traffic these routes, providing a continuing target for III MAF firepower.

(C) The pace of action generated by combat operations throughout I CTZ during November was essentially an extension of that experienced over the past several months, as the enemy exhibited little disposition to do battle. Despite a rash of reports describing a forthcoming period of stepped-up activity, he remained preoccupied with foraging for food and other supplies, by and large limiting overt acts to those classed as harassing or population-intimidating in nature.

(S) A moderate but steady advancement distinguished the progress of GVN and Free World pacification and revolutionary development programs, with population security reaching a new high of 93.2 percent and the Chieu Hoi campaign counting 813 defectors, also a monthly record. Two factors influencing the continuing pacification progress were the Infantry Company Intensified Pacification Program (ICIPP) and the improved performance of Vietnamese territorial forces. The former, an outgrowth of the Marine Combined Action Program, featured the deployment of a rifle company with RF/PF platoons at the hamlet level. The latter, gauged by the 333 enemy killed or captured in I CTZ by those provincial units during November, gave rise to a measure of optimism concerning their future role in the war.

(C) The KEYSTONE CARDINAL redeployment of Marines from I CTZ was completed with the late-November embarkation of two LSTs with the final air/ground increments of the departing 3d Mar Div and elements of the 1st Mar Wing team. In all, the movement included 18,483 troops (18,465 spaces), 23,813 STONS of cargo, and 422,366 square feet of vehicles or major items of equipment.

(S) Plying the northern Nui Loc Son basin and Que Son mountains of Quang Nam Province with 1,526 patrols, 672 ambushes, and 259 company operations, the 7th Mar Regt made contact with the enemy on 258 occasions during November. The sharpest fighting was registered in the mountains overlooking Antenna Valley, an area characterized by large rock outcroppings, boulders, precipitous slopes, and dense vegetation which seriously limited both visibility and maneuverability. Thus combat at short range was dictated. For several weeks elements of the 7th Mar Regt scoured the Que Son mountains searching for enemy base/cave complexes reported

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by intelligence agencies to be in the area. Toward mid-November several significant discoveries of logistic complexes containing materiel, maps, documents, and ordnance were made. These finds, coupled with a surge in enemy contact, signaled the location of a major headquarters, subsequently identified as that of the 36th NVA Regt. While this regiment was not encountered in strength, the 7th Mar Regt action caused the enemy to disperse his forces westward and into the lowlands, where they were exposed and further decimated by a combination of III MAF and RVNAF maneuver and supporting arms action from the An Hoa basin to the coastal region south of An Hoa.

(S) While the saturation of pacification and small unit offensive operations limited enemy activity in the area contiguous to Danang, 1st Mar Regt activity in the DODGE CITY/Hill 55 region (some 3,500 patrols, ambushes, and company operations) did evoke 108 contacts during November, accounting for 132 VC/NVA killed. Confronted primarily by VC soldiers and infrastructure, the 1st Mar Regt often teamed a rifle company with RVNAF units in cordon and search operations. During one such operation 18 km southwest of Danang, a 1st Mar Regt company and a Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU), responding to a Hoi Chanh report of a cache in the area, fought a series of engagements on 9 Nov. Fighting commenced during early morning, as the combined friendly unit engaged approximately 20 enemy, killing 12 of them. Continuing the search, the Marines and Vietnamese established contact on three more occasions, bringing enemy losses for the day to 21 killed. One Marine was killed during the day-long operation.

(C) Enemy activity was essentially an extension of his resupply efforts prevailing over the past several months; thus, enemy-initiated incidents in I CTZ in November remained well below the past year's monthly attack average of 56. Much of the contact registered resulted from Free World operations, with the enemy initiating but 16 ground attacks, seven of which were in Quang Nam Province. Of his 22 attacks-by-fire of 20 rounds or more, 50 percent occurred in Quang Tri Province, primarily a reaction to friendly maneuvering close to the DMZ.

(S) With the redeployment of the final increment of the 3d Mar Div units in November, the enemy moved to test the posture of Free World forces in Quang Tri Province. Utilizing a favored infiltration trail about 11 km southwest of Con Thien, an enemy force, estimated at two reinforced battalions of the 27th NVA Regt was engaged in heavy fighting by elements of the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) during 11-15 Nov. As a result of this action, 183 enemy were killed, two taken prisoner, and a large quantity of munitions, materiel, and weapons captured. Friendly casualties were 13 killed and 58 wounded and evacuated.

(S) Earlier in the month, on the 7th, a task force of ARVN armored cavalry established contact with NVA elements, while conducting battle damage assessments in the southern half of the DMZ, just north of Gio Linh, Quang Tri Province. Action continued until dusk, when the ARVN departed the DMZ with one prisoner and 10 enemy weapons, leaving behind 36 NVA dead. ARVN casualties included two killed and 16 wounded and evacuated. ⁷²

(S) Operations in I CTZ during December generally paralleled those of November -- a scattering of limited-intensity maneuver unit engagements, with the preponderance of enemy casualties resulting from supporting arms attacks on covertly-detected enemy formations. Continued heavy troop losses in the CTZ depleted already low-strength enemy units, further limiting their ability to muster a sustained winter/spring campaign.

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(S) Marine units executed over 11,000 patrols, ambushes, and search operations in support of the III MAF counter guerrilla campaign. This round-the-clock vigil continued to reap significant results, as the enemy, despite heavy losses, was not able to abandon a presence in Quang Nam, the densely populated, rice-rich, hub of communications and government in the north, control of which would ultimately decide the fate of the entire CTZ.

(S) Complementing and aiding the deployment of maneuver elements in Quang Nam, a system of manned observation devices and self-contained sensors extended outward from the vital Danang area to monitor regions with high enemy usage. These means of tracking enemy movement provided not only target data, but also insight to enemy intentions, when multiple unit readouts or sightings were compared and produced patterns or trends. An inherent advantage of the detection system was the minimizing of friendly troop exposure, as supporting arms attacks were the primary means of exploiting targets, with ground units, in most instances, providing followup action.

(S) Maneuver units of the 1st Mar Div gained 626 contacts during December, accounting for 688 VC/NVA killed. As in November, the 5th and 7th Marines developed the bulk of the action in the An Hoa/Que Son region of Quang Nam Province, tallying 207 contacts each. That the 1st and 26th Mar Regts, deployed immediately south and west of Danang, tallied 154 and 37 contacts, respectively, accounting for but 20 percent of the enemy killed, testified to the effectiveness of the counter guerrilla campaign -- the majority of the enemy maneuver units were being interdicted short of the city. ⁷³

(S) The year closed with no significant change in the level or direction of combat activity in I CTZ. The enemy continued to avoid major contacts, and limited his own adventures to attacks-by-fire and limited ground probes.

(S) In I CTZ the year's total friendly KIAs was 6,440, of which 3,229 were US. Enemy KIAs totalled 49,632, of which 29,386 were the result of US operations. ⁷⁴

Year End Assessment

(TS) Pacification progress continued at a slow pace throughout I CTZ. The three provinces of southern I CTZ continued to be a security problem. During 1969, the aggregate operational results achieved by I CTZ organizations were consistently better than those attained by the ARVN forces in the other CTZs.

(TS) The 1st ARVN Div, which was reputed to be one of RVN's best, performed well during the entire period.

(TS) Even more encouraging than the continued good performance of the 1st ARVN Div, was the marked improvement in the 2d ARVN Div. This division was considered to be a problem unit in early 1968; yet, in 1969 it was one of ARVN's better performers.

(TS) A new armored brigade headquarters engaged in two successful combat operations. In the second operation, in December, the headquarters controlled six maneuver battalions including armored, infantry and ranger elements in a series of relatively heavy contacts.

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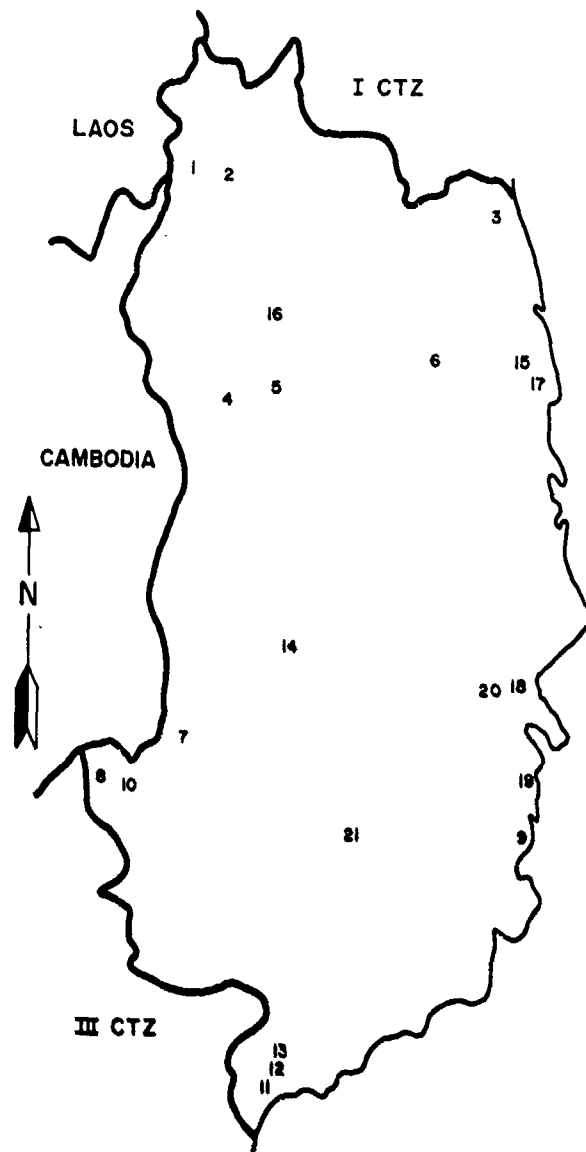
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**II CTZ
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- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Ben Het | 8. Bu Prang | 17. GRID (Capital ROK
Inf Div) Hqs |
| 2. Dak Tu | 9. Cam Ranh AB | 18. 9th ROK Div HQs |
| 3. LZ ENGLISH
173d Abn Bde Hq | 10. FSB KATE | 19. I FFORCE, 5th SF Op
ROK FFV Hqs (Nha Trang) |
| 4. LZ OASIS | 11. TF SOUTH HQ | 20. Lam Song Trn Ctr (ARVN) |
| 5. Camp ENARI
4th Div Hq | 12. FSB SHERRY | 21. Dalat Natl Mil Academy |
| 6. An Khe (Camp
RADCLIFF) | 13. FSB SANDY | |
| 7. Duc Lap | 14. 23 Div Hq ARVN | |
| | 15. 22d Div Hq ARVN | |
| | 16. 24 STZ HQ ARVN,
Co B 5th SFGP (Controls all USSF
and VNSE CIDG Camp II CTZ) | |

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FIGURE V-6

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(TS) There was a down-trend in the results attained by the 51st ARVN Regt. This trend was probably due more to under-employment than to any deterioration in unit capability. The percent of time devoted to combat operations declined sharply during the latter part of the year, dropping to less than 25 percent in the fourth quarter. Also of concern were the high desertion rates in both the 51st Regt and the 2d Div.

(TS) Indicators of RF/PF unit effectiveness showed continued improvement in I CTZ. The reduction in weapons lost, high kill ratios and low desertion rates reflected the aggressiveness, morale and unity of the RF/PF command in I CTZ. ⁷⁵

II CTZ - Ground Operations

(U) The II CTZ encompassed 12 provinces (See Figure V-6) and two broad geographical areas, the Central Highlands and the Central Lowlands, and was the largest of the CTZs in RVN. The Central Highlands, actually the southern plateau area of the Chaine Annamitique, could also be divided into two distinct parts. The northern part extended from the vicinity of Ban Me Thuot northward for about 175 miles, with elevations averaging from 600 to 1,600 feet, although individual peaks were much higher. Irregular in shape, with an area of about 5,400 square miles, this region was covered mainly with bamboo and tropical broad-leaf forests, interspersed with farms and rubber plantations. The southern portion, much of it below 3,000 feet elevation, and centered around Dalat, had about 4,000 square miles of usable land. Evergreens predominated at the higher reaches and bamboo at the lower elevations. Sloping gradually in the west to the Mekong Valley in Laos, the Highlands fell steeply in the east to the Central Lowlands. The fertile, extensively cultivated Lowlands extended as far inland as 40 miles in some areas, while in others they were crowded into the sea by the encroaching Highlands. Rice was the principal crop, although considerable sugar cane was also grown. In Cam Ranh Bay, II CTZ had one of the finest natural, deep draft harbors in SEASIA. ⁷⁶

(C) At the beginning of 1969, Allied forces in II CTZ were positioned generally as follows: the 4th Inf Div, the 2d ARVN Ranger Group, and the 42d ARVN Inf Regt in the Highlands provinces of Kontum, Pleiku, and Darlac; the 173d Abn Bde, the 22d ARVN Inf Div, and the Capital ROK Inf Div in Binh Dinh Province; the 9th ROK Inf Div in the central province of Khanh Hoa; TF SOUTH, in the southern provinces, controlling the 3d Bn, 506th Abn Inf, the 3d Bn, 503d Abn Inf, and the 53d ARVN Regt.

(C) Five large unit operations had been underway in II CTZ for extensive periods and they continued into the new year until terminated on 31 Jan. Operation MACARTHUR, under 4th Inf Div control in the Western Highlands, upon termination, had accounted for 5,731 enemy soldiers killed since commencing in October 1967. Allied losses were 955 killed. ⁷⁷

(C) Operation BOLLING, under the control of the 173d Abn Bde, had commenced 19 Sep 67 in the area centered 27 km west-northwest of Tuy Hoa in Phu Yen Province. During the 16-month operation, 715 enemy soldiers were killed; US losses were 72 killed and 307 wounded. ⁷⁸

(C) Operation MCLAIN, under control of Task Force SOUTH, had commenced on 20 Jan 68 and was centered 30 km south-southwest of Dalat. During the 12-month operation, 1,042 enemy soldiers were killed and US losses were 69 killed and 568 wounded. ⁷⁹

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(C) Operation COCHISE GREEN had commenced on 30 Mar 68 under the control of the 173d Abn Bde in Binh Dinh Province 15 km west-southwest of Bong Son. During the 10-month operation 929 enemy soldiers had been killed, while US losses were 144 killed and 870 wounded. 80

(C) Another of the large operations terminating on 31 Jan was Operation WALKER, initiated 17 Jan 68 in Binh Dinh Province in an area centered 10 km west-northwest of An Khe. The operation was under control of the 173d Abn Bde and during the 12-month period, 272 enemy soldiers were killed while the US lost 42 killed and 313 wounded. 81

(C) During January, combat with enemy forces remained generally light and scattered throughout the CTZ. Emphasis was divided between support of pacification and the conduct of both large and small unit operations. As large enemy units became more elusive, strategy shifted from massed operations towards a saturation of the countryside with small unit patrols. Allied forces continued to uncover caches and conduct aggressive cordon and search operations of hamlets and villages to eliminate the VCI.

(C) As the tempo of ground combat increased, the enemy increasingly employed a larger number of standoff mortar, recoilless rifle, and rocket attacks as well as ground attacks on isolated hamlets and RF/PF units. Generally he continued to avoid decisive combat and concentrated his efforts on attacks of villages, hamlets, US installations and outlying military positions. Allied units placed emphasis on small unit operations and revised their contingency plans so as to improve reaction both from the standpoint of time and impact.

(C) In the Western Highlands at the beginning of the year ground combat increased in intensity. Allied forces intensified operations against enemy units, base areas, and LOCs. Cordon and search operations were conducted to identify and capture the VCI and to assist the GVN in regaining control of contested hamlets. In early January ARVN and VN Ranger elements in a significant operation, BINH TAY 48, stormed enemy sanctuaries in an area 24 km southwest of Kontum City. Intelligence had indicated that the NVA was using the area west of the Plei Mrong CIDG camp as a main base, and had stocked it with supplies flowing down the Plei Trap Valley leading out of Cambodia. Allied forces seized huge stores of weapons, munitions and food. Upon termination of Operation BINH TAY 48 on 21 Jan, 251 enemy had been killed with friendly losses of 31 killed and 71 wounded.

(C) Allied forces immediately re-entered the enemy domain in Operation BINH TAY 49 with elements of the 4th Inf Div, the 22d and 23d ARVN Ranger Bns and the 2d Bn, 42d ARVN Inf. Allied forces killed 356 enemy soldiers at the loss of 30 friendly infantrymen killed and 61 wounded. 82

(C) As Operation BINH TAY 49 terminated 27 Jan, elements of the 42d ARVN Regt began Operation BINH TAY 50 in Pleiku Province. The combat sweep started on 28 Jan and terminated on 8 Feb, accounting for 304 enemy killed while friendly casualties were one killed and 47 wounded.

(C) The 4th Inf Div had been operating in the Western Highlands of the II CTZ since 1966. With a TAOR reaching from the CTZ boundary in the north to Ban Me Thuot in the south, the division had the largest area of responsibility of any US unit in RVN of comparable size. Operations by necessity called for economy of force in order to secure adequately such a vast region with the forces available. Fire support bases were constructed to cover all avenues of approach, with units conducting platoon patrols and sweeps from these bases. All contacts were rapidly reinforced and all detected enemy moves blocked.

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(C) The Capital and 9th ROK Inf 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. In an operation that had commenced on 29 Dec 68, elements of the ROK Cav Regt, the 2d Bn, 1st ROK Inf Regt, and 2d Bn, 26th ROK Inf Regt accounted for 170 enemy killed in Binh Dinh Province. The operation, BUN KAE 68-5, terminated on 15 Jan with five ROK soldiers having been killed and 16 wounded. Elements of the 26th ROK Regt, the 1st ROK Regt, and the 1st Bn, ROK Cav Regt then initiated Operation HAE SAN JIN 6 on 20 Jan and upon termination 8 Feb, 107 enemy soldiers had been killed at a loss of six ROK soldiers killed and 20 wounded. 83

(S) Effective 1 Feb, responsibility for the northern portion of the 4th Inf Div TAOR, from the CTZ boundary to just north of Kontum City, was transferred to the ARVN 24th Special Tactical Zone (STZ). This adjustment of the TAOR enabled the 4th Inf Div to consolidate positions and initiate more extensive operations to deny enemy forces access to the key population centers of Kontum and Pleiku cities. These operations took the form of company and battalion reconnaissance-in-force and cordon and search operations conducted near the Cambodian border in western Pleiku and southwestern Kontum Provinces. The 4th Inf Div continued to provide adequate combat support to ARVN units in the area vacated by the US forces. Further, if the enemy were to pose a threat beyond the capability of the ARVN forces in the 24th STZ, the 4th Inf Div was prepared to reinforce the RVNAF in upper Kontum Province. 84

(C) On 1 Feb dual Vietnamese-US names were given to each major unit's area of operation (AO). Dual names were considered appropriate since a large proportion of the operations were combined; dual names also provided a more suitable basis for complete accounting and reporting. Effective 1 Feb, TAOR MACARTHUR became AO BINH TAY-HINES; TAOR WALKER became AO SUC MANH-MARSHALL; TAOR COCHISE GREEN became AO DUNG CAM-LEE; TAOR MCLAIN became AO DANG THANG-SHERIDAN and TAOR BOLLING became AO LY DO-WAINWRIGHT. Brigade-sized operations conducted in these AOs for specific short range objectives were assigned a code name as they occurred. All other operations conducted in unit AOs were reported as small unit operations. 85

(C) The 4th Inf Div continued operations with elements positioned to permit control of key terrain astride main avenues of approach into the Western Highlands. The 2d Bde, 4th Inf Div began Operation PUTNAM PANTHER on 1 Feb in Kontum Province west of Kontum City. The pacification support operation was targeted against elements of the 66th NVA Regt. Brigade elements also secured bridges, villages, and roadways along QL-14N within the AO. Upon termination on 21 Jun the operation had accounted for 250 enemy killed. 86

(C) The enemy generally continued to avoid major combat during the early weeks of February, while completing preparations for a new offensive. In mid-month intelligence sources indicated that the enemy was in advanced stages of preparation for possible offensive activity and there were continuing indications that enemy units were moving toward possible targets. 87

(C) On the night of 22-23 Feb, enemy forces, as anticipated, launched a coordinated country-wide offensive consisting of indirect fire and ground attacks against key military installations and cities in RVN. Initial targets in the enemy's Post-Tet Offensive in II CTZ included military compounds at Dak To and Cam Ranh Bay, Ban Me Thuot Airfield, five locations near Pleiku City, and the Phan Thiet District Headquarters. However, the main enemy effort in II CTZ was directed against the Ben Het CIDG camp in the tri-border area in Kontum Province. On 23 Feb the camp came under enemy ground attack by an estimated two to three companies. Following this attack, during late 23 Feb and early 24 Feb over 310 rounds of mixed 122mm

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rocket, artillery and mortar fire struck the camp. On 1 Mar, the 4th Inf Div moved one tank platoon, one cavalry troop, and an infantry company to Dak To to reinforce the Ben Het camp if required. During the night of 3 Mar the enemy, employing an estimated reinforced battalion and supported by ten PT-76 tanks, launched his main attack against the camp. Shortly after midnight the US tank platoon at Dak To moved to Ben Het. The Communists continued the attack until first light on the 4th, when they withdrew. This engagement marked only the second time that enemy armor had been engaged in combat in RVN. Close air support, called to aid the beleaguered outpost, destroyed one enemy PT-76 tank and damaged one APC-type vehicle during the contact. This was the first enemy use of armor in II CTZ. ⁸⁸

(C) The 1st Bde, 4th Inf Div infantrymen began Operation WAYNE GRAY on 1 Mar in an area west of Plei Kleng in the northern Plei Trap Valley in Kontum Province. This operation was tasked to deny access to Kontum City and to block enemy withdrawals into sanctuaries. Upon termination on 14 Apr, cumulative results of the fighting were 608 enemy killed, 16 detained, while US losses were 99 killed, 357 wounded and six missing. ⁸⁹

(C) On 3 Mar, approximately 46 km west of Kontum City, elements of the 3d Bn, 8th Inf engaged an estimated NVA battalion in heavy fighting that lasted throughout the night and the next day. Initial attempts to reinforce Company A met heavy enemy resistance but finally succeeded on the afternoon of 4 Mar. Twenty-two US soldiers were killed in the battle with one missing and 89 wounded. A later sweep of the area turned up 50 enemy bodies in mass graves and a tunnel complex. The enemy dead were credited to the 3 Mar contact. On 6 Mar, to the east of the Company A contact, other elements of the 3d Bn, 8th Inf engaged an estimated enemy battalion in bunkers for 11 hours, resulting in 112 enemy killed with no friendly casualties. ⁹⁰

(C) The 2d Bn, 503d Abn Inf commenced Operation DARBY TRAIL II on 8 Feb in an area north of Bong Son in Binh Dinh Province. The reconnaissance-in-force operation was terminated 15 Apr, having accounted for 181 enemy killed and 387 detained at a cost of five US soldiers killed and 28 wounded. DARBY TRAIL III continued in the same AO. ⁹¹

(C) The enemy launched a new phase of his Post-Tet Offensive in II CTZ during the night of 20-21 Mar. Enemy-initiated activity consisted primarily of attacks-by-fire directed against military targets. The attacks were widespread, with the majority occurring in the Western Highlands. The Ben Het CIDG Camp west of Dak To and an artillery position near Kon Horing Village, located 13 km southeast of Dak To, received significant attacks-by-fire. On 21 Mar sappers attacked a tank farm at Qui Nhon in Binh Dinh Province, infiltrating the base and destroying over 700,000 gallons of POL with satchel charges. The largest attack occurred on QL-14, 7 km south of Kontum City, when Forward Observation Base #2 received B-40, 60mm and 82mm mortar fire, and possibly 122mm rocket fire followed by a ground/sapper attack by an estimated 200-400 enemy. The attack was repulsed with few casualties, however the motor pool sustained major damage.

(C) Enemy-initiated activity decreased following the 20-21 Mar high point and consisted primarily of widely scattered indirect fire attacks against military targets, the most significant of which was a sapper attack on 23 Mar against an ammunition dump at the 184th Base Depot located 9 km south east of Qui Nhon where 861 tons of ammunition were lost. ⁹²

(C) In an operation designed to halt repeated shellings of Phan Rang Air Base, the 9th ROK (White Horse) Div commenced Operation DONG BO 5 on 25 Mar in an area centered 16 km north-west of Phan Rang in Ninh Thuan Province. Two battalions of the 9th ROK Div were airlifted to

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the northwest of Phan Rang where they cordoned off an area believed to contain the main forces delivering the rocket and mortar attacks on the base. The peak of the cordon and search operation came 1 Apr when the Korean infantrymen killed 102 of the enemy. The ROK artillery and US helicopter gunships supported the operation which terminated on 5 Apr, having accounted for 154 enemy killed and large quantities of munitions, food, and communications equipment captured. Translations of numerous documents found in tunnels revealed commendations and certificates of achievement to members of gun crews for their proficiency and attitude in training; dead gunners were found chained to their weapons outdoors. One ROK soldier was wounded in the operation. ⁹³

(C) In the vicinity of Bong Son in Binh Dinh Province, an observer positioned on top of Tiger Mountain, detected a large number of sampans along the coast and initiated a preplanned communications and rapid reaction system. A HAWK team from the 173d Abn Bde's 2d Bn, 503 Abn Inf combat assaulted into the area, while Navy SWIFT boats moved in and sank 41 sampans as the VC dumped cargo overboard. One US soldier was wounded, the enemy lost 49 killed. ⁹⁴

(C) In early April enemy-initiated activity was at a low level in II CTZ and consisted primarily of indirect fire attacks, ground probes and sapper activity. Mortar attacks the night of 6-7 Apr on Ban Me Thuot Airfield and Camp Holloway Army Airfield in Pleiku City damaged 21 helicopters.

(C) On 13 Apr the 1st Bde, 4th Inf Div, with four battalions, moved to a newly assigned AO in western Binh Dinh Province in order to provide additional forces to support the pacification program. The brigade commenced Operation WAYNE JAVELIN on 15 Apr as the 173d Abn Bde's Operation WASHINGTON GREEN began in northern Binh Dinh Province with the 40th and 41st ARVN Regts participating in the pacification of the province.

(C) As captured documents and a PW provided information of increased enemy infiltration into II CTZ, several significant contacts with infiltrating enemy units developed. On 21 Apr, Allied forces engaged infiltration units in northern Darlac Province. The enemy was initially engaged by Camp Strike Force (CSF) elements which subsequently were reinforced by 4th Inf Div elements. Results of the contact which terminated 27 Apr, were 136 enemy killed while friendly units lost one killed and five wounded. During the same week, on 25 Apr in Quang Duc Province, the 1st Mobile Strike Force (MSF) Bn engaged an estimated NVA battalion. Other MSF units reinforced the contact in the vicinity of the Bu Prang CIDG Camp, as Allied forces accounted for 79 enemy killed. Five CIDG and three US soldiers were killed in the border contact.

(C) Operation DONG BO 7 commenced on 9 May near Cam Ranh. Soldiers of the 2d Bn, 30th Regt, 9th ROK Inf (White Horse) Div were airlifted onto Tao Mountain about 20 km southwest of Cam Ranh. The peak of the mountain was a base for enemy units of the 5th NVA Div. Contact was made with the enemy as the "White Horse" Division soldiers began searching the caves and trenches on the mountain. When the operation terminated on 20 May, 155 enemy soldiers had been killed while the ROKs had lost three KIA and one WIA. ⁹⁵

(C) Enemy-initiated activity increased sharply in the Western Highlands of II CTZ on 10 May and reached a high point on 11-12 May. There were battalion-sized ground attacks and heavy attacks-by-fire in the Ben Het-Dak To area of Kontum Province. One significant attack occurred on the night of 10-11 May when LZ OASIS in Pleiku Province received a ground attack supported by more than 300 rounds of mixed artillery, mortar, and rocket fire. Forty-five

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enemy soldiers were killed while Allied forces lost 11 killed, 25 wounded; one Hawk radar site was destroyed. During this period the 42d ARVN Regt deployed forward into the Ben Het-Dak To area, supported by the 22d ARVN Ranger Group, two MSF battalions and six CSF companies. Operation DAN QUYEN 38-A (PEOPLES RIGHTS) commenced 15 May and was targeted against two NVA regiments which had moved into RVN in early May from the neighboring Cambodian and Laotian sanctuaries. By mid-month these units posed a threat to Dak To and the nearby Ben Het CIDG Camp. The operation was considered significant in that it was, in a sense, a test of whether ARVN ground forces could effectively stop the NVA in the rugged border area without US infantry support. As the NVA launched the attack, however, the ARVN troops turned the ensuing battles into an ARVN show, calling on US forces only for artillery and TACAIR support. During the three weeks operation 945 enemy soldiers were killed while 157 ARVN and 13 US advisors were killed. The action is covered in greater detail in Annex H -- Ben Het-Dak To. 96

(U) Enemy-initiated activity in II CTZ rose on the night of 5 Jun and then fell to a low level during the remainder of the month, except in the vicinity of the Ben Het CIDG camp where the enemy committed both the 28th and 66th NVA Regts, supported by engineers and elements of the 40th NVA Arty Regt. Two prisoners captured on 15 Jun, 6 km southeast of the camp, identified their unit as the 66th NVA Regt, and stated that elements of the regiment had the mission of encircling and attacking ARVN units in the Ben Het area. They further provided evidence that the 66th NVA Regt had sustained heavy losses since 8 May and that 90 percent of the personnel in the regiment were new replacements. It was believed that elements of the 66th NVA Regt were involved in a contact on 30 May, 11 km south-southeast of the camp, where three ARVN battalions were attacked by an unknown-sized enemy force. This action resulted in 309 enemy killed.

(U) A Hoi Chanh, who rallied on 24 Jun at the Ben Het CIDG camp, identified his unit as the 28th NVA Regt. He stated that the mission of the regiment was to destroy the camp in order to influence the Paris Conference.

(C) Operation BEE HO 23, conducted from 1 to 21 Jun by nine companies of a ROK Regiment, resulted in 182 enemy killed, one detained, and 74 small arms captured. The area of operation was approximately 20 km northwest of Qui Nhon, Binh Dinh Province. Friendly casualties were two killed and 20 wounded.

(C) ROK Army elements conducted Operation BAEK MA 10 in an area of southern Khanh Hoa Province 25 km northwest of Cam Ranh from 4 to 19 Jun. Four Koreans were killed and 12 wounded, while the enemy lost 170 killed, five detained, one returnee, 56 small arms, and 17 crew-served weapons. 97

(C) ARVN units wound up Operation DAN QUYEN 41 on 25 Jun. They had taken 35 killed, 135 wounded, and two missing, while killing 33, detaining four, and capturing 38 small arms and 16 crew-served weapons. The combat operation which had started on 8 Jun was conducted in Kontum Province some 11 km southwest of Dak To by elements of the 47th and 42d ARVN Inf Regts, the 22d ARVN Ranger Regt, three CIDG companies, and three RF companies. 98

(C) Operation DAN QUYEN 43, a combat operation under control of the 24th Special Zone and initiated on 22 Jun, terminated on 25 Jun west of Dak To, Kontum Province. Elements of the 42d ARVN Inf Regt, the 3d and 14th ARVN Cav, and a CIDG company participated in the operation which resulted in 214 enemy killed and 18 wounded. 99

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(C) Enemy-initiated activity during July was characterized by limited indirect fire attacks and minor ground probes. Major enemy maneuver elements were probably engaged in refitting and retraining. In the western highlands, elements of the 24th NVA Regt were identified in the area of the Plei Mrong CIDG camp. A prisoner captured near the camp on 12 Jul stated that elements of the 24th NVA Regt were located in Cambodia. A prisoner captured in the vicinity of Plei Mrong on 30 Jul identified himself as a member of the 24th NVA Regt, and stated that his unit's mission was to interdict QL-14 in the Pleiku-Kontum border region. There were no significant attacks along QL-19 west of An Khe by elements of the 95B Regt during the month, but elements of the unit may have been responsible for a 7 Jul attack against a US fire support base 39 km northwest of Cheo Reo that resulted in 11 enemy killed.

(C) On 22 Jul a cache containing 8.6 tons of munitions was found in the Duc Lap area.

(C) Along the coast, activity was confined to minor ground attacks and indirect fire attacks.

(C) In the southern corps area widespread indirect fire and ground attacks occurred during the month, although most were of low intensity.

(C) On 7 Jul, the night position of B Troop, 2d Sqdn, 1st Cav and the 5th Bn, 27 Arty received a sapper attack. The enemy penetrated the perimeter and destroyed four APC's and one ammunition carrier. One M-48 tank and two APCs were moderately damaged. Enemy casualties were eight KIA. Friendly casualties were six killed and 28 wounded (27 US, one ARVN).

(C) The 28th ROK Regt, 9th Div conducted Operation DO KAE BEE 13 in the area west of Tuy Hoa, Phu Yen Province and north of the Da Rang River from 7 to 21 Jul. On this search and clear operation the regiment was reinforced by the division reconnaissance company. The final operational results were: 136 enemy KIA, two detained, and 41 individual and two crew-served weapons captured. Friendly losses amounted to four KIA and 24 WIA.

(C) On 11 Jul 10 km north of Tuy Hoa, Phu Yen Province, a platoon from the 729th RF Co and a US Mobile Advisory Team (MAT) were attacked by an unknown size enemy force employing small arms and mortar fire. A sweep of the area disclosed 11 enemy KIA and three enemy individual weapons captured. Friendly losses included 14 KIA (three US, nine RF, and two PF) and 20 RF WIA. The same day Kim That hamlet, 2 km southwest of Dalat, Tuyen Duc Province, was attacked by an unknown size enemy force resulting in 22 friendly KIA (11 RF and 11 civilians) and 11 WIA (three RF and eight civilians). Enemy casualties were unknown.

(C) In northern Pleiku Province and south central Kontum Province elements of the 4th Inf Div conducted Operation PUTNAM TIGER from 22 Apr to 22 Sep. The AO was 21 km southwest of Kontum and 30 km northwest of Pleiku. In this five month operation US forces killed 563 enemy, captured 50, and received one rallier. A total of 47 enemy individual and 11 crew-served weapons were captured. Friendly losses were 81 KIA and 245 WIA. 100

(C) In an operation designed to smash NVA forces in the Ong La Mountains in Phu Yen Province, troops of the 1st Bn, 26th ROK Regt launched Operation HAI SAN JIN 9 on 7 Jul near Song Cau. Using intelligence information captured from local VC, the ROK troops prevented the NVA from regrouping and strengthening their underground cell system in Phu Yen Province. When the operation terminated on 20 Jul, 202 enemy had been killed and 73 weapons captured. ROK casualties were six killed and 28 wounded. 101

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(C) On 31 Jul a battalion of the 9th ROK Inf (White Horse) Div launched Operation DONG BO 2-18 on the west slope of Hao Chu Hi (Hill 1451) 27 km west of Cam Ranh Bay in Ninh Thuan Province. When this search and clear operation terminated on 7 Aug, the ROKs had suffered no casualties while killing 106 of the enemy and capturing 45 of his individual weapons and three of his crew-served weapons. 102

(U) Enemy-initiated activity in II CTZ was limited in scope and intensity except for the period 11-12 Aug, when the enemy launched his Autumn campaign with 50 indirect fire attacks and 20 ground attacks.

(U) In the Western Highlands a prisoner captured on 30 Jul near the Plei Mrong CIDG camp identified his unit as an element of the 24th NVA Regt, and stated that his battalion's mission was to interdict QL-14 along the Pleiku/Kontum border. Elements of the regiment were assigned this mission during earlier offensives.

(U) An ammunition cache was discovered near Plei Me, Pleiku Province, on 15 Aug. The cache contained 113 82mm mortar rounds, 12 cases of small arm ammunition, and 70 mines. Elements of the 95B NVA Regt were probably responsible for ambushing two US convoys 15 km west of An Khe, Binh Dinh Province, on 23 Aug, and for the 24 Aug attack on a US Cav position 8 km west of An Khe. There were an increasing number of reports of sightings of large enemy troop concentrations in the southern highlands and near the Bu Prang CIDG camp in Quang Duc Province. The NVA regiments mentioned in some of the reports could pose a significant threat to Allied installations in Quang Duc Province.

(U) In coastal II CTZ a Hoi Chanh, previously a member of the Qui Nhon VC City Committee, stated that a country-wide campaign had been planned to begin on 2 Aug and last until 1 Oct. Possibly related to this campaign, on 26 Aug a terrorist detonated four grenades during a meeting between RD cadre and civilians near Phu Cat in Binh Dinh Province. Friendly casualties 103 from this incident were 26 killed and 100 wounded. One male suspect, age 14, was interrogated.

(C) Elements of the 4th Inf Div conducted Operation GAFFEY BLUE in central Binh Dinh Province, north of Hill 732 some 22 km north of An Khe. The search and clear operation ran for 20 days from 5 Aug. Although contacts with the enemy were infrequent, they cost the US forces four killed and 13 WIA, while the enemy lost 100 KIA, three detained, and three individual weapons captured, and 188 structures and 164 fortifications destroyed. 104

(C) Across the valley of the Cong River from the scene of Operation GAFFEY BLUE, on 21 Aug, elements of the ROK Capital Inf Div, supported by elements of the 1st Bn, 69th Arm commenced another search and clear operation nicknamed BUN KAE 7. The AO was located 45 km northwest of Qui Nhon, Binh Dinh Province. The operation terminated on 23 Aug with eight friendly KIA and nine WIA. Enemy losses were 109 KIA, 83 individual and four crew-served weapons captured. 105

(C) An unknown size enemy force attacked the 53d ARVN Regt command post located 28 km east of Bao Loc, Lam Dong Province on 11 Sep. In the same vicinity and also attacked were the 3d Bn, 53d ARVN Regt, the 906th RF Co, the local subsector headquarters, and a number of Leo Cong Chien Truong (LCCT) prisoners (apprehended ARVN deserters used as laborers). The enemy employed sappers, and small arms and mortar fire. AC-119 gunships and ARVN artillery supported and the ARVN battalion reacted. Enemy losses were three KIA, two individual and one crew-served weapons, and an assortment of grenades, satchel charges, and

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ammunition captured. Friendly losses were 18 KIA (10 ARVN, one RF, seven LCCT), 49 WIA (18 ARVN, eight RF, 23 LCCT), five Vietnamese civilians wounded, and one ARVN MIA. The following equipment was destroyed or lost: several bunkers, two warehouses, 115 M16 rifles, 23 .38 caliber pistols, six M-79 grenade launchers, two M-60 machine guns, one 60mm mortar, and two PRC-25 radios.

(C) On 12 Sep two enemy squads entered Phu My Hamlet, Binh Dinh Province, detonated two hand grenades, and burned 20 to 30 houses. The 731st RF Co reacted. Results: enemy - unknown; friendly - one RF KIA, and 12 Vietnamese civilians wounded.

(C) Enemy-initiated activity in II CTZ in September was limited in scope and intensity except for 4 and 5 Sep, when activity increased in southeastern II CTZ. On 4 Sep, US air cavalry elements captured \$VN 737, 850 (US \$6,253) in a base area 41 km southwest of An Khe, Binh Dinh Province. The money probably belonged to elements of the 95B NVA Regt.

(C) Meanwhile, the 28th and 66th NVA Regts were reported to be located in the vicinity of the Bu Prang CIDG camp. A Hoi Chanh from a local force battalion stated that the mission assigned his unit was to coordinate with local guerrillas in assassinating GVN employees and gaining control over the population in the northern corps area. To do this they were forming into squad size units. Another Hoi Chanh who rallied in Binh Thuan on 25 Sep from a main force battalion stated that units in the southern portion of the CTZ had received NVA replacements. He also stated that a new artillery battalion was being formed in the area. Friendly-initiated activity remained at a low level throughout the month.

(C) October saw activity in II CTZ remain limited in scope and intensity until 18 Oct when a period of increased activity commenced in the B-3 Front area. Possibly related to this activity was the initiation of enemy offensive activity in the Duc Lap-Bu Prang area on 28 Oct. A prisoner from the 24th NVA Regt, captured on 20 Oct, stated that his unit had the mission of interdicting QL-14 between Pleiku and Kontum City, and attacking friendly troops and installations in the vicinity of Plei Mrong, Pleiku Province.

(C) About 25 km east of An Khe, Binh Dinh Province, US and ROKA forces engaged in sporadic contacts with enemy forces and uncovered sizable munitions and rice caches in enemy base areas. Cumulative results were: 210 enemy killed, 22 detained, 26 tons of munitions, and 24 tons of rice captured. The detainees identified their units as various elements of the 18th NVA Regt. On 15-17 Oct the Capital ROK Inf Div in Binh Dinh Province made 68 separate contacts and found one cache.

(U) In Nha Trang harbor, Khanh Hoa Province, the merchant ship Kin Wah, of Heng Kong ownership and Panamanian registry, was sunk by two explosions on 15 Oct. The ship was loaded with structural steel. The main ship channel in the harbor remained open. Casualties were three crew members and two guests killed and 29 crew members wounded.

(C) While locating and engaging the enemy was generally difficult in II CTZ for most of October, he continued to evidence his presence by such harassments as the two indirect fire attacks on the Nha Trang Air Base on 11 and 12 Oct. These attacks resulted in four VN civilians killed, 16 VN civilians wounded, one CIDG WIA, three VNAF helicopters, and one refueling tanker damaged. His presence and activity were also revealed by discoveries of his caches of supplies. Between 6 and 14 Oct, some 22 km northeast of An Khe, Binh Dinh Province, elements of the US 4th Inf Div and the Capital ROK Infantry Division discovered 10

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separate enemy caches within a 3 km radius. These 35 tons of rice and munitions were thus denied the enemy.

(C) While avoiding conventional contact, the enemy maintained his pressure against the pacification program by acts designed to destroy confidence in the GVN's ability to defend the population. An example of this type of activity was the 15 Oct abduction of 15 PF soldiers on graduation leave from a service school. Three of them later escaped from their 17 captors who had entered the hamlet 29 km south-southeast of Pleiku. Another example of the enemy's presence was the detonating of an unknown type of explosive in a civilian theatre on 19 Oct in Qui Nhon City. The resulting dead and wounded were all civilians. Still a third example occurred on 28 Oct, 3 km northwest of Phu Cat, Binh Dinh Province, when a terrorist threw a hand grenade into the marketplace in Hoa Hoi Hamlet. There were eight civilians killed and 43 wounded. Later, six boys, ages 11-14 were detained.

(C) Activity throughout II CTZ in November was light and scattered. The enemy continued occasional attacks-by-fire and limited probes and sapper attacks. Notable exceptions to this pattern were the Bu Prang and Duc Lap areas where the enemy continued to maintain significant pressure with attacks-by-fire and ground attacks.

(U) The CIDG camp at Duc Lap, Quang Duc Province, had been unsuccessfully attacked by the VC/NVA in August 1968. This attack had been preceded by large scale southward movement of enemy forces from the northern Kontum Province area. In mid-July, 1969, intelligence information indicated that the 66th and 28th NVA Regts were redeploying south from the Ben Het area of Kontum Province. The CGs, II CTZ and IFFORCEV monitored this development closely, and correctly forecast possible new attacks against the camps at Duc Lap and Bu Prang and against the FSBs in their vicinity. Accordingly plans for reinforcement and for command and control were readied. By late October, it was estimated that the enemy had collected about 5,000 troops in the environs of Duc Lap and Bu Prang, and that he was well supported with artillery from the 40th NVA Arty Regt. The Bu Prang and Duc Lap CIDG camps were each manned by the equivalent of about one battalion of CSF personnel with a few artillery pieces.

(U) Reacting to intelligence, the CG, II CTZ placed all the forces in the Duc Lap-Bu Prang area under the command of the commander of the 23d ARVN Inf Div with headquarters at Ban Me Thuot, to the northeast, in Darlac Province. A tactical GP with essential staff, communications, and supporting elements was ordered to Gia Nghia, the capital of Quang Duc Province, to provide command and control over the multi-regimental sized forces that were expected to be deployed in countering the anticipated enemy offensive. Near Bu Prang, US Army 105mm and 155mm howitzer units were deployed to FSBs ANNIE, KATE, and SUSAN, while similar support was provided to FSBs BARON, BORRE, and MIKE SMITH near Duc Lap.

(U) The first significant contact occurred 8 miles southwest of the Duc Lap camp on the morning of 28 Oct, when a 45th ARVN Regt battalion engaged an estimated NVA company while on a combat sweep of the area. Nine enemy soldiers were killed while ARVN casualties were 12 killed and 10 wounded. The same day FSBs ANNIE, SUSAN, and KATE began receiving several indirect fire attacks. On 1 Nov FSB KATE received a heavy indirect fire attack which knocked out the howitzers at that location. The enemy fire included 85mm and 105mm artillery rounds. The base was ordered evacuated and the guns destroyed in the early evening. Under cover of darkness, a platoon sized group of US artillerymen and some 200 CIDG personnel moved west toward Bu Prang, linking up with the 5th MSF Bn before midnight and closing Bu Prang in the morning, 2 Nov. That afternoon, both FSBs SUSAN and ANNIE were ordered closed with the US

artillery units redeploying to other areas. Some pieces were moved into the Bu Prang camp to reinforce the CIDG artillery elements there.

(U) A pattern of attacks-by-fire and ground probes every few days continued through November and into December. Reinforcements were brought in from Kontum, Pleiku, Phu Yen, Tuyen Duc, Binh Thuan, Darlac, and Lam Dong Provinces. From October to early December, 16 RVNAF infantry, ranger, and MSF battalions and elements of two ARVN armored cavalry squadrons operated in Quang Duc Province under command of the 23d ARVN Inf Div. Massive movements by USAF transports and Army helicopters were required. A total of 87 missions were flown by B-52s which dropped 30 million pounds of bombs during this period. Another 6 million pounds of bombs were dropped by F-4 Phantoms, F-100 Supersabers, A-37s, and A-1 Skyraiders. Over 22,000 rounds were fired by US 105mm and 155mm howitzers between 28 Oct and 10 Dec. Additionally, some 1,100 rounds of 175mm and 8-inch artillery fire were provided in support of forces in the area. ARVN and CIDG 105mm and 155mm artillery pieces fired approximately 19,000 rounds between 28 Oct and 30 Nov. This firepower compares with some 3,500 rounds of high explosive of all types employed by the enemy in indirect fire attacks around Bu Prang and Duc Lap between 28 Oct and 11 Dec.

(U) During this period, the enemy made full use of his sanctuary in Cambodia to stockpile supplies close to the battle area and to site his hospitals. Artillery fire was directed against friendly forces within RVN from Cambodian positions. Exercising the inherent right of self-defense, Allied forces returned fire with TACAIR and artillery fire. The Dak Dam incident which is further covered earlier in this chapter occurred during this period.

(U) By 15 Dec the enemy was moving out of the area, and the pressure against Duc Lap and Bu Prang was relieved. 106

(C) In early December, in the Bu Prang - Duc Lap areas, the enemy concentrated on attacks-by-fire; ground activity was minor. Further, there was a sharp decrease in enemy activity in the Bu Prang area and an increase in the Duc Lap area. Phu Bon Province, usually a quiet area, experienced three enemy initiated contacts in the first week of December. By the end of the second week of December, activity in the Bu Prang - Duc Lap area ceased almost entirely, and for the remainder of the year both friendly and enemy initiated activity in II CTZ remained consistently light and scattered.

(S) Total friendly KIAs in II CTZ for the year were 4,215, of which 940 were US. Enemy KIAs totalled 22,801, of which 8,683 were killed by US forces.

(C) At the end of the year, the headquarters of I FFORCEV remained at Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, the 4th Inf Div Hq was at Camp Enari, Pleiku Province, the 173d Abn Bde was at LZ ENGLISH, Binh Dinh Province, TF SOUTH was at Phan Thiet, Binh Thuan Province, the headquarters of the Capital ROK Infantry Division was at Qui Nhon, Binh Dinh Province, and its components were all in the same province, except for one artillery battalion which was at Dong Tre, Phu Yen Province. The 9th ROK Div occupied a long AO along the coast, reaching from southern Phu Yen Province south through Khanh Hoa Province and to the southern extremes of Ninh Thuan Province. II CTZ headquarters remained at Pleiku, and the headquarters of the 22d ARVN Div were at Ba Gi, Binh Dinh Province. 107

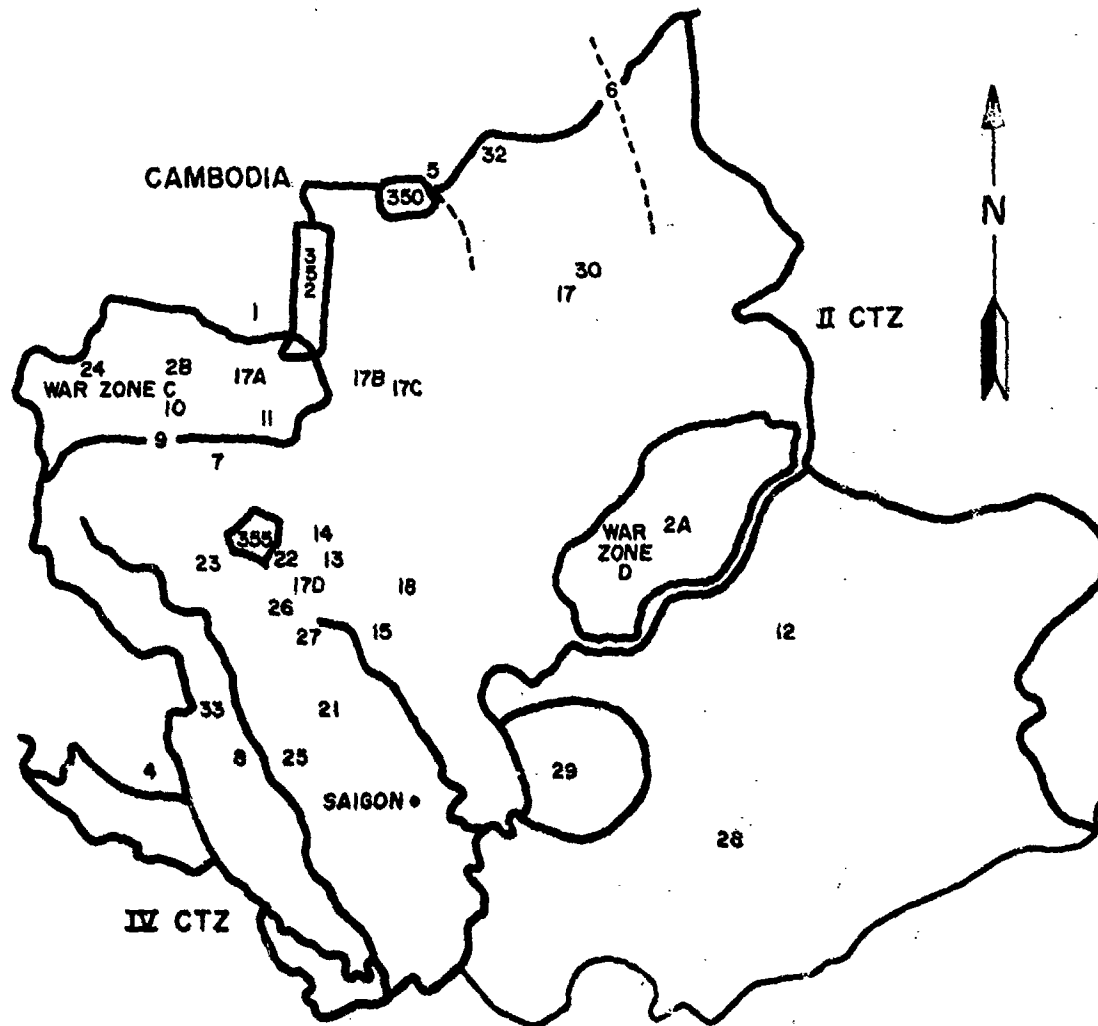
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III CTZ SKETCH-NOT TO SCALE



- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. The Fishhook | 12. LZ Joy | 21. Cu Chi |
| 2. War Zone D, C | 13. Trapezoid | 22. Dau Tieng |
| 3. BA 355, 350, 352 | 14. Michelin | 23. PB Diamond |
| 4. Parrott's Beak | 15. Iron Triangle | 24. Thien Ngon |
| 5. Sergi's Jungle Highway | 16. Highway 13 | 25. Bao Trai |
| 6. Adam's Road | 17. FSB Buttone | 26. Boi Loi Woods |
| 7. LZ Grant | 17a. FSB Becky | 27. Ben Suc |
| 8. LZ Tracy | 17b. FSB Sidewinder | 28. Hat Dich |
| 9. LZ St. Barbara | 17c. FSB Aspel | 29. AO Green Extension |
| 10. LZ Carolyn | 17d. FSB Mahone | 30. Song Be |
| 11. LZ Jamie | 18. Lai Khe | 31. Lai Khe |
| | 19. An Dien | 32. Bu Dop |
| | 20. Chanh Luu | 33. PB KOTRC |

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FIGURE V-7
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Year End Assessment

(TS) The general situation in II CTZ was much the same as that in I CTZ. There was a slow but steady overall increase in security. This was partially due to a significant decrease in enemy initiated activity in most of the provinces. Binh Dinh, however, remained a problem, as did the continued enemy capability to threaten western Kontum and Quang Duc Provinces. It was expected that future progress, as measured by the HES, would be slow, since security was already provided to the majority of the population, and future operations would be directed toward providing security for the small population pockets spread throughout the vast expanses of the CTZ area.

(TS) There was a slight regression in the security situation in Phu Yen and Ninh Thuan provinces due to an upsurge in enemy initiated activity. Reports indicated increased enemy movement both into and within Binh Dinh and Phu Bon. The relatively favorable military situation continued to provide stability for pacification and development. The majority of II CTZ ARVN units were committed to pacification missions during the latter part of the year, with some short term combat operations conducted on the edges of populated areas.

(TS) Significant contacts were made with NVA units around Bu Prang/Duc Lap by the 23d ARVN Div and attached elements of the 22d ARVN Div during the period Oct-Dec 69. During a series of sharp ground attacks the ARVN forces obtained good results, with the enemy forces withdrawing by the end of the quarter without achieving any significant objectives. By this experience, the 23d ARVN Div came into its own. Nevertheless, during these engagements the aggressiveness and overall operational effectiveness of some units were reported by advisors as unsatisfactory.

(TS) The 22d ARVN Div's capabilities in combat were largely unknown. It was employed primarily in pacification missions along the coast, and was not combat tested. It did not enjoy a high advisor assessment.

(TS) The 42d ARVN Regt, which had a high operational effectiveness assessment during early 1969, dropped to a very low assessment in the spring following the Ben Het/Dak To operations. This regiment achieved poor results during the last of the year.

(TS) RF and PF organization in terms of assigned strengths and lowered desertion rates demonstrated considerable improvement during 1969, but their performance continued to be the poorest in the country. Statistical evaluation of RF/PF in II Corps showed little improvement in operational performance due primarily to limited contacts with enemy forces and unit inactivity. 108

III CTZ Ground Operations

(U) Though not generally considered to be part of the Mekong Delta, III CTZ nevertheless included the northern part of that region. It was a low area, most of it being under 625 feet elevation with large portions as low as 10 feet above sea level. The area was drained by three rivers; the Vam Co, the Saigon, and the Dong Nai which flowed into the Nha Be River near Saigon en route to the South China Sea. Tidal influence was evidenced by the differences of six feet between high and low tide on the northern reaches of the Saigon River. While much of the

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land was cleared for rice production, there were still large tracts of rain forest, especially in the east and north along the Cambodian border and in the coastal provinces. Mangrove swamps were found in Gia Dinh Province where the Nha Be River emptied into the sea.

(C) At the first of the year, Allied forces in III CTZ were positioned generally as follows: the 1st Cav Div (Aml) northwest of Saigon in Tay Ninh, Binh Long, and Binh Duong Provinces; the 1st Inf Div and 5th ARVN Inf Div north of Saigon in the northern provinces of Binh Long, Phuoc Long, and northern Binh Duong; the 25th Inf Div and 25th ARVN Inf Div west and northwest of the capital in Tay Ninh and Hau Nghia Provinces; the 11th Armd Cav Regt (less one squadron) under the operational control of the 1st Inf Div; the 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div south of Saigon in Long An Province (while the division (-) continued operations in IV CTZ); the Capital Military Assistance Command (CMAC) in Gia Dinh Province; the 18th ARVN Inf Div east of Saigon in Long Khanh and Binh Tuy Provinces; the Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force (RTAVF) northeast of the capital city in Long Khanh and Bien Hoa Provinces; and the Australian Task Force (ATF) to the east in Phuoc Tuy Province.

(C) Friendly-initiated operations in I, II, and IV Corps tended to revolve around individually-named operations conducted by specific units for a prescribed time in a relatively limited AO. Operations in III CTZ were considered a part of Operation TOAN THANG II which had been initiated 1 Jun 68 as a follow on to Operation TOAN THANG I. For this reason it was not meaningful to report activities in III CTZ in terms of operations. Instead, III CTZ operations were reported as activities of the major commands within the CTZ.

(U) The enemy continued to reposition his forces throughout January, while attempting to avoid large-scale contacts. Small unit contacts along the corridors of the Be and Saigon Rivers indicated continued enemy infiltration of men and material into central III CTZ. An element of the 1st NVA Div was identified in contact northeast of Ba Den Mountain. An element of the 7th NVA Div was contacted south of the Cambodian border in Tay Ninh Province. The 9th VC Div was contacted in southwest Tay Ninh Province. A reconnaissance element of a VC MF battalion was identified in a contact south of Saigon near the Can Giuoc Bridge in Long An Province.

(U) In southeast III CTZ, an element of the 5th VC Div continued to pose a threat to the Long Binh-Bien Hoa complex and the BEARCAT Base Camp. The enemy forces attempted to avoid major engagements with the exception of an ambush by elements of one NVA regiment in which the enemy lost 122 KIA and an attack by an unidentified enemy force on Loc Ninh in Binh Long Province. The enemy, however, did continue to reconnoiter routes to Saigon from all directions, indicating continued enemy planning to attack Saigon.

(C) During the early weeks of the year, Allied units continued to exert heavy pressure on the enemy seeking out and destroying his caches and forcing him to commit himself in combat. Allied forces were shifted to key areas in the tactical zone in response to intelligence indicators. Particular emphasis was placed on infiltration routes into Saigon. Saturation operations in known base areas resulted in the discovery of caches which denied the enemy significant quantities of food and munitions and retarded his preparation of the battlefield for his expected Tet offensive. The continuing discovery of caches in the CTZ during January gave further indications that the enemy was moving into forward staging areas to resume offensive operations. On 13 Jan elements of the 2d Bn, 12th Cav found 16 tons of rice near Go Dau Ha in Tay Ninh Province. Southeast of Katum elements of the 5th Bn, 7th Cav discovered 30 tons of munitions on 19 Jan. These two caches plus many others yielding tons of arms and food were found along the 120 km stretch of key infiltration routes from Cambodia. These routes were a part of a supply network set up to equip enemy troops for the expected wave of attacks in III CTZ. 109

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(U) In III CTZ enemy activity during February fell generally into two phases. In the first phase, 1 through 22 Feb, the enemy generally avoided contact while positioning his forces and attempting to establish supply bases in areas near prospective urban and military targets in preparation for his offensive. The second phase, from 23 Feb to the end of the month, was characterized by an enemy offensive directed primarily against military installations.

(U) Enemy activity consisted mainly of widespread indirect fire attacks, resulting in relatively light casualties and damage. Ground assaults accompanied the indirect fire attacks in some instances, but all were repulsed, resulting in heavy enemy losses. Over 200 enemy were killed in two attacks at a 25th Inf Div FSB in Tay Ninh Province on 23 and 25 Feb. Over 400 enemy were killed in a series of engagements in the Bien Hoa/Long Binh military complex area between 23 and 26 Feb. Enemy divisional forces identified in contact during the offensive were the 1st NVA Div, 5th VC Div, and the 9th VC Div, the latter two divisions were 75 to 90 percent respectively NVA personnel.

(U) Most of the enemy's indirect fire attacks in support of the late February offensive were relatively light, and the major portion of his divisional and subregion forces were not committed. This suggested that further offensive activity was planned, possibly on an increased level.

(U) Enemy activity during March was characterized by attempts to maintain the momentum of the offensive. Despite the enemy's efforts, his activity decreased gradually during the month. Most enemy activity involved indirect fire attacks against Allied military installations. Ground assaults and convoy ambushes were also attempted, but these achieved no decisive or significant results.

(C) 1st Cav Div (Ambl). Operating in Tay Ninh, Binh Long, and Binh Duong Provinces at the start of the year, the 1st Cav Div (Ambl) found only small unit contacts with small scale results until 21 Jan. On that day, an element of the 2d Bde, conducting operations in the area 8 km southwest of the Fishhook (northeast Tay Ninh Province) (See Figure V-7), contacted scattered enemy forces. Although these contacts resulted in only six enemy killed and the capture of four AK-47 rifles and one 60mm mortar, the unit also located caches in the same area containing 331 82mm mortar rounds, 312 60mm mortar rounds, 44 107mm rockets, 40 RPG-2 rounds, 15 RPG-7 rounds, 75 recoilless rifle rounds, 246 grenades, 147,020 rounds of small arms ammunition, 1.1 tons of TNT, .33 tons of C4 explosive, 24 mines, and 11,760 time fuzes.

(C) In early February the 1st Cav Div (Ambl) extended its operations into Bien Hoa Province and War Zone D. In February, March, and April the division relocated its combat power several times in response to intelligence and in order to maintain units between the enemy and his targets. The division continued to secure LOCs in its area and provided assistance and support to other FWMAF units and indigenous personnel. The 1st Bde continued operations to interdict and destroy enemy forces infiltrating from Cambodia through BA 355 and south of PARROT'S BEAK. While the 2d Bde continued operations in the vicinity of the FISHHOOK, secured Route QL-13 (which runs north and south the length of Binh Long Province) within the sector, and conducted reconnaissance in force operations in rubber plantations near populated areas, the 3d Bde continued ground and airmobile operations against the Sergi's Jungle Highway and Adam's Road infiltration routes. The division also employed extensive psychological operations in conjunction with ground operations. On 7 Feb, 10 km north of LZ GRANT, a 2d Bn, 12th Cav unit located 54,000 pounds of rice, 50 B-41 rockets, 20 B-40 rockets, 15 57mm RR rounds, 15 bicycles, and four 82mm mortar rounds while searching a bunker complex. About a month later on 8 Mar in the vicinity of LZ GRANT, a unit of the same battalion received a ground attack from an enemy battalion size force. When the contact broke some six hours later, the results

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were: 157 enemy killed, two prisoners, and 23 small arms, eight crew-served weapons, two flame throwers, 45 HE rounds, 10,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 73 grenades, and four bangalore torpedoes captured. Friendly losses were 13 US killed, 39 wounded, and one howitzer destroyed.

(C) On 14 Mar at a river bank southeast of LZ TRACY a 1st Bn, 8th Cav unit located a cache containing 486 rocket rounds, 1,053 82mm and 1,188 60mm mortar rounds, 323 recoilless rifle rounds, 25,076 rounds of small arms ammunition, 1,344 grenades, 40 mines, and miscellaneous military equipment. Two days later, a 1st Bn, 5th Cav unit located 630 82mm rocket rounds in a bunker complex while an element of the 2d Bn, 5th Cav found 32,000 pounds of rice.

(C) 1st Inf Div. In January the division's contacts were generally light and scattered. At the end of the month the division was continuing operations designed to locate and destroy enemy forces and to interdict his movements and logistical operations toward the Capital Military District and the Long Binh/Bien Hoa military complex. 110

(C) In February and March the 1st Inf Div continued Operation TOAN THANG, and conducted reconnaissance in force and night patrol operations to deny enemy base utilization, interdict infiltration to the south, and disrupt enemy logistic operations. Ground and air reconnaissance was conducted in the Bien Hoa-Saigon rocket belt to hamper enemy rocket and mortar activity. The first part of February was one of low activity to include a lull over the Tet period. The enemy began his post-Tet offensive by conducting massive attacks-by-fire and selected ground attacks against VN and FWMAF targets. The 1st Inf Div conducted thrusts in the Thu Duc District, in the Trapezoid, and later in the Michelin. Combined operations with the 5th ARVN Division elements also increased, and the division conducted several coordinated operations with the 25th Inf Div and the 1st Cav Div (Ambl).

(C) The 1st Bde continued the effort to open a land LOC to Song Be. Phuoc Long Province, which began on 15 Jan. This was a combined operation using US land clearing forces, with the bulk of the engineer and troop effort provided by elements of the ARVN. The 2d Bde continued the pacification program through population control and rice denial operations in the Di An-Phu Loi area of Bien Hoa and Binh Duong Provinces and continued to hamper enemy logistic operations and to neutralize VCI in the area. The 3d Bde continued pacification operations in the vicinity of An Dien and Chahn Luu areas and continued rice denial and VCI neutralization operations in these areas. The 11th Armd Cav Regt continued VCI neutralization and civil affairs programs in the eastern Tan Son-Catchers Mitt area of Bien Hoa Province.

(C) The 1st Bde conducted extensive land clearing along QL-14 between Phuoc Vinh and Dong Xoai in combined operations with the 9th Regt, 5th ARVN Div in February and March. The brigade conducted ambush patrolling in the Iron Triangle-Trapezoid area to deny the enemy use of the area and to prevent enemy night movement. The patrolling activity resulted in 100 enemy killed, two prisoners, and 47 individual weapons, 206 grenades, 2,830 rounds of small arms ammunition and 12 mines captured. Phase I of the Song Be road operation was completed and the road was cleared from Phuoc Vinh to Dong Xoai.

(C) On 26 Feb, a troop from the 11th Armd Cav Regt assisted in defending III CTZ headquarters and the Bien Hoa Air Base against an enemy attack.

(C) The 1st Bde, 1st Inf Div relocated from Lai Khe, Binh Duong Province, to Quan Loi Base Camp, Binh Long Province, on 12 Mar, and assumed responsibility for the area of Loc

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Ninh, An Loc-Quan Loi, and Song Be to include base camps located along QL-13, Quang Loi Base Camp, FSB BUTTONS, and overwatch of SF/CIDG.

(C) On 18 Mar the 11th Armd Cav Regt was designated as the force to deploy and attack the elements of the 7th NVA Div in the Michelin Plantation. The regiment engaged the 320th NVA Regt killing nearly 400 enemy as part of Operation ATLAS WEDGE.

(C) 25th Inf Div. In January the division aggressively sought out enemy forces operating in its areas and conducted operations to interdict enemy movements of personnel and supplies toward critical population centers. Despite enemy attempts to avoid decisive combat, the division developed a number of major contacts and located several sizable caches of enemy materiel. On 13 Jan, elements of the 1st Bn, 5th Inf (M), conducting security and reconnaissance in force operations on the west edge of Michelin Plantation, uncovered caches containing 15.7 tons of rice. The next day, elements of the 3d Bde engaged in two sizable contacts. At 0850 hours, 7 km southeast of Tay Ninh, an element of the 2d Bn, 22d Inf (M), (-) contacted an enemy force of undetermined size, killing 23 enemy while losing one US killed and two wounded. Contact was lost for a short period but regained at 1045 hours. Results of this engagement were 99 enemy killed and four US killed and five wounded. Air strikes in support of the brigade killed another 36 enemy. 111

(C) In February the 25th Inf Div continued Operation TOAN THANG. The 1st Bde maintained operations in Tay Ninh Province; the 2d Bde units operated generally in the Cu Chi area; and the 3d Bde operated in the Dau Tieng area in western Binh Duong Province. The 1st Bde forces were located to provide for the defense of Tay Ninh and Dau Tieng Base Camps, to include the Tay Ninh laterite pit, Bau Co, the rock crusher, signal facility, and FSBs in the TAOR. Airmobile operations were used to locate and destroy enemy forces. ARC LIGHT and tactical air strikes were employed in an economy of force role and were exploited by artillery and/or the employment of ground troops. The 2d and 3d Bdes, in conjunction with the 25th ARVN Div, RF/PF units, and the National Police, conducted combined and unilateral offensive operations within their TAORs. The brigades conducted reconnaissance in force operations and located and destroyed many enemy ammunition and food supplies through the employment of scout dog teams. Land clearing operations removed the jungle from many of the areas previously used for enemy base camps and supply caches. US battalion elements and ARVN battalions conducted joint operations consisting of cordon and search, combat assaults, and reconnaissance in force missions.

(C) On 19 Feb air strikes in support of 1st Bde operations resulted in 107 tons of rice being destroyed. On 23 Feb, elements of the 2d Bn, 27th Inf received small arms, automatic weapons, RPG, and mortar fire in the vicinity of Patrol Base DIAMOND, located west of Ap Binh Hoa, in southernmost Tay Ninh Province. Return fire with small arms, automatic weapons, artillery, light fire teams, air support and SHADOW resulted in 109 enemy killed, one prisoner, and 15 small arms and seven rocket launchers captured. Friendly losses were 15 US killed and 12 wounded. Two days later in the vicinity of Patrol Base DIAMOND in southern Tay Ninh Province, a contact by elements of the 2d Bn, 27th Inf resulted in 78 enemy killed, two prisoners, and 40 rocket launchers, 87 grenades, 61 HE rounds, and 1,600 rounds of small arms ammunition captured. Friendly losses were one US killed and three wounded.

(C) On 4 Mar approximately 6 km northeast of Trang Bang in northern Hau Nghia Province, elements of the 2d Bn, 12th Inf and of the 1st Bn, 5th Inf (M), received small arms, automatic weapons, mortar, and recoilless rifle fire. Return fire with small arms, automatic weapons,

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artillery, light fire teams, and air strikes resulted in 84 enemy killed. Friendly losses were three US killed, 20 wounded, and two APCs destroyed. In the vicinity of Kom Bau Rong east of Dau Tieng in Binh Duong Province on 11 Mar the Dau Tieng convoy received enemy fire. Return fire by the elements of the 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div supported by artillery, light fire teams, and tactical air resulted in 76 enemy killed and two prisoners. Friendly casualties were three US wounded.

(C) Contacts on 19 Mar approximately 7 km east of Trang Bang. by elements of the 2d Bn, 12th Inf, and on 25 Mar approximately 1 km south of Ap Suo Cao in southern Tay Ninh Province, by elements of the 2d Bn, 34th Armd, resulted in a total of 88 enemy killed, five prisoners taken, and 27 small arms, 11 crew served weapons, and 33 HE rounds captured. Friendly losses were four US killed and six wounded.

(C) 9th Inf Div. On 1 Dec 68 the division, less the 3d Bde and supporting elements, had been released from the operational control of the CG, II FFORCEV and placed under the operational control of the Senior Advisor, IV CTZ. Contacts by the 3d Bde in January were light. 112

(C) In February the 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div continued Operation TOAN THANG, Phase II, with two infantry battalions and one mechanized battalion. The 2d Bn, 47th Inf (M) performed the mission of road, bridge, and convoy security along QL-4. The brigade's battalions were all in Long An Province.

(C) The second quarter saw a general decrease of enemy activity in III CTZ, except for high points on the nights of 11 and 12 May and the night of 5 Jun. The enemy continued his indirect fire attacks at a low to moderate level, and several attacks up to multi-battalion size were attempted. In general, April was a period of re-assessment and refitting for enemy forces in III CTZ. All divisions attempted to keep forces in forward bases from which they could threaten their targets, but these forces did little more than maintain an enemy presence in these areas. In May there was evidence that the enemy was reorganizing somewhat, and that a regiment had redeployed to Chau Doc Province in IV CTZ. Meanwhile, in Saigon the National Police arrested over 80 individuals associated with VC terrorists and sapper cells, thus pre-empting any enemy plans for extensive terrorist activity in the city. The same pattern continued in June.

(C) The month of April for the 1st Cav Div (Ambl) was characterized by light and scattered contacts, while in scattered actions during April the 1st Inf Div killed 282 enemy and 31 were captured. Division casualties were 37 killed and 251 wounded. 113

(C) During the early part of May the 1st Cav Div (Ambl) shifted operations to the southern portion of War Zone C and assumed an interdiction posture typified by small unit patrols and ambushes. In the latter part of May the division resumed its offensive role to attack major enemy formations in their base areas throughout central War Zone C. The division forces, operating in heavily jungled terrain against large troop concentrations in fortified base areas, utilized a technique employing massed B-52 strikes followed by massive ground force exploitation against such targets. Extensive use was made of large amounts of CS crystal in conjunction with these operations; this aided in canalizing enemy movements and denying him his bases. Severe damage was inflicted on two of the three regiments of the 1st NVA Division and on supporting units. The initiative was wrested from the enemy and his logistical traffic was significantly disrupted.

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(C) Operation MONTANA RAIDER, begun on 13 Apr, terminated a month later on 12 May. This was a three-phased operation targeted against one regiment of the 1st NVA Division and two regiments of the 7th NVA Division with each brigade of the 1st Cav Div (Ambl) in turn cross-reinforcing with elements of the 11th Armd Cav Regt to exploit B-52 strikes. The 1st Bde, (reinforced), conducted an operation in the area between Tay Ninh, Tay Ninh Province, and Tri Tam, Binh Duong Province. The 2d Bde, (reinforced), conducted an operation in the area east and north of the Michelin Plantation in Binh Long and Binh Duong Provinces, and the 3d Bde, also with 11th Armd Cav Regt elements conducted an operation in an area south of An Loc, Binh Long Province, against elements of the 209th Regt, 7th NVA Div. The results were 39 US killed, 151 wounded, and one aircraft destroyed with 353 enemy killed and eight prisoners, 231 rounds of small arms ammunition, 131.9 tons of rice, and 29.4 tons of salt captured. The division also conducted operations in War Zone C against elements of the 1st and 7th NVA Divisions, and against elements of the 5th VC Div in War Zone D. Results of the operations in War Zone C were 1,570 enemy killed and 39 prisoners, 399 individual weapons, 59 crew-served weapons, nearly 80,000 rounds of ammunition, 65.96 tons of rice, and 14.73 tons of salt captured. Friendly losses were 64 US killed, 376 wounded, 19 aircraft destroyed, and one 105mm howitzer destroyed. Operations in War Zone D were conducted by the 3d Bde. The mission of the brigade was to interdict the southerly movement of the 5th VC Div out of War Zone D into the heavily populated areas in the vicinity of the Long Binh-Bien Hoa area, to interdict known crossing points on the Dong Nai River, and to locate the 275th and 174th Regts of the 5th VC Div. Results of these operations were 132 enemy killed and five prisoners, 46 individual weapons, 21 crew-served weapons, approximately 78,000 rounds of ammunition, 194.56 tons of rice, 42.97 tons of salt, 8.5 tons of flour, 1,000 cans of fish, and 70 tons of assorted foodstuffs captured. Friendly losses were 19 US killed, 104 wounded, and two aircraft destroyed.

(C) On 6 May the 2d Bn, 8th Cav was continuing security for LZs ST. BARBARA and CAROLYN by conducting operations to the north. At 0200 LZ CAROLYN began receiving a mortar and rocket attack, followed by a ground assault by an estimated enemy regiment. The assault was from the southwest and north, and in the next 25 minutes a portion of the perimeter was breached. A 105mm howitzer ammunition dump was hit and destroyed at 0315; fighting continued throughout the early morning hours. Counterattacks reestablished the perimeter and the enemy force began withdrawing an hour later with contact breaking at 0600. Elements of a company were airlifted from LZ ST. BARBARA about 45 minutes after the withdrawal started to reinforce and begin a sweep of the battle area. At 0930 a 2d Bn, 5th Cav company combat assaulted to block avenues of escape from the battle area to the north. A 2d Bn, 12th Cav company combat assaulted to block and interdict avenues to the west some three hours later. Sweeping the battle area revealed the following results: 101 enemy killed, 29 prisoners, and 48 small arms, 23 crew-served weapons, 12,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 249 HE rounds, and 259 grenades captured. Friendly losses were nine US killed and 62 wounded.

(C) Operations in War Zone C, initiated on 24 Jan, were characterized by light contacts and significant cache finds. Major results were derived from bomb damage assessment of B-52 strikes. Results were 117 enemy killed and nine prisoners taken.

(C) The 1st Inf Div experienced scattered contacts in April. These resulted in 282 enemy KIA and 31 captured, while division casualties were 37 KIA and 251 wounded. One troop of the 1st Sqdn, 4th Cav was attached to the 1st Avn Bn (Cbt). This internal reorganization provided increased maintenance support to the air cavalry troop and increased the availability of its aircraft.

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(C) Controlled by the 1st Bde, 1st Inf Div, Operation TOAN THANG 2-64 began on 21 Apr and terminated 26 Jun. The operation consisted of opening and upgrading LTL 1A, QL-14, and Rte 311 from Phuoc Vinh to Dong Xoai to Phuoc Binh, that is from northern Binh Duong Province to central Phuoc Long Province. A total of 9,243 acres of land was cleared during the operation. Route upgrading and bridge repair were conducted by the 301st ARVN Eng Bn.

(C) In May, June, and July the 2d Bde, 1st Inf Div concentrated its efforts on pacification operations. An expanded area of operations into northeastern Binh Duong Province resulted in additional road security requirements and the assumption of overwatch responsibility for additional target hamlets. The 3d Bde retained responsibility for Lai Khe Base defense. School construction, repair, and maintenance continued to enhance the RVN educational system.

(C) A combined operation was conducted from 5 May to 22 Jun with the 5th ARVN Div in the vicinity of An Loc and Quan Loi, northern Binh Long Province, to find and destroy elements of the 1st and 7th NVA Divs. The results of this operation were 601 enemy killed and 29 prisoners, with substantial quantities of war materiel captured. On 18 Jun the 1st Bde, 1st Inf Div began relocating from Quan Loi, Binh Long Province to Dau Tieng Base Camp, near Tri Tam in north-west Binh Duong Province, and assumed responsibility from the 25th Inf Div for base camp security on 30 Jun. The division initiated combat operations in the Michelin Rubber Plantation and in the western Trapezoid area and increased combined operations with the 5th ARVN Div and the Provincial Forces. Combined forces of infantry, mechanized armor, and engineers completed the opening of the land line of communication to allow resupply convoys to travel from Phu Cuong, Binh Duong Province, to Song Be, Phuoc Long Province, 15 through 17 Jun.

(C) Operation AN SON was conducted 4 to 25 Jun with elements of the 2d Bn, 18th Inf, the 18th ARVN Regt, and four RF companies participating. A combined US/ARVN staff was formed under the command of a US field grade officer to control the task force which was formed to eliminate main force elements which had infiltrated the An Son area, south of Phu Cuong, in southern Binh Duong Province. The task force saturated the area and eliminated 83 of the reported 120 VC in the area. Of the total, 15 enemy soldiers rallied as a result of a combination of tactical pressure supported by extensive PSYOP coverage. A special technique was employed whereby loudspeaker broadcasts from aircraft, river patrol boats, and ground vehicles were made in accordance with a coordinated maneuver and broadcast schedule. During previously announced periods of one hour duration Allied troops would cease offensive operations to allow enemy troops to rally. Enemy forces were educated through loudspeaker missions and through contact made by armed propaganda teams as to the best procedures to be used to rally.

(C) The 1st Inf Div was relieved of responsibility for Binh Long and Phuoc Long Provinces and the Quan Loi Base Camp by the 1st Cav Div (Ambl) in Operation BOSTON PISTOL, which ran from 18 to 30 Jun.

(C) Approximately 2 km west of Ap An Phu, some 5 km northwest of An Loc, Binh Long Province, a 2d Bn, 2d Inf (Mech) company on 6 Jun engaged an estimated company size enemy force. The enemy returned fire and light fire teams, aerial rocket artillery, artillery, and tactical air supported the contact. Less than an hour later another 2d Bn, 2d Inf (Mech) company reinforced, and two hours after that a third company also reinforced. The contact continued for another hour. The results were 78 enemy killed and five prisoners, five HE rounds, six crew-served weapons, 17 small arms, 940 rounds of small arms ammunition, and 71 grenades captured. Friendly losses were four US KIA, and 14 WIA. The next day, some 9 km

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southwest of An Loc the 2d Sqdn, 11th Cav Regt with the help of supporting arms, and reinforced by a company from the 2d Bn, 2d Inf (Mech) killed 96 enemy with friendly losses of four US killed and 26 wounded.

(C) The first significant April contact of the 25th Inf Div occurred on 5 Apr when, in the vicinity of Patrol Base DIAMOND in extreme southern Tay Ninh Province, 2d Bn, 27th Inf elements engaged an enemy force of unknown size. Supported by artillery, light fire teams, SPOOKY, air strikes, and aerial rocket artillery (ARA), the 2d Bn, 27th Inf units repulsed the enemy ground attack with the following results: 81 enemy killed, one prisoner, and 23 small arms, 16 crew-served weapons, 81 grenades, and 47 HE rounds captured; friendly losses were four US killed and 13 wounded. Five days later approximately 1 km northwest of Ap Phu Thuon in northwest Tay Ninh Province, a 1st Bde contact resulted in 63 enemy killed. There were no friendly casualties. Ten days later in the same general area, elements of the 2d Bn, 27th Inf received a heavy mortar and ground attack from an estimated two reinforced-battalion size enemy force. Return fire included small arms, automatic weapons, mortars, artillery, light fire teams, SHADOW, SPOOKY, and air strikes. Results of the contact were 198 enemy killed, eight prisoners, and 40 small arms, 42 crew-served weapons, 291 grenades, and 198 HE rounds captured. Friendly losses were 13 US killed and nine wounded. On 16 Apr the 4th Bn, 23d Inf (Mech) located 93 enemy dead and destroyed 70 HE rounds approximately 3 km southwest of Thion Ngon. Two days later approximately 10 km northeast of Ap Phuoc Hoa approximately 28 km northeast of Tay Ninh, a helicopter was downed by fire. Teams of the 1st Sqdn, 11th Armd Cav Regt moved into the area and established contact with the enemy. The results were 80 enemy killed and four crew-served weapons captured. Friendly losses were seven US killed, 27 wounded, four tanks destroyed, and one helicopter damaged.

(C) On the night of 25 Apr, elements of a company of the 4th Bn, 7th Inf detected movement of an estimated enemy company in the vicinity of the patrol base FRONTIER CITY approximately 22 km south of Tay Ninh. At 0035 hours on 26 Apr the patrol base received a mortar and rocket attack followed by a battalion size attack from the south in an attempt to breach the perimeter. The company engaged the enemy with small arms, machineguns, recoilless rifle fire, and claymores, supported by artillery, light fire teams, SPOOKY, and tactical air strikes. The enemy continued his suppressive fires until 0230 hours; by 0330 hours the heavy fire terminated and only sporadic weapons fire was received for the remainder of the battle. US forces continued to place fire on enemy targets of opportunity until 0630 hours, at which time the engagement terminated. The results of this contact were 214 enemy killed, six prisoners, and 37 small arms, 40 crew-served weapons, 56 HE rounds, 8,700 rounds of small arms ammunition, 100 grenades, and 100 pounds of web gear captured. There was one US wounded. Air strikes in support of the 1st Bde on 26 Apr resulted in 115 enemy killed, approximately 3 km west of Ap Ben Trai approximately 21 km south of Tay Ninh.

(C) The same day in the vicinity of Patrol Base FRONTIER CITY the 4th Bn, 9th Inf received an enemy attack. The engagement, in which artillery, light fire teams, SPOOKY, air strikes, and ARA supported, resulted in 188 enemy killed, six prisoners, and 35 small arms, 15 crew-served weapons, 58 HE rounds, 8,700 rounds of small arms ammunition, and 100 pounds of web gear were captured; one US was wounded. The following day at 0315 hours approximately 10 km northeast of Trang Bang, elements of the 2d Bn, 12th Inf received small arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire followed by a ground probe. Return fire with small arms, automatic weapons, artillery, light fire teams, SPOOKY, and air strikes resulted in 100 enemy killed, two prisoners, and 31 small arms, 23 crew-served weapons, and 40 grenades captured. Friendly losses were 10 US killed and four wounded. 114

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(C) During the months of May, June, and July the 25th Division had three primary objectives: first, to preempt enemy main force and local force efforts; second, to place emphasis on the improvement of the RVNAF through combined operations; and third, to continue the pacification program. During this period greater emphasis was placed on NIGHT HAWK missions (operations employing armed helicopters with night observation devices). The effectiveness of the Combined Reconnaissance and Intelligence Platoon (CRIP) improved considerably. Also, the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) began operations with Vietnamese LRRP counterparts. Tank-infantry training was conducted for RF/PF units and maneuver battalions of the division constructed rifle ranges to emphasize marksmanship for RF/PF units. There was a significant increase in both the variety and total number of psychological operations conducted within the division in support of the 1969 Pacification Program. Increased emphasis was placed on civic action projects of construction and distribution in support of unit pacification operations in targeted areas. An integration of intelligence gathering capabilities with the medical civic action projects (MEDCAPs) brought a renewed emphasis to this facet of civil affairs. The division's deployment remained basically unchanged.

(C) The most significant modification of AOs made in June was a division boundary change resulting in the relocation of the 3d Bde from Dau Tieng to a forward location at Bao Trai approximately 12 km southwest of Cu Chi, Hau Nghia Province. Initial implementation began on 4 Jun with gradual changes continuing until full responsibility for Dau Tien, the Michelin Rubber Plantation, and Trapezoid was assumed by the 1st Inf Div on 30 Jun. The 3d Bde remained in the area until 30 Jun while concurrently preparing to commence operations in lower Hau Nghia Province east and west of the Vam Co Dong River. During the period 15 May to 9 Jun the Rome Plows of the 60th Land Clearing Company cleared over 7,000 acres of possible enemy base areas in Boi Loi Woods.

(C) Except for the high point on the night of 5 Jun, and the attack on FSB CROOK (see Annex G) the 25th Inf Div did not develop significant contacts in June until the 14th. On that day approximately 1 km east of Ap Bien Quy approximately 10 km southwest of Tay Ninh, a contact by the 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav while conducting reconnaissance resulted in 78 enemy killed and 63 HE rounds, 125 rounds of small arms ammunition, nine crew-served weapons, 42 small arms captured. Friendly losses were four US killed, nine wounded, one tank destroyed, one tank damaged, and seven APCs damaged. Then, on 27 Jun approximately 6 km northeast of Tay Ninh, a 4th Bn, 23d Inf contact resulted in 94 enemy killed and three prisoners, 30 small arms, six crew-served weapons, and 20 HE rounds captured. Friendly losses were one US killed, six wounded, one APC destroyed, and one APC damaged.

(C) The month of April for the 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div was characterized by various small contacts. The results of these contacts were 630 enemy killed and two prisoners with friendly losses of 11 killed and 161 wounded. 115

(C) The 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div continued air mobile assault, CHECKERBOARD, BUSH-MASTER, cordon and search, reconnaissance, and special night operations as its primary combat operational techniques. Operations were designed to destroy the enemy, to deny him the opportunity to reorganize and redistribute his forces and resources, and to impede his efforts to launch offensive operations against GVN forces and populated areas. The enemy's offensive activity was characterized by harassment of outposts, attacks-by-fire, and extensive use of mines and booby traps. The brigade operated with three maneuver battalions (2d Bn, 60th Inf, 5th Bn, 60th Inf, and 2d Bn, 47th Inf (Mech), in Long An Province until 2 Jun when a fourth battalion, the 3d Bn, 7th Inf, became OPCON to the brigade. The 3d Bde continued to support the 1969 Pacification Program.

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(C) On 12 May an artillery aerial observer was dispatched to an area southwest of Thu Thua, approximately 7 km north of Tan An, to assist a PF outpost which was under attack. During the initial reconnaissance, automatic weapons fire was received from an unknown size enemy force. An element of the 3d Sqdn, 17th Cav was sent to the area and also received heavy fire. On request of the province chief, reconnaissance elements of the 2d Bn, 47th Inf (Mech) were sent to reinforce and immediately came in contact with the enemy. A "pile-on" operation began utilizing five companies of the 2d and 5th Bns, 60th Inf; one company each from the 2d and 3d Bns, 50th ARVN Regt; two PF platoons; four RF companies; and one PRU platoon. Assault helicopters, air cavalry, tactical air, and artillery supported the operation. Sporadic contact continued throughout the night. At first light, US, ARVN, and territorial forces conducted a sweep of the battlefield, while two companies of the 5th Bn, 60th Inf conducted airmobile assaults to the northwest in pursuit of the enemy. By 2000 hours 13 May the combined sweep and pursuit terminated. Final results of the combined operation were 91 enemy killed, six prisoners, and 16 crew-served weapons, and 15 individual weapons captured. Combined friendly losses were four killed and 37 wounded. Three armored personnel carriers and seven aircraft were damaged.

(C) On 26 Jul, due to the rotation of the division headquarters and the 1st and 2d Bdes, the 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div was placed OPCON to the 25th Inf Div. Contact during June and July was light. 116

(C) 199th Inf Bde. Effective 18 Jun the 199th Inf Bde became OPCON to II FFORCEV. The brigade moved to Long Khanh Province and began operations with the 18th ARVN Div in the combined DONG TIEN (Progress Together) program. The brigade's operations were targeted against the 5th VC Div and Long Khanh Province local forces. Contact during the months of June and July was light. 117

(C) The third quarter was marked by a dramatic decrease in activity except for high points in August and September. In July contacts became increasingly infrequent while in August, except for an increase in activity from 11 to 16 Aug, the month was characterized by scattered low intensity attacks-by-fire. The enemy initiated the first phase of the Autumn Campaign with major attacks in Binh Long, Phuoc Long, and Tay Ninh Provinces on 11 and 12 Aug. There was an increase in activity during the night of 4 Sep, and again on 11 Sep, immediately following the Communist-announced cease fire. Otherwise, activity in III CTZ was at a low level.

(C) Although extensive patrolling was undertaken, both the 1st Cav Div (Ambl) and the 1st Inf Div found only light contacts in July, as did the other major units in the CTZ.

(C) In the months of August, September, and October, 1st Cav Div (Ambl) operations were once again interdictionary in nature. Exploitation of B-52 strikes and the increased employment of small unit day and night ambushes were typical of the period. Combat assaults followed by extensive ground reconnaissance operations proved effective in disrupting enemy infiltration routes, discovering and eliminating enemy caches, and inflicting casualties on the enemy. The division was organized with the 1st and 2d Bdes in War Zone C, the 11th Armd Cav Regt in Binh Long Province, and the 3d Bde in Phuoc Long Province. The 1st Bde operations were targeted against units of the 1st NVA Div and the 82d and 50th Rear Service Groups with priority of effort directed toward reduction of base areas, cache sites, and the interdiction of enemy lines of communication. The 11th Armd Cav Regt continued combined operations with the 9th ARVN Regt and the 5th ARVN Div. Priority of effort was directed against cache sites, against enemy local forces in the An Loc, Loc Ninh, and Quan Loi areas and toward the interdiction of enemy

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units moving from BAs 350 and 352 in northern and western Binh Long Province. The 2d Bde operated against elements of the 5th VC Div in the eastern portion of Phuoc Long Province with priority of effort directed toward the interdiction of the Adams Road complex and toward the elimination of the D/168th VC local force and the Song Be battalions. Emphasis was placed on combined operations with RF/PF units stressing increased night ambush positions in the vicinity of villages and hamlets to enhance security of these areas. The 3d Bde was targeted against elements of the 7th NVA Div, local and main force VC units, and rear service elements operating in Binh Long Province and along Serges Jungle Highway.

(C) In the early hours of 12 Aug the enemy initiated attacks against FSBs BECKY, SIDEWINDER, and ASPEN, and the Quan Loi Base Camp. The enemy was engaged with organic weapons, artillery, SHADOW, and NIGHT HAWK, resulting in 54 enemy killed and one prisoner. Friendly losses were eight US killed and 39 wounded. During the attack on FSB SIDEWINDER friendly forces were supported by artillery and light fire teams. Elements of the 1st Sqdn, 11th Armd Cav Regt moved from FSB ASPEN during the attack to support the 2d Sqdn, 11th Armd Cav Regt units at FSB SIDEWINDER. The enemy withdrew some three hours later leaving 78 killed, three prisoners, and four Hoi Chanh. There was one US wounded. That afternoon 2d Sqdn, 11th Armd Cav Regt made contact with the retreating enemy in the vicinity of Ap Duc Thinh, some 8 km southwest of An Loc in Binh Long Province. The enemy was engaged with organic weapons supported by a light fire team and tactical air. Results of the contact were 85 enemy killed with friendly losses of five US killed and 42 wounded.

(C) The enemy-initiated high point continued on 13 Aug and into 14 Aug. During the period 12-14 Aug the 1st Cav Div (Ambl) accounted for 761 enemy killed while friendly losses were 36 US killed. Enemy activity decreased after 14 Aug and consisted generally of indirect fire attacks. Two further contacts in August added 65 enemy killed and one US killed and three wounded.

(C) In September the 1st Cav Div (Ambl) recorded six engagements which resulted in 235 enemy killed, and in October a single engagement, on the 28th, resulted in 17 enemy killed with no friendly casualties. 118

(C) Operations of the 1st Inf Div during August, September, and October were characterized by the use of small unit ambushes, ground reconnaissance, and airmobile operations supported by the integration of all available target acquisition, mobile, artillery, and air assets. Riverine, land clearing, and air cavalry operations supported by ground maneuver forces succeeded in further attriting enemy main and local force elements. Operation STRANGLE, which began on 21 Jul, continued until 21 Sep. This operation was conducted in western Binh Duong Province with the objective of neutralizing Subregion 1 forces in the Iron Triangle and the Trapezoid by interdicting supply routes, cutting the flow of replacements, and destroying base camps. The operation was conducted using the 2d Bn, 16th Inf; 1st and 2d Bns, 28th Inf; the 1st Sqdn, 4th Cav; 2d Bn, 2d Inf (Mech), an element of the 2d Bn, 34th Arm, the 8th ARVN Regt, and US and VN naval forces. The operation resulted in 414 enemy eliminated, consisting of 365 killed, 35 prisoners, and 14 ralliers.

(C) An increased enemy threat in northern Binh Long Province was met by the 3d Bde. This threat necessitated the division's assuming an additional 17 km section of the QL-13 road security on 12 Aug as 1st Cav Div (Ambl) forces countered the enemy threat in the north.

(C) The 1st Inf Div, on 8 Aug, assumed responsibility for the majority of the Phu Hoa District and the Phu Cuong and Ba Bep bridge. Within the 25th Inf Div a minor boundary change

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affecting the 2d Bde took place. The 1st Bde continued combined operations with ARVN airborne, RF/PF, and CIDG units with the Vietnamese undertaking more diversified operations throughout the area of operations. The 2d Bde intensified its efforts against the Cu Chi and Trang Bang local force and the VCI in eastern Hau Nghia Province, and greatly limited the enemy's use of his base camps, staging areas, and resupply areas in the lower Boi Loi Woods in southeastern Tay Ninh Province and the Citadel in northern Hau Nghia Province. The 3d Bde emphasized pacification. Mixed stationing of one US platoon with one or more RF platoons was also attempted. The relatively heavy concentration of government forces, coupled with the relatively secure hamlet evaluation status for all hamlets and villages permitted the brigade to operate in smaller size units. Mobile patrol bases consisting of a rifle company were positioned in rural development target areas and operated well with minimum guidance. Operations were directed at finding and engaging small enemy groups, and at denying the enemy the use of Nui Ba Den Mountain as a sanctuary. Elements of the 4th Bn, 23d Inf (Mech), the 2d Bn, 34th Arm, and an ARVN airborne battalion applied constant pressure on enemy forces on the mountain. The ground forces were supported by heavy artillery, air bombardments, and the use of CS gas. Psychological operations were conducted in support of tactical operations and the pacification program. MEDCAP was the most effective civic action activity. It raised health standards and also provided a means through which intelligence gathering and PSYOP could be conducted.

(C) A large-scale combined operation commenced on 21 Sep. It involved all 1st Div elements and the OPCON of units of the 505th Abn Inf and of the 11th Armd Cav Regt. The objectives of this operation were to destroy VC/NVA forces within the area of interest, to assist in upgrading the ARVN/GVN forces, and to establish an overwatch responsibility for the pacification program throughout the area of interest. The operation included the 1st and 3d Bdes in DONG TIEN (Progress Together) operations with the 8th ARVN Regt in northern Binh Duong Province against SR-1 and to the east of QL-13 against the Dong Nai Regt. The 2d Bde, in DONG TIEN operations with the 7th Regt in southern and eastern Binh Duong Province, was targeted against the K-1 Bn, the Dong Nai Regt, and the Quyet Thang Bn.

(C) Land clearing operations continued through August, September, and October, as did riverine operations along the Saigon and Thi Tinh Rivers. In September the 1st Inf Div established a Target Destruction Center (TDC) within its operations center in order to analyze all available intelligence in an effort to eliminate lucrative enemy targets. The section was organized to analyze contact, agent, radar, and reconnaissance reports and to analyze patterns of sensor activities which developed. Collocated with the G2 and G3 Air, the fire support element, and the Army aviation element, the TDC recommended employment and coordinated the use of assets to include artillery, tactical air, and ground and naval forces.

(C) The cordon of Phu Hoa Dong in southern Binh Duong Province from 15 to 26 Sep was one of the most successful operations conducted during the month. This combined cordon by elements of the 2d Bde, 1st Inf Div, the 7th ARVN Regt, and GVN forces of Phu Hoa District included elements of four infantry battalions. Psychological operations were extensively used throughout the seal which resulted in 23 enemy killed, 16 Hoi Chanh and 17 prisoners, 32 individual weapons, six crew-served weapons, and significant quantities of war materiel captured.¹⁹

(C) The 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div continued operations in Long An Province in July, August, and September with responsibility for the security of QL-4 and TL-18 and for the local pacification program. Emphasis was placed on PSYOP, particularly quick reaction operations. The FAMILY TREE PSYOP Campaign was conducted whenever the parent enemy unit could be identified. In this campaign, accurate enemy casualty figures were publicized to the SR-3 command

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by means of loudspeakers or leaflet drops. As enemy units in most instances did not report heavy casualties, this operation was designed to produce conflict within the enemy command. PSYOP operations were also integrated with civic action operations such as during the conduct of MEDCAP. On 31 Aug the 6th Bn, 31st Inf arrived from the IV CTZ and came under OPCON of the 3d Bde.

(C) In July, August, and September the 199th Inf Bde conducted daily reconnaissance/training operations with RF/PF units defending populated areas. As a result of this effort, a steady improvement was noted in the aggressiveness, tactical proficiency, and willingness of territorial forces to assume a greater role in hamlet and village security. Operations against enemy command and control elements were successful in keeping enemy headquarters elements on the move and denying them uninterrupted operations in forward base areas. The brigade placed emphasis on psychological operations integrated with combat operations, oriented toward pacification objectives. All activities were designed to be adaptable to combined execution by RVNAF/FWMAF and provincial agencies. Four major plans were developed to support the brigade's mission. First, target the 274th VC Regt and U-1 Province headquarters; second, target the local populace to break accommodation with the VC and create support for the GVN; third, target the 33d NVA Regt, MR-7 regional headquarters, and the 81st and 84th Liberation Army Rear Svc Gps; and fourth, target local force units, primarily to induce Hoi Chanh. Tactical operations were supported by preplanned targeting and quick reaction PSYOP. The PSYOP program and combat operations resulted in a significant increase in Hoi Chanh. The brigade encouraged provincial officials to conduct indoctrination sessions for VC relatives. This program was conducted through visits of three days duration at the province Chieu Hoi center and by house-to-house visits by combined teams. The program was directed toward using VC relatives to encourage members of the local force and infrastructure to rally. The civic action program during the quarter was directed toward enhancement of pacification, improvement of public welfare, and improvement of the psychological attitude of the populace. All civic action projects were closely coordinated with GVN officials and advisory personnel. The most significant contact of the quarter occurred on 8 Aug approximately 15 km northeast of Xuan Loc, Long Khanh Province, in which a 12th Inf element killed 20 enemy. There were two US killed and six wounded.

(C) On 11 Sep the 2d Bn, 3d Inf (199th Inf Bde) began participation in a combined operation which included units of the 18th ARVN Div, the 1st Australian Task Force, and the RTAVF in an extensive reconnaissance and clearing effort in and north of the Hat Dich base area.

(U) Activity in October was characterized by low intensity attacks-by-fire and limited ground probes, as most divisional elements remained out of contact in or near border base areas. Elements of three enemy divisions were identified in contacts during the month. The 9th VC Div had its forces divided, with two regiments deployed in the northern Tay Ninh Province/Cambodian border area and one regiment southeast of Tay Ninh City. The 272d Regt relocated to northern Tay Ninh Province and was identified in several contacts in War Zone C. The 7th NVA Div was deployed in the northern Binh Long Province/Cambodian border area for training and refitting. 120

(U) In III CTZ during November, enemy activity was characterized by low intensity attacks-by-fire except for the night of 3-4 Nov when 27 attacks-by-fire and four ground attacks were conducted. Three of the ground attacks were battalion size. The majority of the attacks were in the northern portion of the CTZ.

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(U) December started out in III CTZ with activity characterized by attacks-by-fire and limited ground attacks. Elements of the 9th VC Div in northern War Zone C, and 7th NVA Div elements in the Bu Dop area were the most active. The initiation of the Winter-Spring Campaign of the enemy was marked by a slight increase in attacks-by-fire on the night of 7-8 Dec, and by two terrorist incidents in Saigon. The end of the year was marked by the US forces's capture of an enemy radio intercept station. The station was targeted against friendly voice and manual CW communications.

(C) The 1st Cav Div (Ambl) in the last quarter continued operations to interdict enemy infiltration routes through Tay Ninh, Phuoc Long, Binh Long, and Binh Duong Provinces, and to neutralize enemy forces operating in the area. Division elements continued to support the pacification program and to conduct DONG TIEN operations with RVNAF forces operating within the division's area.

(C) The 1st Inf Div continued Campaign TOAN THANG by conducting ground reconnaissance, night patrols, and VCI neutralization operations to deny enemy base area utilization, interdict VC/NVA infiltration to the south, disrupt enemy logistic operations, and to eliminate the VCI in populated areas. During November the 1st Bde, with three battalions, conducted combined offensive operations with ARVN units in the Trapezoid, Michelin Plantation, Razorback, the Minh Thanh area, and the Long Nguyen Secret Zone. These operations were directed against elements of Subregion (SR)-1, the 101st Regt, Rear Service Group (RSG)-50, RSG-83, C-64, and K-35. The 2d Bde operated in western Phuoc Long, eastern Binh Duong, and northern Bien Hoa Provinces. The brigade, with two infantry battalions, conducted combined operations with ARVN units against elements of SR-4, RSG-84, LF Company C-41, and possible elements of the 274th VC Regt and the D440 LF Bn. The 3d Bde, with four battalions, conducted combined operations with ARVN units, against the Dong Nai VC Regt in the lower Song Be Corridor and against elements of SR-5 in northern Bien Hoa Province. The brigade also operated in southern Binh Long Province, southeastern Trapezoid, and the Lai Khe rocket belt, and conducted security operations along QL-13. The division continued its emphasis on psychological operations and on the pacification program.

(C) The 25th Inf Div continued to promote small unit combined operations with emphasis on upgrading ARVN forces while stressing night operations. Emphasis continued on the upgrading of hamlets and contested villages. The division coordinated night patrols, detection devices, and firepower in its effort to annihilate the enemy.

(C) The 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div continued under OPCON of the 25th Inf Div for the remainder of the year. The brigade began Phase IV of Campaign TOAN THANG with four battalions and operated in Long An Province, with responsibility for the security of QL-4, QL-18, and Route 23. It conducted multiple airmobile, reconnaissance, CHECKERBOARD, BUSHMASTER, and riverine operations. The brigade conducted operations against enemy local force units and elements of SR-1, SR-2, and the 1st NVA Regt. The pacification program was also emphasized.

(C) The 199th Inf Bde also continued Campaign TOAN THANG, in November conducting combined and coordinated operations. The 2d Bn, 3d Inf conducted operations with the 48th ARVN Regt and territorial forces in southwest Long Khanh Province. Elements of the 3d Inf continued to conduct combined operations with elements of the 18th ARVN Div, the 1st ATF, and RTAVF against the 274th VC Regt in the Hat Dich area. The 3d Bn, 7th Inf conducted combined and coordinated operations with the 52d ARVN Regt and territorial forces in south and east Long Khanh Province. The 4th Bn, 12th Inf conducted operations with the 43d ARVN Regt in

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western Long Khanh Province. The 5th Bn, 12th Inf also conducted operations with the 43d ARVN Regt in west central Long Khanh Province, with Trp D, 17th Air Cav conducting unilateral and combined operations with the brigade and the 18th ARVN Div. The brigade's operations were directed toward the elimination of enemy forces and the VCI and the support of the pacification program.

(C) The 1st Australian Task Force. The task force continued its participation in Campaign TOAN THANG in January with operations designed to destroy enemy elements, base areas, and supply caches in Phuoc Tuy Province. 121

(C) In February the 1st Australian Task Force (ATF) continued operations in the vicinity of the Headquarters, 1st ATF (Main) at FSB JULIA, off QL-15 approximately 31 km southwest of Bien Hoa. The 1st Bn continued to support land clearing operations in the area of Phu My, Phuoc Tuy Province. Operation GOODWOOD, a four-nation Australian-directed operation that included US, Australian, New Zealand, and Vietnamese in the Hat Dich area, approximately 43 km southwest of Bien Hoa, had commenced on 3 Dec 68. It was terminated on 16 Feb. The operation resulted in enemy losses of 250 killed and 41 wounded. More than 200 individual weapons were captured along with four 82mm mortars, 274 rounds of 82mm mortar, and 197 rounds of 60mm mortar. Also captured were 400 rockets, 52,500 rounds of small arms ammunition, and more than 10 tons of rice. Australian engineers destroyed a large number of enemy bunkers. Friendly casualties were light. The operation disrupted enemy logistic support and kept the enemy on the defensive throughout an area that he had previously regarded as his own. It denied the enemy infiltration routes to Saigon, to base camps constructed in the Hat Dich-Binh Son areas, and to other enemy BAs of importance. On 17 Feb elements of the 1st ATF occupied positions astride enemy approaches into Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex from the northeast and east and began patrolling and reduction in force operations. The remainder of the year saw the 1st ATF finding only numerous small contacts. 122

(C) The 1st ATF began Phase IV of Campaign TOAN THANG with the 5th Bn, Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) completing its deployment to AO GRACI in far southeast Bien Hoa Province; the 6th Bn, RAR/New Zealander (NZ) (ANZAC) continuing ambush and reconnaissance operations in AO LINTON in south-central Phuoc Tuy Province; and the 9th Bn, RAR completing its return to the 1st ATF base camp. On 28 Nov, the 8th Bn, RAR arrived in RVN, replacing the 9th Bn, which departed the 1st ATF base camp for Australia on the same day. The 8th Bn began training at the base camp on 29 Nov. November and December were characterized by small and scattered contacts with the battalions operating in various AOs.

(C) The Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force (RTAF). In January the 2d Bde began arriving, while the 1st Bde conducted reconnaissance in force operations and provided security for a variety of installations. The 2d Bde closed RVN on 25 Feb, when the rear party arrived. The combat elements of the second increment were operational by 21 Feb and commenced combat operations by conducting reductions in force. On 19 Feb in eastern Bien Hoa elements of the 1st Thai Inf captured 5,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 89 HE rounds, seven grenades, and one mine. The Thais engaged in two major contacts in February and March. On 23 Feb approximately 4 km southeast of Long Binh, an element of the 2d Inf contacted an enemy battalion and received mortar and rocket fire. The contact continued throughout the day and resulted in 56 enemy killed and four friendly wounded. On 16 Mar approximately 3 km east of Long Than, some 20 km southeast of Bien Hoa, the 3d Thai Inf Bn CP was attacked by an enemy battalion. The Thais returned the fire, supported by artillery, an armored cavalry squadron, and light fire teams. The contact resulted in 65 enemy killed, four prisoners, and 32 small

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arms, 13 crew-served weapons, 7,601 rounds of small arms ammunition, 82 grenades, and 182 HE rounds captured. Thai losses were two killed and 23 wounded. April saw numerous contacts of small size. 123

(C) On 12 May 10 km southeast of BEARCAT, approximately 30 km southwest of Bien Hoa, the 3d Bn, 31st Thai Inf received mortar, rocket, and small arms fire. Return fire with organic weapons, supported by artillery and SPOOKY, resulted in 41 enemy killed and 17 small arms, 15 crew-served weapons, and 452 rounds of small arms ammunition captured. Friendly casualties were one Thai killed and 11 wounded. The next day southeast of BEARCAT the battalion received an attack by an estimated enemy battalion, consisting of mortar and rocket fire. Return fire with organic weapons, supported by artillery, light fire teams, and SPOOKY resulted in 87 enemy killed and three small arms, two grenades, one mine, 24 HE rounds, and 540 rounds of small arms ammunition captured. There were no friendly casualties. On 16 Jun an enemy attack against the 2d Bn, 1st Thai Inf resulted in 212 enemy killed and one prisoner, 16 small arms, 25 crew-served weapons, 823 grenades, and six mines captured. Friendly losses were six Thais killed and 34 wounded. 124

(C) On 12 Aug the rear party of the third increment of the Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force closed into RVN following the last of the three serials of the main body which arrived during the 3-5 Aug period. This completed the replacement of the first increment by the third increment. The latter, upon arrival, assumed all the missions and functions of the first increment, to include the assumption of the designation as the 1st Bde. During the period of 2-4 Aug the 1st Bde conducted a combined operation in conjunction with US Navy elements from the Rung Sat Special Zone and the VNMC in the vicinity of Tan Go Ong Cua approximately 29 km southeast of Bien Hoa. During the operation several bunkers were found which were determined to be a hospital complex. From 9 to 15 Aug a combined operation was conducted by the 1st Bde with the VNMC approximately 5 km southeast of Ap Binh Son, about 8 km northeast of the earlier engagement, with limited results. During the period of 12 to 20 Aug the 2d Bde conducted a cordon and search operation at Phu Hoi using patrol boats along the Thi Vai River. On 11 Sep RTAVF began combined operations with elements of the 199th Inf Bde, the 1st Australian Task Force, 125 and the 18th ARVN Div in and north of the Hat Dich area against elements of the 274th NVA Regt.

(C) The RTAVF conducted combat operations throughout its area of responsibility to interdict infiltration routes through Long Thanh and Nhon Trach Districts and to destroy enemy forces within the area. The 1st Bn, 2d Inf provided security for Bearcat and the Long Thanh District headquarters during November and December. Activity was characterized by the conduct of reconnaissance, ambush, and cordon and search operations resulting in scattered contacts and the discovery of small caches.

(C) Capital Military Assistance Command (CMAC). CMAC continued offensive operations in Gia Dinh Province and adjacent areas to counter the enemy ground and rocket attacks against Saigon. Operations focused on denying the enemy the resources and staging areas needed to conduct offensive operations by locating enemy caches and interdicting routes of infiltration. Contacts were sporadic, and limited to actions against small groups of enemy. Probing and the use of mine detectors proved successful in locating cache sites. Bobby traps continued to be encountered, however the use of armored suits reduced the number of casualties incurred from these devices. CMAC began the year with a task organization consisting of the 199th Inf Bde (2d Bn, 3d Inf; 3d Bn, 7th Inf; 4th Bn, 12th Inf; and the 5th Bn, 12th Inf); the 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div, (1st Bn, 505th Abn Inf, 2d Bn, 505th Abn Inf and the 1st Bn, 508th Abn Inf); 3d Sqdn, 17th Air Cav; and 7th Sqdn, 1st Air Cav. Units of the CMAC conducted operations to the west and southwest of Saigon in January, locating several small enemy caches.

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(C) CMAC continued Operation TOAN THANG, conducting combat assault, airmobile, riverine, search, reconnaissance in force, and land clearing operations and continuing the pacification program. Operations were characterized by reconnaissance in force and detailed searches, utilizing waterborne and airmobile assets for movement in less accessible areas. Extensive night ambushes were employed throughout the area to detect and prevent enemy night movement. Side looking radar (SLAR), aerial red haze, aerial observers, DUFFLEPAG, and ground surveillance were employed in conjunction with the night ambushes. Contact was at a relatively low level in February and March despite the opening of the post-Tet offensive by the enemy. Enemy activity consisted primarily of rocket attacks against Saigon and ARVN military installations. Active use was made of switch boundaries, extensions of areas of operations, and combined operations with adjacent units in order to counter the enemy tactic of using operational boundaries to elude friendly forces. The 3d Bde, 82d Abn continued operations to the north of the Hoc Mon Canal. Contacts and sightings increased in that area as the enemy attempted to use this area as a staging area for attacks on Saigon. Numerous tunnels and spider holes were discovered and many caches found. Extensive land clearing operations were conducted to preclude the enemy from concealing his movement. Radar and other warning devices assisted in detecting the enemy and in providing early warning of his movement. The 2d Bn, 3d Inf and TF KAY (two companies from the 7th Inf and one from the 12th Inf), began Operation STRANGLER on 5 Feb to destroy or neutralize VC, VCI, and guerrilla elements; to seize and destroy enemy resources; and to enhance pacification and strengthen GVN control in the target area approximately 10 km south of Saigon. Operation STRANGLER resulted in 1,370 personnel being processed, with 1,340 released as innocent civilians, and four VCI, six VCI supporters, 16 draft dodgers, and four deserters apprehended. On 9 Feb, the 2d Bn, 3d Inf and TF KAY began operation ROUND-UP I in approximately the same area with the same objectives as Operation STRANGLER. TF KAY was terminated on 10 Feb. It was reorganized 12 Feb, with two companies from each of the 4th and 5th Bns, 12th Inf and it prepared for Operation ROUND-UP II. The 2d Bn, 3d Inf terminated Operation ROUND-UP I on 12 Feb. The operation was conducted in the Hung Long area, 10 km south of Saigon with RF and National Police Field Forces conducting the search while the other forces, including two battalions from the 5th ARVN Rgr Gp, accomplished the cordon. Results of Operation ROUND-UP I were 2,713 personnel processed, 2,647 released, and nine VCI, 25 VCI supporters, four VC (suspect), 23 draft dodgers, and five deserters apprehended. Operation ROUND-UP II was initiated on 12 Feb approximately 16 km north of Tan An, with TF KAY and the 2d Bn, 3d Inf beginning operations on 13 Feb in conjunction with National Police and RF/PF elements. Operation ROUND-UP II was completed on 16 Feb. Results were 2,584 personnel processed, 2,552 released, and six VC, three VCI, 12 VC suspects, and 11 draft dodgers apprehended. CMAC conducted Operation LULU during the period of 12 to 14 Mar consisting of area cordon and search operations. The results were 10 enemy killed, four prisoners, and eight individual weapons captured. Friendly casualties were 10 wounded. During March, ground contact was light with the enemy utilizing attacks-by-fire as his tactics, firing primarily into police precincts and housing areas. During March and April, and on through July, intensive surveillance and density of night ambushes made it difficult for the enemy to utilize his traditional "Rocket Belt" around Saigon. 126

(C) In August, September, and October CMAC continued participation in Operation TOAN THANG III. The activity during the period was characterized by small unit actions supported by Army aviation with an increase in offensive operations adjacent to the area of operations' boundaries. Daylight operations most frequently were platoon and company size reconnaissance actions with contacts frequently initiated by supporting aircraft. Booby traps accounted for a large number of friendly casualties; consequently, refresher training and troop discipline received added command emphasis. Several significant caches were uncovered thus depriving the enemy of much needed food and medical and ordnance supplies. Considerable tactical effort

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was directed toward defense against rocket and mortar attack. This effort included daylight searches, night ambushes, aerial surveillance, ground radar surveillance, and harassing and interdiction fires. Daylight searches were oriented toward discovery of munition caches and the denial to the enemy of reconnaissance and preparation of launch sites. Preplanned aerial surveillance was integrated with ground radar to ensure continuous coverage of the rocket belt. Preplanned artillery fires were integrated with the daily patrol and ambush plans to ensure interdiction of all known and suspected launch sites. Enemy rocket attacks against Saigon and outlying areas increased in intensity during the period with the enemy launching simultaneous attacks from previously used launch sites.

(C) On 1 Oct effective 0800 hours the 3d Bde 82d Abn (-), consisting of the 1st Bn, 505th Abn Inf, the 1st Bn, 508th Abn Inf, and Troop B, 1st Bn, 17th Cav, was placed under OPCON of II FFORCEV, with the 1st Bn, 508th Abn Inf moving to Phu Loi and the cavalry troop, moving to the Iron Triangle. Troop A, 3d Sqdn, 17th Air Cav remained in direct support of CMAC. On 15 Oct effective 1800 hours the 2d Bn, 505th Abn Inf was released from OPCON of the 3d Bde, 82d Abn with Troop A, 3d Sqdn, 17th Air Cav remaining in direct support of CMAC. 127

(C) Following the change in OPCON, the 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div continued Operation YORK-TOWN VICTOR in the Iron Triangle and southern Phu Hoc District, with the 1st Bn, 505th Abn Inf assuming overwatch responsibility for the Phu Cuong and Ba Dop bridge on 1 Nov. The 2d Bn, 505th Abn Inf continued its standdown at Phu Loi, which began on 15 Oct, in preparation for redeployment. The brigade had been notified of its selection for redeployment on 17 Sep. On 1 Nov the 1st Bn, 508th Abn Inf moved from southern Phu Hoi District to Phu Loi and began its standdown for redeployment. On 14 Nov the 1st Bn, 505th Abn Inf moved to Phu Loi and began its standdown in preparation for redeployment. On 15 Nov the 3d Bde was released from OPCON of II FFORCEV and came under OPCON of Headquarters, USARV. The brigade subsequently redeployed to the US.

(C) The Bien Hoa Tactical Area Command (Provisional) (BHTAC). On 1 Nov 68 the Bien Hoa Tactical Area Command had been organized with an authorized strength of 12 officers and 27 enlisted men. The mission of the BHTAC was to coordinate US and RVNAF forces in the defense of the Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex in Bien Hoa Province against ground, rocket, and mortar attack; to coordinate operations of the Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force which affected the defense of the Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex; to exercise control over US and FWMAF fire support within the BHTAC area of operations and to operate the Bien Hoa Artillery Warning Center. On 5 Nov 68 the BHTAC Fire Support Coordination Element (FSCE) and the Artillery Warning Control Center (AWCC) had become fully operational. The FSCE had the responsibility of coordinating all artillery fires in the Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex; coordinating the efforts of the Flash Base Center and the 10 flash base towers around the Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex that assisted in the detection of mortar and rocket firing sites. The AWCC was responsible for broadcasting all artillery data to aircraft entering the Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex. In December the BHTAC had assumed OPCON of several units, however, by 25 Jan all had been released to their parent organizations. 128

(C) The development of the Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex continued during the next several months. The period of 11 Feb through 6 Mar demonstrated the coordination activities of BHTAC. This coordination initially concerned the RTAVF and AO boundaries. As enemy activity increased around the Long Binh-Bien Hoa area, the influx of FWMAF units led to more detailed coordination. Land clearing operations, defoliation, and burning projects were conducted in areas east and southeast of Long Binh Post, as well as east and north of Bien Hoa Air

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Base. The defoliation missions terminated on 19 Feb, the burning project continued to the post-Tet offensive. The clearing operations resulted in 14,301 acres of land being cleared. The period of 23 to 28 Feb reflected a sharp increase in enemy activity with mortars and rockets impacting on Long Binh Post, Camp Frenzell-Jones, Bien Hoa AB and the POW compound. As a result of coordinated support through the BHTAC/LBSZ combined tactical operations center, friendly units accounted for 244 enemy killed and 60 prisoners from 26 Feb to 3 Mar. April was characterized by small contacts. 129

(C) Ground activity in May, June, and July was light. The move of the joint BHTAC Tactical Operations Center to the III Corps Compound resulted in improved working conditions and increased the capabilities for communications. During these months BHTAC exercised OPCON over two infantry battalions, two armored cavalry squadrons, three cavalry troops, one tank troop, and two infantry companies for various periods of time. Army aviation utilized by BHTAC throughout the period consisted of two hunter killer teams from the 3d Sqdn, 17th Air Cav. Although not OPCON to BHTAC, the 5th RAR, 1st Australian Task Force was given the mission of conducting operations in the eastern portion of the BHTAC TAOR north of QL-1 on 13 May. It was released from this mission on 22 May. During the period 12 May through 23 May a battalion from the 3d Bn, 7th Inf (-) conducted search and clear operations. During the daily operations they destroyed 20 bunkers, found two VC killed, and destroyed 39 rolls of demolition wire. The 4th Bn, 12th Inf conducted search and clear operations from 14 to 21 Jun with very limited results. The DUFFLE BAG program within the BHTAC AO was aimed at monitoring and denying the enemy force use of access routes into the rocket belt around the Bien Hoa-Long Binh area. There were 31 sensors in six strings deployed around the north and northwest approaches into the area. Airborne Personnel Detector (APD) support was provided BHTAC by the 29th Chem Det, OPCON to II FFORCEV. A high percentage of readouts was engaged by artillery. Continuous improvement in the development of the defense against ground/rocket attacks on the Bien Hoa-Long Binh complex was accomplished. A major factor in this improvement was the coordinated utilization of ground surveillance radar, DUFFLE BAG Program, APD reports, and hunter killer teams. The improved coordination of all the intelligence and information collection assets enabled more effective planning for ground operations. 130

(C) The 501st Land Clearing Company conducted Rome Plow operations in AO Green Extension during the period of 21-27 Aug and cleared 1,208 acres. Enemy contact during the reporting period was light. Four ground surveillance radars were employed by BHTAC during this period. Many of the targets acquired were engaged by artillery. Ground surveillance radars were deployed to monitor possible avenues of approach to the Bien Hoa Army Base/Air Force Base area. These radars were moved periodically to increase their effectiveness. The majority of sightings acquired were passed to ground units concerned for action and information. The DUFFLE BAG program continued to monitor the access routes to the Bien Hoa-Long Binh rocket belt. There were six strings of 47 sensors deployed along the northern and northeastern approaches to the area. Sensor targets were cleared on a nightly basis by the FSCE. An armor rifle platoon from the 3d Sqdn, 17th Air Cav was used for security during sensor emplacement missions with US and ARVN ground cavalry units also used at times. APD support was provided BHTAC by the 29th Chem Det with significant results. Patterns of enemy movement were noted which frequently correlated with agent reports and reports from other sources. Results of the APD were passed to appropriate ground commanders for action and to the artillery for targets, with a high percentage of the readouts engaged by artillery. 131

(C) Hunter-killer teams of the 3d Sqdn, 17th Air Cav conducted daylight visual reconnaissance in the BHTAC TAOR. The ready reaction force was provided by another troop from the

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squadron, which also conducted reconnaissance and ambush operations and provided security for dredge operations along the Dong Kai River. Effective 1 Nov, BHTAC was given a new mission by the CG, II FFORCEV. The responsibilities assigned BHTAC were as follows: to coordinate US and ARVN efforts for the defense of the Bien Hoa-Long Binh area with the Commanding Officer, Long Binh Special Zone (LBSZ); to ensure coordination of the Long Binh Post, Plantation, Camp Frenzell-Jones, Bien Hoa Army Base, and Bien Hoa Air Base (US) internal defense plans with LBSZ defense plans; to procure and coordinate US and FWMAF units or assets requested by the Commanding Officer, LBSZ for use in defense of the Bien Hoa-Long Binh complex; to act as area coordinator for US Army air assets for the Bien Hoa Sector; to assist the Commanding Officer, LBSZ in the development of tactical operations center (TOC) operations; to assist the Commanding Officer, LBSZ in the development of timely information and intelligence from US intelligence sources; to represent the CG, II FFORCEV in the LBSZ TOC and to be prepared to assist in the occupation of LBSZ TOC alternate (II FFORCEV TOC) by the II FFORCEV main TOC in the event of an emergency requiring such action; to provide assistance to all mobile assistance teams in Bien Hoa Province less Di An and Tan Uyen Districts; to assist in and facilitate coordination among LBSZ, 1st Inf Div, RTAVF, and 18th MP Bde on all operations conducted within the LBSZ area; to assist the CO, LBSZ in the development of the LBSZ fire support coordination center; to assist the CO, LBSZ in the development and training of personnel for a ground surveillance and sensor program (US radar teams would be placed in direct support of the LBSZ); and to assist in coordinating sectors of surveillance and processing of reports of flash bases and countermortar radars within the LBSZ. The instructions tasked II FFORCEV Artillery to provide adequate personnel to the LBSZ fire support coordination element until this function could be performed by ARVN personnel. Plans for the further reduction of BHTAC and its eventual elimination were to be formulated for implementation when ARVN personnel achieved this capability.

(S) Total friendly casualties in III CTZ for the year included 5,137 killed, of which 2,120 were US. Enemy killed in III CTZ totalled 51,600, of which 35,983 were credited to US forces. 132

Year End Assessment

(TS) According to plan, territorial forces were beginning to assume the dominant role in major population areas such as Saigon, releasing ARVN units to move out toward the border areas to counter enemy main strength. Although Hau Nghia Province continued to be a pacification problem area and additional work was required in Long An Province, III CTZ continued to show improvement in pacification. The enemy appeared to recognize this improvement, and his offensives were more and more targeted against the pacification program.

(TS) There were signs of improvement in III CTZ ARVN units. The 5th ARVN Div still remained one of the lowest in country in operational effectiveness and overall results, even though a high kill ratio was achieved in the 4th quarter. Two battalion commanders were replaced and leadership was improving, although there was still weakness at low levels. The 18th ARVN Div showed some improvement in operational effectiveness, particularly in the 3d quarter of the year when both its assessment and results were above average, but in the 4th quarter both declined. This division had a relatively new division commander and during the last quarter four battalion commanders were replaced. The operational effectiveness assessment of the 25th ARVN Div improved throughout the year. While operational results were low early in the year, during the past two quarters they improved and were above the country

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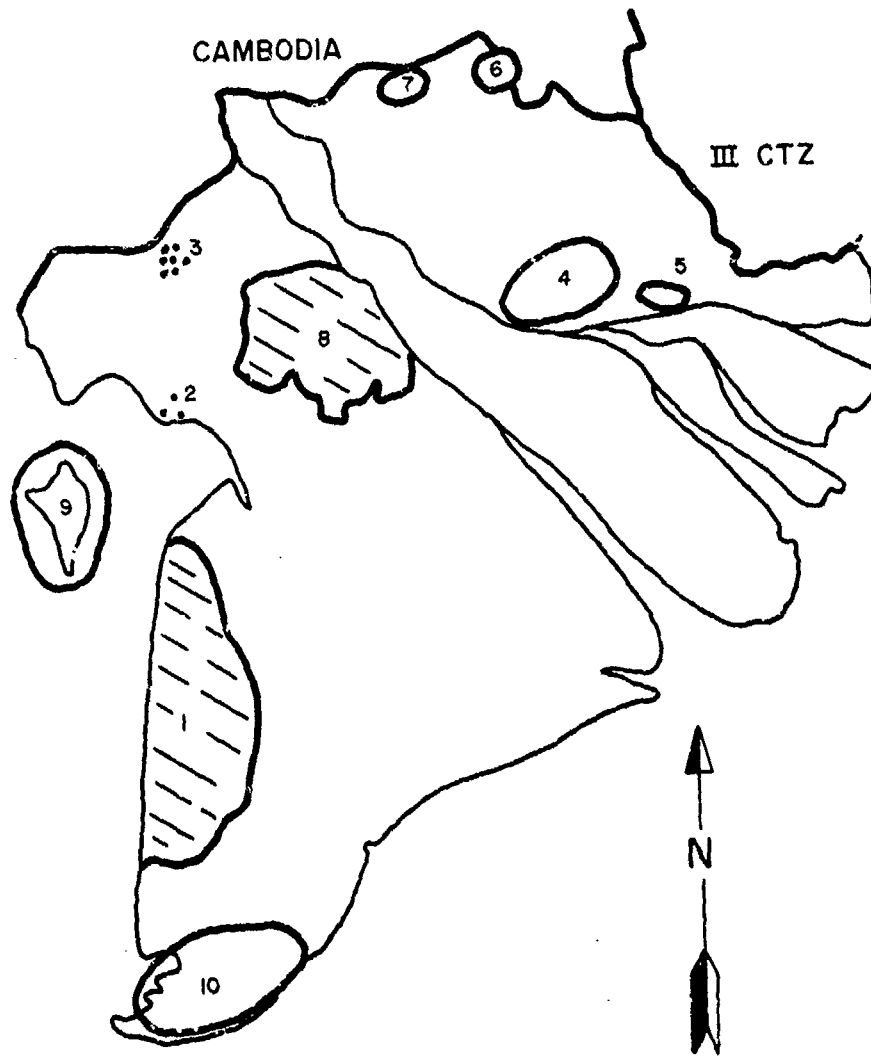
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IV CTZ
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- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. U Minh Forest | 7. Cai Cai SF Camp |
| 2. 3 Sisters Mountains | 8. An Giang Prov
(Most Pacified Province
in Viet Nam - Hoa Hao
Religious Sect) |
| 3. 7 Mountains
(Nui Coto Mountain Most
Southern one and most
famous) | 9. Phu Quoc PW Camp |
| 4. En Base Area 470 | 10. Nam Cam Peninsula |
| 5. Dong Tam Mil Base | |
| 6. Long Khot SF Camp | |

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FIGURE V-8

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average. While there were some indicators of improving effectiveness, none of these divisions had yet faced the test of major combat on its own.

(TS) The airborne division, which historically had been required to have a large portion of its force in close proximity to Saigon, began operating along the III CTZ Cambodian border in December with six of its nine battalions. Initial reports indicated that the division enjoyed good success in airmobile tactics under the tutelage of the 1st Cav Div (Ambl).

(TS) Performance by the VNN in III CTZ was excellent. Portions of GIANT SLINGSHOT, a combined interdiction operation, were assigned exclusively to VNN. Another combined operation, READY DECK, on the upper Saigon river, resulted in 500 VC KIA during the last half of the year.

(TS) All facets of RF/PF organization in III CTZ showed improvement in 1969. The performance of territorial forces and their confidence in themselves rose. Leadership continued to be spotty, but many units were experienced and combat ready. 133

IV CTZ Ground Operations

(U) With the exception of the Seven Mountains Area in the northwestern section (Chau Doc Province and portions of the coastal area of Kien Giang), the terrain of IV CTZ consists of the flat, low-lying, alluvial plain of the Delta formed by the Hau Giang and Mekong Rivers (See Figure V-8). The total area of 14,250 square miles is about twice that of New Jersey. The average elevation is eight feet above sea level except in the isolated peaks of the Seven Mountains which reach 2,300 feet. The area has the characteristic features of all deltas. The soil is an acidulous alluvial clay, having little sand content and except in the isolated mountains, is extensively cultivated, rice being the chief crop. The shoreland is marked by long stretches of mangrove swamp, beyond which mud flats stretch some distance at low tide; it affords few navigable approaches except for shallow draft vessels. There, the drainage of the water of the Hau Giang and Mekong Rivers and tributaries is a slow process. Canals that reach the coast usually have gates to prevent the intrusion of salt water at high tide. Much of the Delta has never been reclaimed and the unimproved areas of swamp, mangrove forest and jungle afford sanctuary to the Viet Cong. The Plain of Reeds is a major geographical area of the Delta, located generally in Kien Phong and Kien Tuong Provinces. The vast area consists of relatively few canals and is quite suitable for armor when dry. The area is not in production and is largely uninhabited except for the district towns on high ground. There is a total of 1,400 km of major rivers and canals and an additional 2,000 km of minor waterways in IV CTZ. The major rivers are the Mekong, known as the Cuu Long to the Vietnamese, and its larger subdivisions, the Hau Giang, the Tien Giang, the Co Chien, and the Ham Luong which are very broad and unfordable.

(U) The climate in IV CTZ is typically tropical, with a dry period (January to March) during which no rain falls and the sun bakes the ground hard. Rains increase during April, May, and June, with July through September being months of torrential showers, usually of short duration. Rain again decreases during October, November, and December. ¹³⁴(See Annex B.) The Mekong River divides near the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh. The northern, major portion, is known as the Mekong River and flows to its delta. The southern, lesser portion, parallels the Mekong River, and, in fact, rejoins it at at least one point in the Chau Doc-An

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Giang provincial border. This southern portion is known as the Bassac River in Cambodia, and is sometimes referred to in the literature on Vietnam by that name. The correct Vietnamese name is Song (River) Hau Giang. Previous MACV Command Histories referred to the Bassac River. This history will follow the Vietnamese and refer to the Hau Giang River.

(C) At the beginning of 1969, Allied operations in the Delta were targeted against Main and Local Force units in each division's AO. The 7th ARVN Inf Div continued operations south of Saigon in Dinh Tuong, Go Cong and Kien Hoa Provinces; the 9th ARVN Inf Div operated in the central part of the CTZ in An Giang, Sa Dec, Vinh Long and Vinh Binh Provinces; the 21st ARVN Inf Div in the most southern provinces, Phong Dinh, Ba Xuyen, Chuong Thien, Bac Lieu, Kien Giang and An Xuyen Provinces; the 9th Inf Div operated in the same AO as the 7th ARVN Inf Div with the 1st Bde in Dinh Tuong Province and the 2d Bde in Kien Hoa Province. During the early part of 1969, the 9th Inf Div's 2d Bde operated with the Mobile Riverine Force, generally in Kien Hoa Province. The 1st Bde took part in a continuing operation -- SPEEDY EXPRESS.

(C) The northern provinces along the Cambodian border, Kien Tuong, Kien Phong, Chau Doc, and western section of Kien Giang, had been combined into the 44th Special Tactical Zone in 1968 and operations continued in 1969 with CIDG, Mobile Strike Force, RF/PF and supporting cavalry elements participating. Also, ARVN Ranger and Marine battalions were targeted against enemy units throughout the Delta.

(C) A CTZ-wide campaign had been initiated against the VCI on 1 Oct 68 as part of the country-wide Accelerated Pacification Campaign. The IV CTZ Dry Weather Campaign had also begun 1 Dec 68 in support of the overall pacification mission, progressively to continue the preemptive operations in order to prevent VC units from interfering with pacification efforts.

(C) The 9th Inf Div operations were largely a steady progression of smaller engagements and scattered contacts. There were insertions of patrols, air mobile assaults, sweep operations, light fire team actions, uncovering of caches, night ambushes, night position defenses, and sniper team activities. Though most single engagements produced modest results in eliminating VC, the total results were steady and the accumulation significant. The division did experience several sizable engagements that produced impressive results as described in the following discussion.

(C) The ARVN CTZ-wide QUYET CHIEN Campaign had commenced on 17 Jul 68 in the Delta and was replaced with Operation QUYET THANG on 1 Jan 69 although QUYET CHIEN was not officially terminated until 4 Mar when QUYET CHIEN BK 44/55 ended. The campaign finally ended with 15,953 enemy killed and 15,832 detained. Friendly losses were 2,402 killed, 11,181 wounded and 162 missing. At the beginning of 1969 ARVN operations and results in the IV CTZ Dry Weather Campaign were included in Operation QUYET THANG. 135

(C) Except for small contacts the CTZ was generally quiet until the night of 12-13 Jan, when Can Tho Air Field in Phong Dinh Province received an enemy ground attack resulting in significant aircraft damage. Attacking with B40 rockets, small arms and satchel charges, the enemy force overran the 271st Avn Co command bunker. The airfield was secured by friendly forces at 0430 hours. Friendly casualties were four killed and 15 wounded as three CH-47 helicopters were destroyed, two CH-47s and five AH-1G Cobras heavily damaged, one CH-47 and seven AH-1Gs lightly damaged. Four enemy soldiers were killed in the attack. 136

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(C) On the same night, 4 km southeast of Long Dinh in Dinh Tuong Province, the 9th Inf Div headquarters at Dong Tam received an attack-by-fire, resulting in four UH-1Hs heavily damaged, eight UH-1Hs, one AH-1G, one OH-6A lightly damaged. The base again received an attack-by-fire on 14 Jan when twenty 120mm mortar rounds were received. Friendly casualties were three killed (incl one Vietnamese civilian), 25 wounded, as five buildings were heavily damaged. 137

(C) In Kien Giang Province in a QUYET THANG operation begun 10 Jan, elements of the 21st ARVN Div had killed 44 enemy in contacts during a four day period ending 14 Jan in the division's continuing operations in the U Minh Forest. 138

(C) Meanwhile in Sa Dec Province in an area 14 km southeast of Sa Dec City on 12 Jan, elements of a 9th ARVN Div engaged an enemy force, killing 30 enemy soldiers with nine friendly soldiers wounded in the contact. The operation terminated 28 Jan resulting in 101 enemy killed and eight detained. ARVN casualties were four killed, 51 wounded and one missing. 139

(C) A significant contact occurred on 14 Jan in the 44th SZ in an area 25 km south of Moc Hoa in Kien Tuong Province, when the 7th Sqdn, 1st Cav, attacked an estimated enemy company. The operation accounted for 43 enemy killed and 15 detained, along with 120 B-40 and 45 107mm rockets captured. 140

(C) Another QUYET THANG Campaign contact that began on 14 Jan in an area 23 km west of Can Tho in Phong Dinh and Chuong Thinh Provinces, elements of the 21st ARVN Div engaged the enemy in light contacts during a five day period, killing 53 and detaining 28 enemy soldiers. Friendly casualties were 14 killed and 90 wounded. Also, helicopters from the 164th Cbt Avn Gp combined forces with 7th Sqdn, 1st Cav elements and 150 CIDG troops from the 44th Special Zone. This force engaged an unknown size enemy force 42 km north of Cao Lanh in Kien Phong Province. The combined force killed 96 enemy soldiers (79 credited to Army air). Friendly losses were five KIA and 20 (four US) WIA. 141

(C) A QUYET THANG campaign contact in the 44th SZ began on 20 Jan in an area 30 km east of Ha Tien in Kien Giang Province with three RF companies, the 32d, 42d and 43d ARVN Rgrs and elements of the 1st and 2d Sqdns, 12th Cav (Ambl) participating. While exploiting B-52 strikes in the area, the friendly force found 45 enemy killed by B-52s and accounted for two more of the enemy in the contact in the border area. A large enemy cache was also discovered. 142

(C) The 21st ARVN Div continued operations in the U Minh Forest area 30 km north of Quang Long in An Xuyen Province during January and on the 23d another QUYET THANG operation began with ARVN, Rangers, RF and PF units participating. The three day operation accounted for 45 enemy killed and 21 detained as two friendly soldiers were killed and four wounded in the engagement. 143

(C) In an operation that began 27 Jan in an area 30 km west of Can Tho in Phong Dinh Province, elements of the 21st ARVN Div discovered fresh graves on 2 Feb containing 55 bodies apparently killed by B-52 strikes on 30 Jan. Upon termination 3 Feb, 115 enemy soldiers had been killed and 11 detained, while friendly casualties were 16 killed and 109 wounded. 144

(C) A sector-controlled operation 12 km southeast of Rach Gia in Kien Giang Province met with moderate contacts on 19 Feb. With the 31st ARVN Recon Co and an element of the ARVN Cav participating, 63 enemy KIA were accounted for as the friendly force lost three killed and 19 wounded. 145

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(C) Elements of the 2d Bde, 9th Inf Div, fought a day long engagement on 20 Feb in Kien Hoa Province, 18 km east-southeast of Ben Tre. The action began when brigade elements made heavy initial contact with an unknown size enemy force. Additional 2d Bde infantry elements quickly reinforced the forces in contact and swept the area. Supported by artillery and TACAIR, the engagement continued until 2100 hours when the enemy withdrew leaving 54 of his dead in the battle area. In a sweep of the area the following day 45 more enemy bodies were found raising the total to 99 enemy killed. The US losses were six killed and eight wounded. 146

(C) The enemy launched his post-Tet Offensive throughout RVN on 23 Feb. In the Delta indirect fire attacks were received throughout the IV CTZ. In Dinh Tuong Province 120 rounds of 60mm, 82mm and 120mm mortar fire hit the 9th Inf Div base camp at Dong Tam, killing three US soldiers and wounding 36. Destroyed in the attack were 49,000 gallons of JP-4 fuel, one building, with major damage to aircraft and power lines. The Military Province Compound at My Tho received 100 rounds of mixed 120mm and 82mm mortar fire early on 23 Feb. At the same time, the Hung Vuong Training Center in Chau Thanh, 3 km northeast of My Tho received 50 rounds of mixed 60mm, 82mm, and 120mm mortar. FSB MOORE, 3 km east of Cai Lay in Dinh Tuong Province received 27 rounds of 82mm mortar early on 23 Feb. Also in Dinh Tuong Province 5 km north of Cai Be FSB DIRK received 50 rounds of 82mm mortar and B-40 rockets. Four km north of Cai Be FSB DUSTY received 30 rounds of 82mm mortar. 147

(C) On 25 Feb, 6 km northwest of Chau Doc City, a 44th STZ operation against two VC companies resulted in 187 enemy killed. Elements of the 41st ARVN Ranger Bn with four RF companies and one troop of the 3d Sqdn, 12th ARVN Cav participated in the engagement, in which three friendly soldiers were killed and 52 wounded. One enemy company was reported to be a female unit. 148

(C) In Vinh Binh Province 23 km southwest of Tra Vinh in a QUYET THANG operation, three RF companies, supported by helicopter gunships and an ARVN cavalry unit engaged an enemy company on 25 Feb, accounting for 51 enemy killed. Friendly casualties were one killed and four wounded. 149

(C) An operation in the QUYET THANG Campaign, 27 km southwest of Can Tho in Phong Dinh Province, began on 1 Mar, controlled by the 21st ARVN Div. In exploitation of a B-52 strike, the two ARVN infantry battalions, an ARVN reconnaissance company, and seven RF companies discovered 90 bodies killed by the B-52 strike, then killed eight more during the day. Seven friendly soldiers were wounded. 150

(C) Elements of two ARVN infantry battalions, two ARVN Ranger battalions and four RF companies engaged the enemy in a significant contact 12 km southwest of Burg Liem in Vinh Long Province on 7 Mar. In the three hour battle, 72 enemy were killed and 42 detained. ARVN losses were one killed and 16 wounded. 151

(C) QUYET CHIEN BK/44/55 finally terminated on 4 Mar. The operation had begun on 23 Dec 68 in Chau Doc Province and was the last of the QUYET CHIEN Campaign operations. Upon termination the long operation had accounted for 100 enemy killed, 50 detained. Friendly casualties were 19 killed and 155 wounded. 152

(C) At mid-day on 11 Mar, an element of the 2d Bn, 39th Inf, was inserted into an area along the Kinh Tong Doc Loc Canal, in the vicinity of My Phuoc Tay, at the edge of the Plain of Reeds in upper Dinh Tuong Province, to check out a reading from an airborne personnel

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detector (People Sniffer). The company soon ran into enemy fire south of the canal about 5 km west of the CIDG Camp at My Phuoc Tay. The 1st Bde, immediately began a "Pile On" operation to seal off and destroy the enemy force. Before the evening was over, eight US companies had been inserted and TACAIR, artillery and air cavalry had been brought to bear while helicopters had transported men and material. At about 0100 hours on 12 Mar a portion of the enemy force escaped through a gap in the US positions around the enemy force. A sweep of the battle area early on 12 Mar indicated the US troops had accounted for 72 enemy killed (by US body count) while losing three US killed. A later report of the battle written by a PW captured at the action set the enemy killed figure at 203. 153

(C) The 9th Inf Div base at Dong Tam received four rounds of 120mm and five rounds of unknown type mortar fire on the night of 25 Mar. At 260015 hours, an unknown number of unknown type mortar rounds hit the ammunition dump causing it to catch fire and explode pad by pad. Included in the large amount of destroyed material were 2 million rounds of small arms ammunition, 4,000 rounds of 155mm HE, 500 rounds of 8-inch HE, 4,000 charges of 155mm propellant, 500 charges of 8-inch propellant, 2,000 rounds of 4.2-inch HE, 3,700 rounds of 81mm HE, 5,000 hand grenades, 1,900 rounds of 4.2-inch illumination, 990 rounds of 81mm illumination, 2,200 rounds of 105mm illumination. Two helicopters were destroyed, six damaged; 18 buildings were destroyed, 64 buildings heavily damaged, and several buildings received severe shock damage. Two friendly soldiers were killed in the attack and 56 were wounded. 154

(C) In a QUYET THANG operation 4 km east of My Tho in Dinh Tuong Province on 24 Mar, elements of the 11th ARVN Regt made contact with an enemy force, believed to be the rear echelon of an enemy regiment. Results of the contact were 55 enemy killed. Action continued on 27 Mar resulting in 42 additional enemy killed. ARVN losses during the two day engagement were 10 killed and 64 wounded. 155

(C) On 31 Mar, three ARVN infantry battalions (1/31, 1/32, 4/32) with 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav, and eight RF companies surrounded an estimated enemy company in an area 3 km east of Phuoc Long in Bac Lieu Province. When contact was terminated, 50 enemy had been killed, one small generator, 2,000 gallons of fuel and a dispensary complex were destroyed. Friendly casualties were four killed and 14 wounded. 156

(U) In Vietnam, where unconventional warfare was the rule rather than the exception, pitched battles, fought for control of a specific location rarely occurred. Operations some 20 km from the Cambodian border in Chau Doc Province against the Viet Cong mountain stronghold of Coto Mountain (Hill 614), exemplified this type of operation, conventional in the perspective of history, but in 1969 an exception in jungle warfare operations.

(U) The strategic value of Nui Coto, perhaps better known as Superstition Mountain, was quite clear. Situated opposite VC staging areas across the Cambodian border, its network of tunnels and caverns provided an excellent in-country coordination point for the infiltration of enemy personnel and materials. Its 614 meters of boulders and random scrub brush had been impervious to air attacks, even the 500 pound bombs of the B-52s. Japanese and French troops had never managed to wrest it from Communist hands in previous wars. 157

(U) Major operations on Coto Mountain began with a paratroop assault. The 4th and 5th MSFs, advised by US Special Forces, made three assaults, but all proved indecisive. Finally, the successful conquest of the mountain occurred on 7 Apr, after two and a half months of

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operations. Supported by air strikes from 164th Combat Avn Gp gunships with Cobra rocket and minigun fire, the MSF soldiers eliminated the remaining resistance, planting the RVN flag on the summit.

(U) Inside the mountain, the tunnels and caverns were also secured, and a large medical complex and an armory were dismantled. Aside from the obvious benefit of depriving the enemy of a major infiltration route, the victory at Coto Mountain netted the Allies a psychological advantage. The VC lost a position that they had long boasted could never be taken. Though other sites were available for the VC to relocate, they were all much farther from the villages which afforded the enemy supplies, labor, and political support.

(U) Securing the mountain indefinitely would have required approximately two battalions. Two thousand troops could not be spared from the pacification-oriented operations that were being conducted in IV CTZ for the static defense of Coto Mountain and by the end of the year, Coto Mountain was abandoned. 158

(C) One of the largest defections of the war occurred on 6 Jul in Chau Doc Province when a USN patrol boat (PBR) contacted a person who claimed to be a VC captain and had 300 VC who desired to rally to the GVN. 159 (This incident is further covered under The Rallying of the Dissidents in Chapter VIII.)

(S) Operation RICE FARMER which commenced on 1 Jun was conceived as an intensive application of combat power throughout the Delta using both RVNAF and US air, land, and naval forces with a simultaneous intensification of the pacification effort to exploit tactical gains. Emphasis was to be placed on combined RVNAF/US forces operations and joint ARVN/RF/PF operations to enhance pacification and promote territorial security. The enemy targets were an estimated military force of 45,000 and an estimated VCI of 32,000. The success of this joint operation, which involved two brigades of the 9th Inf Div and the 5th ARVN Regt together with appropriate supporting forces, was evident from the results which were reported when the operation terminated on 31 Aug. Friendly forces lost 44 KIA and 452 WIA. The enemy lost 1,860 KIA, 822 detained, and 233 individual and 13 crew-served weapons captured. 160

(C) Also in Chau Doc Province near Ho Da, ARVN units conducted Operation QUYET THANG 44/29 from 13 May to 13 Jun. This operation resulted in 29 friendly killed and 90 wounded. Enemy losses totalled 158 killed, three detained, and 18 small arms and three crew-served weapons captured. 161

(C) Operation QUYET THANG 44/32, a combat operation conducted in Chau Doc Province in the vicinity of Dai Mountain (Hill 549) from 18-24 Jun as part of the continuing campaign of the same name, resulted in one friendly wounded, while the enemy lost 250 killed. The units involved in the operation were the 42d and 43d ARVN Rgr Bns, the 12th ARVN Armd Cav, and a battalion and two companies from the MSF.

(C) Another QUYET THANG Operation, 21/26, was conducted near Xom Mo Thi Cu in Chuong Thien Province from 17-28 Jun by the 1st and 2d Bns of the 31st ARVN Regt and the 1st and 2d Bns of the 32d ARVN Regt. The ARVN forces lost 23 killed, six detained, and 30 small arms, while the enemy lost 216 killed, 53 detained, and 37 small arms. 162

(U) During July, enemy activity was highlighted by indications of troop movement into and throughout the CTZ. Prisoners captured on 7 Jul in northern Kien Tuong Province identified an

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NVA infiltration group. This was the first known case of significant numbers of NVA personnel infiltrating into IV CTZ as replacements.

(U) The most significant enemy contacts occurred in Kien Giang Province during the last two days of the month. During the contacts a total of 81 enemy, tentatively identified as elements of the 273d VC Regiment, were killed (41 killed by air) northeast and northwest of Rach Gia City.

(U) During July, over 3,500 VC rallied to the GVN bringing the total for the first seven months of 1969 to more than 17,500.

(U) Enemy activity in IV CTZ during August was highlighted by the relocation of parts of the 18B NVA Regt from III CTZ to western Chau Doc Province. This was the first known instance of a solely NVA-manned unit entering IV CTZ. Elements of the 273d VC Regt were engaged in central Kien Giang Province while relocating from western Chau Doc Province to the U Minh Forest.

(U) On the night of 11-12 Aug the enemy conducted 41 attacks-by-fire and two limited ground attacks throughout IV CTZ. Enemy-initiated activity increased during the month, particularly in Dinh Tuong Province. Prisoners captured in Kien Tuong Province revealed that approximately 500 NVA replacements were destined for enemy units in VC My Tho Province (GVN Dinh Tuong Province).

(U) RVNAF elements uncovered 61.5 tons of rice in Ba Xuyen Province and three tons of mortar ammunition in Bac Lieu Province during August. Also, 2,473 VC rallied to the GVN, during the month bringing the total for the first eight months of the year to 19,973.

(S) From 3 through 7 Aug, in Kien Giang Province in the vicinity of Rach Gia, elements of the 21st ARVN Div and the 2d VNMC Bn killed 62 enemy and captured 19 individual and 12 crew-served weapons. Friendly casualties were four ARVN KIA and nine wounded (three VNMC and six ARVN). Meanwhile in Ba Xuyen Province 15 km northwest of Than Tri on 6 Aug, elements of the 32d ARVN Regt and the 9th Cav Sqdn, 21st ARVN Div killed 11 enemy and uncovered a 44-ton rice cache. ARVN casualties were one KIA and five wounded. 163

(S) On 15 Aug in Kien Phong Province 65 km northwest of Cao Lanh, elements of the CIDG, MSF, and RF killed 10 enemy in a brief encounter. Later that day, the bodies of 44 enemy soldiers, apparently killed by air strikes and artillery during the three previous days were discovered.

(C) South of Tra Vinh during the early morning hours of 13 Aug, an ARVN FSB with one section of 105mm artillery was overrun by the enemy. The enemy fired 16 rounds with the captured weapons at the airfield and the MACV Compound in Tra Vinh. The FSB was recaptured by RF troops within two hours. One enemy soldier was killed. Friendly casualties were 14 ARVN KIA, 17 wounded (six ARVN, 11 VN civ), and five missing (one ARVN, four VN civ). One howitzer was damaged and two 1/4-ton vehicles were destroyed.

(C) Elements of the 9th Inf Div's 2d Bde began redeployment on 7 Jul as the first part of the President's Vietnamization program. The last maneuver battalion departed 23 Aug. (See Chapter IV and Annex D for details of redeployment.) By 27 Aug the last of the redeploying 9th Inf Div units had left RVN. As a result of this redeployment, IV CTZ became an all-ARVN show, except for advisors and aviation support under control of the 164th Cht Avn Gp. For the rest of the year ground operations tended to consist of large numbers of small unit patrols and

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ambushes, resulting in a small number of contacts each day, as the RVNAF concentrated on pacification operations by seeking to deny the enemy the use of his LOCs and by penetrating his BAs.

(U) On 26 Aug, a four truck ARVN ammunition convoy received one round of B-40 rocket fire at My Tho City, Dinh Tuong Province. The ammunition exploded. Results: enemy - unknown; friendly - four KIA (three ARVN, one civilian), 44 WIA (18 ARVN, 26 civilians); five houses, four 2 1/2 ton trucks (loaded with ammunition), 18 individual weapons, and one PRC-25 radio destroyed.

(U) The next day, Phu Hun Hamlet, manned by 40 PSDF and three PF soldiers, 13 km northeast of Soc Trang, Ba Xuyen Province, was attacked by an unknown size enemy force. The results were: enemy - unknown; friendly - 15 KIA (14 PSDF, one PF), 13 WIA (PSDF) and 30 individual weapons lost.

(U) Also on 27 Aug, elements of the 32d Regt, 21st ARVN Div and five RF companies, engaged an estimated enemy battalion 24 km northwest of Gia Rai, Bac Lieu Province. The enemy lost 44 KIA and four crew-served weapons captured; friendly losses were 19 KIA and 27 WIA.

(C) On 31 Aug, three RF companies and one reconnaissance platoon engaged an estimated enemy company 30 km north of Ca Mau, An Xuyen Province. VNAF helicopters and US gunships supported the contact. The enemy lost 54 KIA (30 KBA); friendly losses were two KIA and nine WIA.

(S) Combat activity decreased throughout the CTZ until the night of 4-5 Sep when a significant increase of indirect fire attacks occurred. Twenty-nine indirect fire attacks, consisting of 264 rounds of mortar and rocket fire, were launched by the enemy. Of these, 14 were directed against Dinh Tuong and Kien Hoa Provinces. The attacks in Dinh Tuong Province were primarily against military installations. In Kien Hoa Province, the province capital and district towns were the primary targets.

(S) Ten km north of Tri Ton on 11 Sep, the Chi Lang ARVN Training Center received an indirect fire attack followed by a ground assault. Supported by artillery, AC-47 aircraft, and US helicopter gunships, the ARVN soldiers and trainees killed 83 of the attacking enemy. Friendly casualties were four trainees killed and 19 wounded.

(S) On 13 Sep, in Chau Doc Province the 32d ARVN Rgr Bn and RF elements supported by US helicopter gunships and VNAF air strikes killed 69 enemy in an afternoon engagement. ARVN casualties were five killed and 21 wounded. 164

(C) On 24 Sep, elements of the 10th and 11th Regts, 7th ARVN Div engaged an estimated enemy battalion 5 km northwest of Mo Cay, Kien Hoa Province. Results: enemy - 30 KIA, five detained; friendly - five KIA, 25 WIA. The next day elements of the same regiments engaged an estimated enemy battalion 11 km northwest of Mo Cay. Results: enemy - 48 KIA, eight detained; friendly - four KIA, 24 WIA.

(C) Operation QUYET THANG 44/42 was conducted from 4 to 16 Sep under the operational control of the 44th STZ in Chau Doc Province just north of Dai Mountain (Hill 549) near the Cambodian border. Rangers, armored cavalry, and RF companies participated in this all-ARVN

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combat operation. The ARVN lost 17 KIA and 73 WIA, while the enemy lost 235 KIA, 20 detained, 26 individual and five crew-served weapons captured. 165

(C) Enemy activity in IV CTZ in October was light and scattered except on the nights of 4-5 and 5-6 Oct when there were 63 attacks-by-fire and 26 ground probes. Friendly forces continued to search for the enemy. There was some increased activity in the Plain of Reeds area as the enemy attempted infiltration of men and material.

(C) On 10 Oct, two RF companies engaged an unknown size enemy force 24 km northeast of Cao Lanh, Kien Phong Province, killing 31 enemy and detaining six. Three individual and three crew-served weapons were captured. There were no friendly casualties.

(S) In Kien Giang Province in the vicinity of Rach Gia, units of the 1st and 4th VNMC Bns killed 47 enemy in several engagements during the week of 11-18 Oct. Marine casualties were four killed and 12 wounded.

(S) On 13 and 14 Oct near Tieu Can, elements of the 14th ARVN Regt supported by US helicopter gunships killed 52 enemy in two engagements. Six ARVN soldiers were killed and 23 wounded.

(S) In An Xuyen Province 35 km west of Ca Mau on 13, 14, and 15 Oct, elements of the 5th VNMC Bn and the 32d ARVN Regt killed 41 enemy in three separate contacts. Friendly casualties were one killed and one wounded. 166

(S) Fifty-eight km south of Rach Gia on 19, 20, and 24 Oct, units of the 32d ARVN Regt killed 110 enemy and captured 21 weapons in several encounters. ARVN casualties were seven killed and 17 wounded.

(S) On 19 and 22 Oct, in Bac Lieu Province northwest of Bac Lieu City, RF and PF units killed 38 enemy in three separate encounters. Four PF soldiers were wounded. Meanwhile in An Xuyen Province 30 km northwest of Ca Mau, elements of the 32d ARVN Regt supported by US gunships killed 30 enemy in scattered contacts. Fourteen ARVN soldiers were wounded. 167

(S) In Kien Phong Province in the vicinity of Cao Lanh, RF and PF units killed 42 enemy soldiers in scattered contacts throughout the week of 27 Oct. Five RF soldiers were killed and 12 wounded. During the same week southwest of Ca Mau, units of the 32d ARVN Regt, 5th VNMC Bn, and RF elements killed 45 enemy in three separate engagements. Friendly casualties were two ARVN killed and 19 wounded (six ARVN, 13 VNMC). 168

(U) Except for the night of 6-7 Nov, action in IV CTZ remained light and scattered for the remainder of the year. There was some concentration of enemy activity in the Chau Doc Province, and some time during November the enemy reinvaded Coto Mountain, but otherwise ground operations were basically small unit actions.

(S) During the first week of November in the vicinity of Tri Ton, Chau Doc Province, RF and CIDG elements supported by US gunships killed 70 enemy in several contacts. Friendly casualties were seven wounded (five CIDG, two US). In Kien Phong Province 12 km southeast of Cao Lanh on 7 Nov, MSF units killed 33 enemy and captured eight weapons in a mid-day contact. Two MSF soldiers were wounded.

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(S) In Kien Giang Province 44 km southwest of Rach Gia on 6 and 8 Nov, the HQ VNN Amphibious Task Force 211.3 was attacked by enemy forces. Ninety-nine enemy were killed and 20 weapons captured in the two attacks while friendly losses were 38 killed, 120 wounded and four missing. 169

(S) On 9 Nov north of Tri Ton, an ARVN convoy containing elements of the 12th ARVN Cav and an ARVN artillery unit was attacked. Fifty-one enemy were killed while ARVN casualties were three killed and seven wounded. Five trucks were destroyed.

(S) Northwest of Tan Chau in Chau Doc Province on 10 Nov, a PF outpost was attacked by an enemy force. Friendly casualties were 29 killed (9 PF, 20 civilians) and seven PF wounded. Enemy losses were unknown.

(S) In Chuong Thien Province, west of Vi Thanh on 10, 13 and 15 Nov, units of the 15th ARVN Regt and the 42d ARVN Rgrs supported by US gunships killed 68 enemy in three separate contacts. ARVN casualties were three killed and 14 wounded. Meanwhile in Vinh Binh Province northwest of Tra Vinh on 13 Nov, US gunships killed 36 enemy in scattered contacts throughout the day. In the vicinity of Kien Long during the same period elements of the 14th ARVN Regt and the 42d ARVN Rgrs killed 78 enemy in several contacts. 170

(S) On 18 Nov in Dinh Tuong Province southeast of Cai Lay, elements of the 11th ARVN Regt engaged an enemy force for three hours. US air support was called but was ineffective due to the US advisors with the ARVN unit having been killed and the majority of the unit's radios lost. Friendly casualties in the engagement were 70 killed (68 ARVN, two US), 28 wounded, and 18 missing. Sixty-nine weapons and 18 radios were lost. Thirty enemy were killed and 11 weapons captured.

(S) In an area approximately 30 km southwest of Kien An elements of the 5th and 6th VNMC Bns killed 63 enemy in three contacts during the week of 14 Nov. Marine casualties were 14 wounded. 171

(S) In Vinh Binh Province west of Cau Ke on 27 Nov, RF and PF units were ambushed by an enemy force killing 36 territorial soldiers, wounding 12, and 12 were listed as missing. Thirty-seven weapons were lost. Enemy casualties were unknown. Earlier in Chuong Thien Province 13 km northeast of Kien Long on 24 and 25 Nov, 9th ARVN Div units supported by US gunships killed 40 enemy and captured 13 weapons in several contacts. ARVN casualties were two killed and 21 wounded.

(S) On 28 Nov in Dinh Tuong Province southwest of Long Dinh, an RF company was ambushed by an enemy force. Five other RF companies reinforced the contact. Fifty-five enemy soldiers were killed while RF casualties were 18 killed and 31 wounded. 172

(U) On 1 Dec, a Provincial Reconnaissance company and two PF platoons engaged an estimated enemy company 13 km southeast of Tra Vinh, Vinh Binh Province, with US helicopter gunships supporting. The action resulted in 36 enemy KIA (seven KBA) and 13 individual weapons captured; friendly losses were three KIA, one WIA. The same day elements of the 7th ARVN Div engaged an estimated two enemy battalions 13 km west of Cai Be, Dinh Tuong Province. Helicopter gunships from the 5th Air Cav supported the action resulting in 30 enemy KIA, two detained, four individual and two crew-served weapons captured; friendly losses were 17 KIA, 30 WIA, two MIA.

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(U) Long Khot in Kien Tuong Province, received an attack-by-fire on 3 Dec followed by a ground attack by an unknown size enemy force. US TACAIR, AC-119 and helicopter gunships supported. The results were: enemy - 160 KIA, two detained, 48 individual and nine crew-served weapons captured; friendly losses were 16 KIA and 27 WIA. Material captured included 300 grenades, 110 kg of TNT and an unknown number of rocket propelled grenades and satchel charges.

(S) On 9 Dec in Dinh Tuong Province 20 km northwest of Cai Lay, elements of the 15th and 16th ARVN Regts killed 38 enemy in a mid-morning encounter. Three ARVN soldiers were killed and 32 wounded. Two US advisors were also wounded. In Kien Tuong Province 13 km northwest of Moc Hoa on 11 Dec, the village of Binh Chau and an adjacent CIDG unit were attacked by an enemy force. The enemy penetrated the village and set it afire destroying 30 percent of the houses. Eleven enemy were killed in the attack while CIDG casualties were one killed and six wounded.

(S) In Go Cong Province 15 km west of Go Cong City on 13 Dec, 23 friendly personnel (20 PSDF, three PF) who had been captured by the enemy on 3 Dec when the An Hoa Tay PF outpost was overrun, were released. While in captivity, the personnel had been employed as laborers. 173

(S) In Kien Hoa Province on 21 Dec, a terrorist threw an explosive charge into the Ben Tre market place. The explosion killed seven VN civilians and wounded 18. This was characteristic of the enemy's efforts to terrorize the countryside. The next day in Chau Doc Province 13 km north of An Phu on 22 Dec, elements of the 16th ARVN Regt and 43d ARVN Rgr Bn killed 51 enemy in a five-hour battle. ARVN casualties were three killed and 13 wounded. 174

(S) In IV CTZ throughout the year, 7,018 friendly troops were KIA. Of this number, 438 were US. Enemy KIA were 48,228, of which 14,851 were credited to US forces. 175

Year End Assessment

(TS) While the crunch of a large scale enemy offensive was yet to come, there were indications in IV CTZ of growing RVNAF development and stability. The presence of NVA units and increased NVA infiltration into VC units in the Delta, although an obvious threat to the pacification program, reflected in a very positive way the success of the program itself and in particular that of the territorial security forces, which made up 80 percent of all forces in the Delta. The main thrust of enemy activity appeared to be directed toward the pacification program, as evidenced by the targeting for attack of the PSDF throughout the area. A recent drop in the number of ralliers could be attributed to the enemy's concentration on disrupting the pacification program and possible preparation for increased activities.

(TS) The withdrawal of US troops did not appear to have precipitated a loss of pacification momentum. Similarly, there had as yet been no general regression in security, and in fact, there had been a continued slow increase. The time spent on combat operations by IV CTZ units increased during the year, reaching the country average by the 4th quarter. Helicopter sorties flown in support of IV CTZ units were higher than any other CTZ.

(TS) The 7th ARVN Div generally spent less time on combat operations than the other divisions. Its results during 1969 were below average and its kill ratio in the 4th quarter was

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lowest in the CTZ. Since the departure of the 9th Inf Div in July, the 7th ARVN Div had not achieved improved operational results in an area where enemy density was high and availability of combat support was appreciable. It was hoped the assignment of a new division commander in early 1970 would improve the performance of this division. The 21st Div continued to be one of ARVN's better performers. Its activities were characterized by large scale sustained combat operations, and the results attained were well above the ARVN average for the year.

(TS) The most encouraging development was the improvement in aggressiveness, flexibility, professional skill, and operational results shown by the 9th Div when it moved from its own tactical area in Chuong Thien and Kien Giang Provinces in early November, and again when it deployed, after a brief stand-down, into Dinh Tuong Province for successful operations in BA 470.

(TS) RVNAF units in the 44th STZ had difficulty in halting the infiltration of enemy units and supplies from Cambodia. VNN and USN boats were conducting interdiction operations along the waterways adjacent to the border. Also IV CTZ contingency plans were prepared to reinforce the 44th STZ and reposition forces within the CTZ to include employment of the 9th Div as a reaction force if the situation warranted.

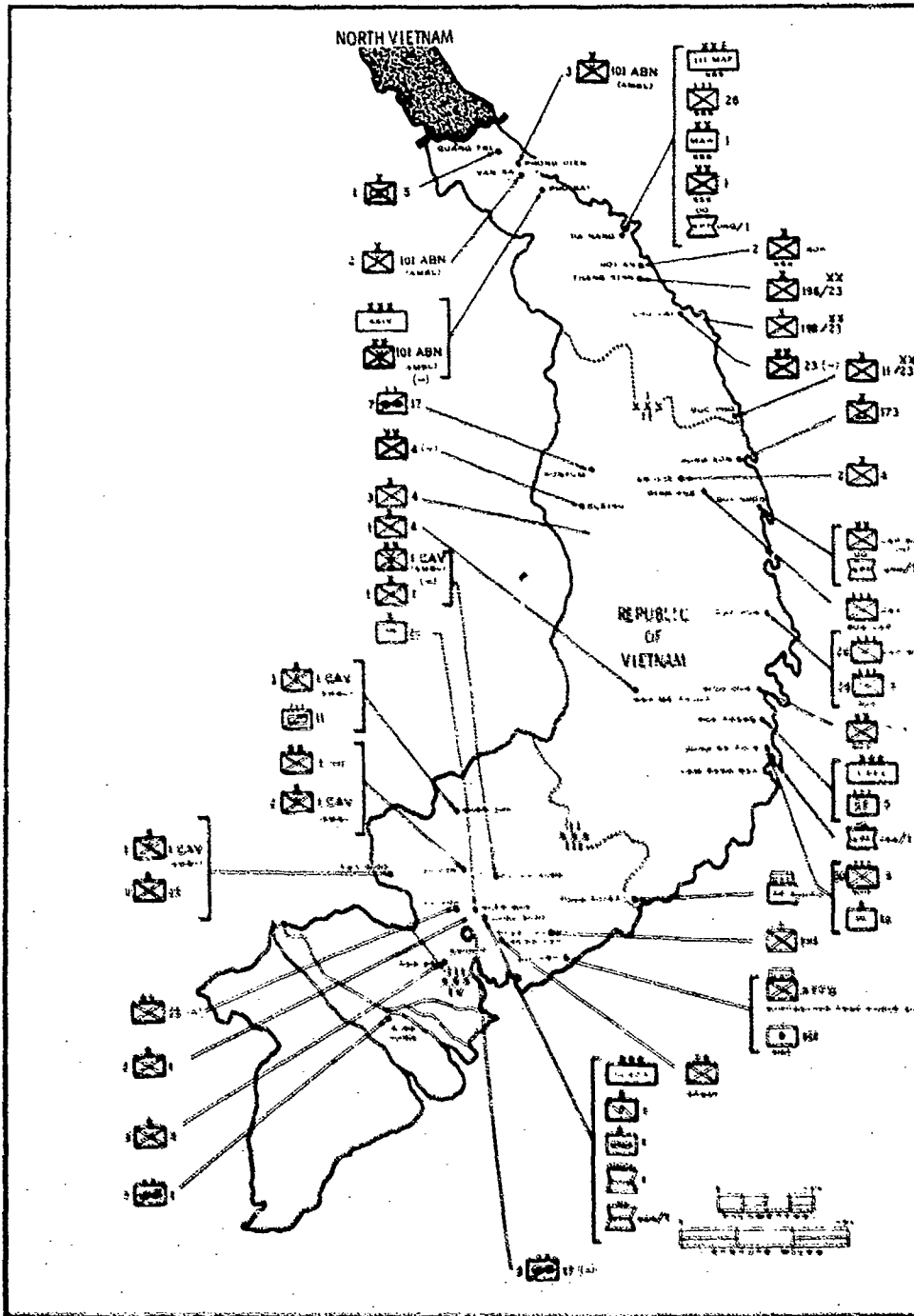
(TS) All division in IV CTZ consistently exceeded the national average in desertions and in the 4th quarter increased to the highest for the year. The RF/PF effectiveness in IV CTZ had suffered from desertion rates that continued to be above the national RF and PF averages. However, the number of contacts per operation increased steadily for both RF and PF in IV Corps.¹⁷⁶

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LOCATIONS OF MAJOR TACTICAL AND
SUPPORT ELEMENTS OF U. S. AND FREE WORLD GROUND FORCES IN RVN 3/



- 1/ The 1st Bn, 50th Inf (A) was OPCON to TF SOUTH.
- 2/ The 3d Bde, 82 Abn Div and PHILCAG redeployed.
- 3/ As of 17 Dec '69. From Rpt(S), GSOCS-74, Army Activities Report: SENSIA (U)

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FIGURE V-9

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Air and Watercraft of the Naval Forces Vietnam

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NAVAL OPERATIONS

Introduction

(S) In 1969, naval operations were essentially a continuation of operations on-going at the end of 1968. Specifically, COMNAVFORV was assigned the following tasks: 177

1. Destroy, or otherwise immobilize, confirmed and designated enemy military waterborne traffic in the coastal waters of RVN and inland waterways of I, III, 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. Maintain naval superiority in RVN territorial waters.
4. Provide shore bombardment and gunfire support to ground forces operating adjacent to the RVN coastline and the inland waterways.
5. Conduct mine countermeasures operations in the major shipping channels to Saigon and in other harbors and waterways as required.
6. Conduct operations on the inland waterways of III and IV CTZ to enforce curfews and interdict enemy attempts to infiltrate or distribute personnel or material.
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. Provide forces for riverine operations along inland waterways in III and IV CTZ.
9. Assist RVNAF to conduct river patrol operations along the inland waterways of III CTZ and IV CTZ.
10. Assist the GVN pacification program in areas where naval forces can be utilized.
11. Assist VNN to establish an active program to assist National Police resources control efforts.
12. Conduct psychological operations.

(S) Under DOD limitations, the Navy (with assigned Coast Guard units) was restricted to an in-country strength of approximately 37,000, or about seven percent of the total US strength in RVN. Nearly two-thirds of this Navy strength was concentrated in the I CTZ to support Army and Marine units there. In addition to the in-country personnel, almost 35,000 personnel in the Seventh Fleet supported operations in RVN. COMNAVFORV, who was also Chief of the

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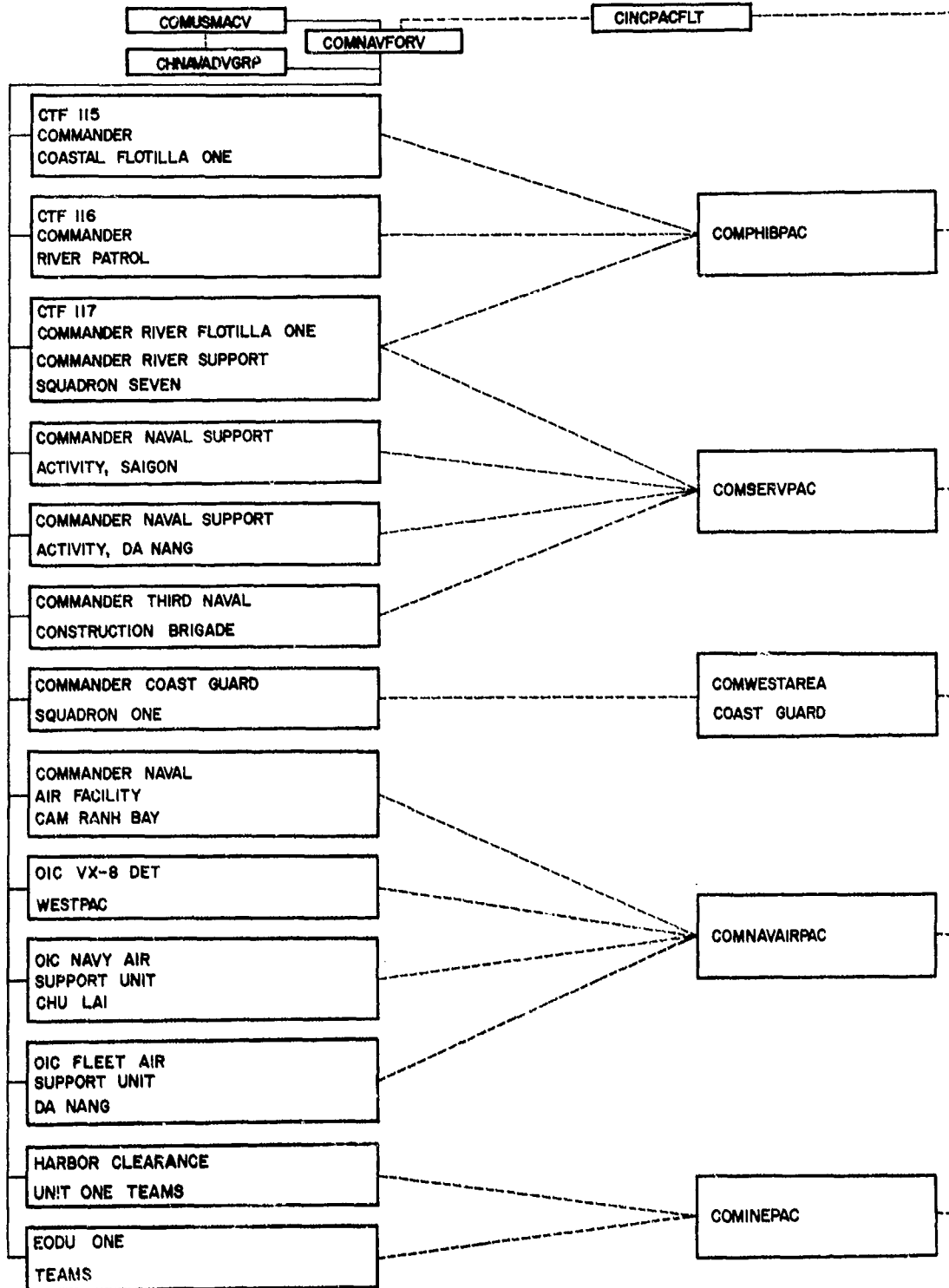
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US NAVAL FORCE, VIETNAM; COMMANDER RELATIONS



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Naval Advisory Group, had operational control over three major operational commands, the Navy Advisory Group, and the three naval logistic commands.

(S) The operational commands were the Coastal Surveillance Force (TF 115), the River Patrol Force (TF 116), and the River Assault Force (TF 117). Task Force 117 provided the lift and support capability for two brigades of the 9th Inf Div. Formed in 1967, by the beginning of 1969, this task force had over 200 craft.

(C) The Naval Advisory Group consisted of 519 Navy and 45 USMC personnel who provided advice and assistance in the development of the VNN and VNMC.

(S) Two of the logistic commands were the Naval Support Activities at Danang and Saigon. The NSA Danang, with an authorized strength of more than 11,000 Navy and about 8,000 civilian personnel, was the largest overseas Navy activity anywhere. The third logistic command was the construction forces (Seabees). Through the NSAs at Danang and Saigon, COMNAVFORV provided common-item support to all US and FWMA forces in the I CTZ and provided Navy-peculiar support to all Navy and Coast Guard forces in RVN. Additionally, maintenance for the hundreds of in-country logistic, patrol, and service craft was accomplished by NSAs Danang and Saigon, supported by detachments which included repair craft and mobile support bases. (See Chapter IX, Logistics)

(C) The Third Naval Construction Brigade was composed of two regiments and 10 mobile construction battalions with an authorized strength of about 7,500 officers and men. The Seabees provided construction support in the I CTZ to FWMAF. (See Chapter IX, Construction)

(C) Salvage operations in RVN involved two broad areas of nonlocalized operations: coastal and in-country. Typical coastal operations were the recovery of downed aircraft and grounded vessels. These efforts usually involved Seventh Fleet salvage assets and, in the case of aircraft, MARKET TIME minesweepers to locate the wreckage. In-country operations involved smaller, salvage-configured craft in river/harbor clearance and in raising riverine craft.

(C) Support and maintenance of salvage assets in-country was a function of Harbor Clearance Unit ONE (HCU-ONE). Backup support was available from Subic Bay, Republic of Philippines. Harbor Clearance Unit ONE also maintained the major salvage pool stock point in the PACOM.

(C) Harbor defense activities were known as Operation STABLE DOOR. The units performing these duties were elements of TF 115. They operated in the major harbors of the RVN and had the mission of defending harbors and anchorages and their seaward approaches against sabotage, swimmer, small surface craft, and submarine attack and enemy minelaying operations.

(U) The Military Sea Transportation Service Office, Vietnam (MSTSOV) was commanded by a Navy captain with headquarters located in the Saigon Port. The MSTS units were located at Danang, Chu Lai, Qui Nhon, Vung Ro, Nha Trang, Cam Ranh, Phan Rang, Vung Tau, and Can Tho. The MSTSOV was under the administrative command and OPCON of Commander, MSTS, Far East, Yokohama, Japan. In-country efforts were coordinated through MACV's Traffic Management Agency (TMA).

(U) During 1969, 50 percent of the world-wide MSTS cargo came to RVN. Approximately

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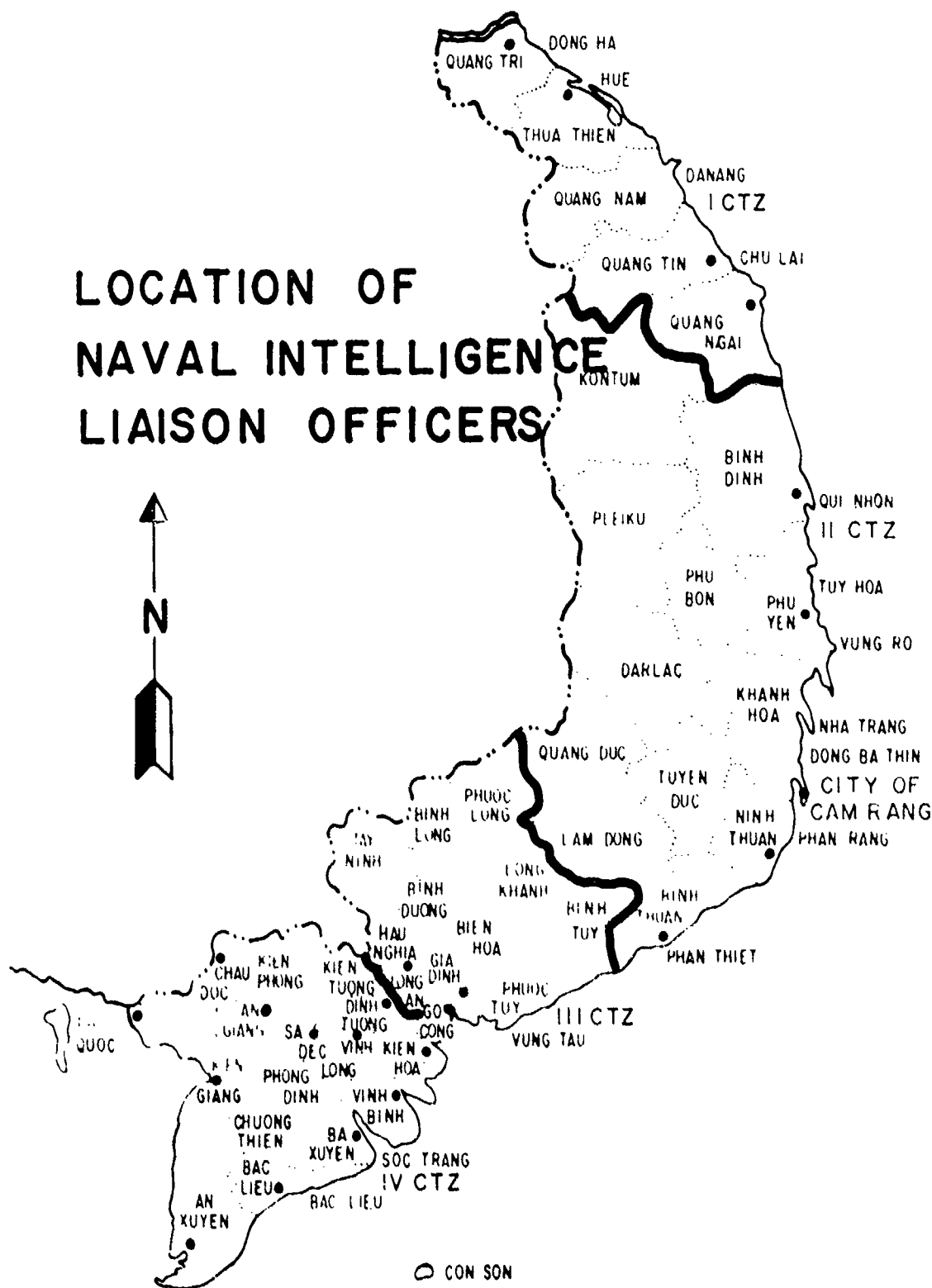
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LOCATION OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE LIAISON OFFICERS



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FIGURE V-11

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1.9 million measurement tons of cargo were discharged, backloaded, and transported monthly in RVN. Ninety-seven percent of all supplies brought into RVN arrived by MSTIS-controlled shipping.

(U) The Naval Intelligence Field Organization, Vietnam (NAVINTFOV) was a group of geographically dispersed elements and was composed of Coastal Zone and Riverine Area Intelligence Officers/Coordinators and Naval Intelligence Liaison Officers. The NAVINTFOV was under the operational and administrative control of COMNAVFORV. The mission of NAVINTFOV was to provide operational intelligence to COMNAVFORV, US Navy operating forces, and other US, VN, and FWMA forces and civilian agencies.¹⁷⁸ There were 31 elements in the organization located in the coastal areas and in the Mekong River Delta as shown in Figure V-11.

(C) The US Navy units offshore fluctuated from time to time but underwent no significant change in the course of 1969 except a cutback in the number of gunfire support ships. (See section on NGFS) One cruiser and four to 10 destroyers were normally assigned to gunfire support duties. These were augmented by inshore fire supportships (LFR). In 1968, gunfire support ships had fired more than one million rounds. This pace slowed to approximately half that rate as there was a general reduction of military activity throughout RVN in 1969.¹⁷⁹ Note: Unless otherwise cited, the data in the following sections are based on COMNAVFORV letters to CINCPACFLT, Subj: USNAVFORV Monthly Historical Summary.

(C) By November COMUSMACV, recognizing that incidental to COMNAVFORV's ACTOV program the availability of USN waterborne assets would become increasingly scarce, noted that the function of COMNAVFORV in many circumstances would be one of coordination with the VNN, or Field Force Commanders who would now have available assets. COMNAVFORV was directed to "Coordinate, provision, or ready reaction forces, available escort vessels, and mine clearance vessels as required for waterways designated red or amber." In response COMNAVFORV issued the following Standard Operation Procedures (SOP):

- A. Task cognizant commanders to provide reaction forces, escorts, mine clearance vessels, as appropriate for craft transiting USN TAOR's.
- B. Coordinate with VNN, Corps Senior Advisors and Field Force Commanders for the provision of waterborne and ground force security to meet requirements where there are no USN assets.
- C. Coordinate with VNN to develop plans and conduct operations to open, improve, and secure waterways for friendly commerce and military operations.
- D. Security will not normally be provided on waterways evaluated green except in the case of high risk ships and waterborne logistics craft.¹⁸⁰

Boats and Craft of the "Brown Water Navy"

(U) The Navy had begun "brown water" operations in the fall of 1965 using four 36-foot armed landing craft personnel, large (LCPL). The mission had been to control VC traffic in

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USN PBR operates in shallow water

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the Rung Sat Special Zone, especially along the Long Tau shipping channel to Saigon. These first boats were used, despite their slow speed, because they had been the only available craft even partly suitable to the task. Also in the fall of 1965 a group of naval representatives had met in Saigon to survey all aspects of waterborne infiltration. An outgrowth of that meeting had been the selection of the first new design boat to be used on the rivers and canals of RVN. The river patrol boat (PBR) as it was later known, had been selected because its overall characteristics were generally acceptable and it was currently in production in a commercial version; only modification would be necessary rather than design from the keel up. The first of these boats had arrived in-country 22 Mar 66 and from that beginning the "brown water Navy" was formed. The majority of craft used were chosen on the basis of availability and then modified to meet environmental and operational requirements. Only the PBR and PCF of the commonly-used craft were new to the military inventory. The following is a list of the most commonly-used craft:

1. The river patrol boat (PBR) was originally assigned to Operation GAME WARDEN. The boats patrolled the Mekong Delta and the Rung Sat Special Zone to prevent movement of VC men and supplies on or across the major waterways of the area. The PBR was developed from a pleasure craft hull and specifically redesigned and outfitted for Navy use. (Power was supplied by two 220-hp engines which drove the boat with a water jet pump. The pump pulled water through an intake opening on the boat's bottom and discharged it through twin jet nozzles on the stern. The boat had no rudder or other hull projections making it a shallow draft vessel, but was steered by directing the water jet nozzles.) The PBR was armed with twin .50 caliber machine guns forward, one .50 caliber machine gun aft, and one M-79 grenade launcher. The boat, 31-feet long, was capable of speeds of 25 knots.

2. The patrol craft fast (PCF) or "SWIFT" boat was developed from a civilian hull for use by the Coastal Surveillance Force on MARKET TIME Operations. Originally used to supply off-shore oil rigs, the high speed craft had become the largest boat group in MARKET TIME. The boat, capable of speeds in excess of 25 knots, had a .50 caliber machine gun atop the pilot house and a dual mounted .50 caliber machine gun and 81mm mortar aft.

3. Landing craft, medium (LCM) or "Monitor" was the battleship of the Mobile Riverine Force. The modified LCM had more firepower than any of the other small craft in the force. Its primary mission was to protect the armored troop carriers. The boat was heavily armored with bar armor and carried a direct firing 81mm mortar, one 40mm cannon, one 20mm cannon, two .50 caliber machine guns on a dual mount, four .30 caliber machine guns, and five automatic grenade launchers. The boat weighed 35 tons and was capable of speeds to 15 knots.

4. The assault support patrol boat (ASPB) was known as the destroyer of the force. The primary mission of the craft was to escort and protect the slower ATCs during troop transport phase of operations. It also provided mine countermeasures for the River Assault Squadrons (RAS). The boat was also used for blocking and interception in the waterways around AOs, for base security, and for patrol. Armament included one 20mm cannon, one 81mm mortar, two .50 caliber machine guns on a dual mount, and two automatic grenade launchers.

5. Armored troop carriers (ATC) provided troop lift, normally a platoon of about 40 men per boat. They were also used for resupply and, until the arrival of the ASPB, did the minesweeping chores. The ATCs were armed with one 20mm cannon, two .50 caliber machine gun mounts and two M-18 grenade launchers as well as an assortment of small arms. The bar

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armor was designed to detonate the enemy rounds before they came in contact with the conventional armor. The addition of a helicopter deck enabled the craft to perform emergency evacuation of wounded, urgent resupply missions, and replacement of personnel. The deck had a side benefit of additional protection against mortars.

6. The ZIPPO was a modified LCM-6 used to provide heavy gunfire support and bank extraction operations. The armament included two 20mm cannons and two flame thrower mounts, hence the nickname "Zippo".

Operation MARKET TIME

(U) The Coastal Surveillance Force, TF 115, conducted Operation MARKET TIME under the command of a US Navy captain. Its headquarters was 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 RVN; to enforce restricted areas established by the JGS; to provide combat support with naval gunfire and blocking patrols for US/FWMAF and RVNAF operating in the coastal region; and to conduct psychological warfare with PSYOP broadcasts and civic action activities. US units participating in Operation MARKET TIME included destroyer escorts/radar picket escort ships (DE/DER), ocean minesweepers/coastal minesweepers (MSC/MSO), patrol gunboats (PG), high endurance cutters (WHEC), patrol craft (WPB), fast patrol craft (PCF), and a tank landing ship (LST), maintaining patrols on both offshore barrier stations and inshore barrier stations. In addition, a Thai Royal Navy gunboat (PGM) and VNN Fleet Command units assisted in maintaining the antiinfiltration barrier. Ashore, there were jointly operated Coastal Surveillance Centers at Danang, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, Vung Tau, and An Thoi, where US and VNN personnel worked side-by-side. US Navy patrol aircraft, augmenting surface surveillance operations, flew visual and electronic patrols on three air barrier patrols 70 miles offshore.

(C) At the beginning of 1969, the MARKET TIME order of battle was: 181

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Base</u>	<u>Province</u>
Coast Guard Division 11 (WPB)	An Thoi	Phu Quoc Island
Coast Guard Division 12 (WPB)	Danang	<u>Danang</u>
Coast Guard Division 13 (WPB)	Cat Lo	<u>Vung Tau</u>
Coastal Division 11 (PCF)	An Thoi	Phu Quoc Island
Coastal Division 12 (PCF)	Danang	<u>Danang</u>
Coastal Division 13 (PCF)	Cat Lo	<u>Vung Tau</u>
Coastal Division 14 (PCF)	Cam Ranh	<u>Cam Ranh</u>
Coastal Division 15 (PCF)	Qui Nhon	Binh Dinh Province

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<u>Unit</u>	<u>Base</u>	<u>Province</u>
Coastal Division 16 (PCF)	Chu Lai	Quang Tin Province
Coastal Division 17 (PCF)	Tan My	Thua Thien Province
PATRON 1 (SP-2H)*	Cam Ranh	<u>Cam Ranh</u>
PATRON 2 (SP-2H)	Cam Ranh	<u>Cam Ranh</u>
PATRON 46 (P-3B)	U Taphao	Thailand
2 DER	At sea	
2 WHEC	At sea	
PG	At sea	
5 MSO/MSO	At sea	
1 LST	At sea	
Thai PGM	At sea	
Shore-based radar station	Con Son Island	
Shore-based radar station	Pouli Obi Island	
MIUWG-1 WESTPAC Detachment (Operation STABLE DOOR):		
IUWU-1	Vung Tau	<u>Vung Tau</u>
IUWU-2	Cam Ranh	<u>Cam Ranh</u>
IUWU-3	Qui Nhon	Binh Dinh Province
IUWU-4	Nha Trang	Khanh Hoa Province
IUWU-5	Vung Ro	Phu Yen Province

*PATRONS rotated and therefore varied as did their bed-down locations.
 Underline indicates independent municipality.

(C) At the beginning of 1969, river incursions into the Ca Mau Peninsula under Operation SEA LORDS continued to dominate the offensive operations carried out by TF 115 units. Over 60 river/canal operations and several naval gunfire support missions were carried out by Swift boat (PCF) patrols during January. In addition, two Swift boats supported by a Mobile Riverine Force (ATC) continued daily patrol operations on the Giang Thanh Canal along the Cambodian border as part of the interdiction campaign in that area. Of 54 hostile fire incidents

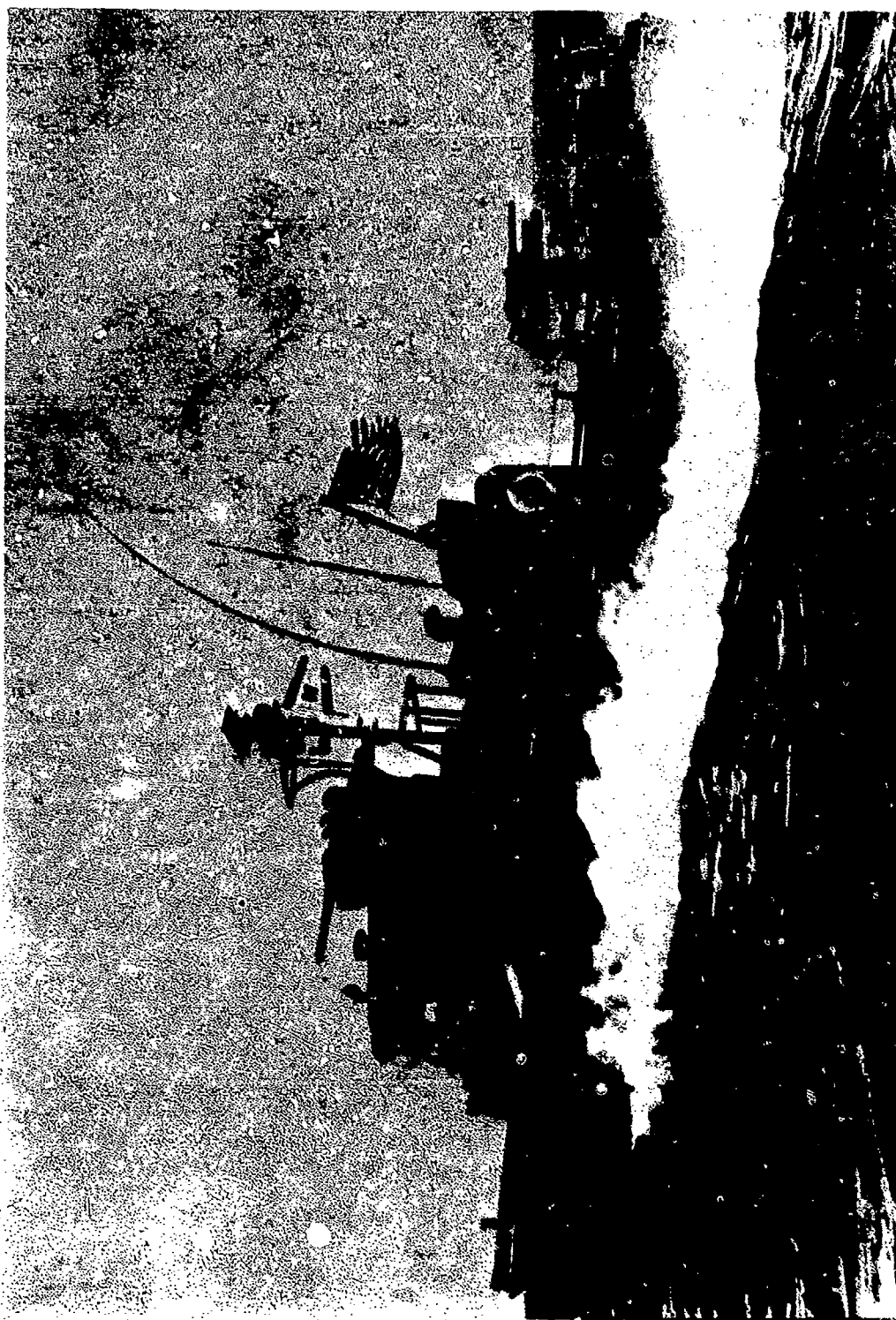
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MARKET TIME "Swift" boat makes high speed intercept

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recorded in January, 30 involved craft operating on inland waterways resulting in one USN killed, 19 wounded, and 12 Swift boats damaged. An additional four US sailors were wounded as a landing team from two PCFs was taken under fire while sweeping an area east of Phan Rang. Enemy losses to naval gunfire by MARKET TIME craft during the river/canal operations and 928 additional naval gunfire support missions totaled 1,579 junks/sampans/structures/bunkers destroyed plus 1,134 heavily damaged, 154 killed, and 60 wounded.

(C) Although nearly all of the river operations represented significant incidents in the month's activity, two stood out--one for the size of forces employed and the other for extending the operations into new areas. On 15 Jan, the enemy bunkers which had frequently been the source of intense hostile fire 2 miles up the Bo De River, 50 miles south of Ca Mau, were dealt a final blow. A force consisting of 10 PCFs, explosive ordnance disposal/underwater demolition team personnel and MSF troops, supported by two WPGs and an LST, moved up the river under both light helicopter fire team and fixed wing air cover. Following air strikes on the bunker complex, demolition teams and security troops were landed unopposed to destroy the enemy positions. During the day's operations, 74 bunkers, 17 huts, 11 structures, 20 sampans, and a footbridge were destroyed with another six bunkers damaged. The second unique river incursion took place on 28 Jan when four PCFs carried out a 6-hour operation that took them more than 40 miles across the Ca Mau Peninsula. Entering the Ganh Hao River, 23 miles east-southeast of Ca Mau, the boats proceeded upriver to Ca Mau, firing on targets of opportunity along the way. From Ca Mau, the four Swift boats proceeded to the Gulf of Thailand via the Ong Doc River, at one point receiving hostile fire which disabled the engines of one PCF. No casualties were received during the engagement, however, and the Swift boat was towed the remainder of the journey. Enemy losses for this operation were 70 sampans, 25 structures, two bunkers, and a fish trap destroyed plus 14 sampans, 62 structures, and two bunkers damaged.

(C) Since the beginning of Operation SEA LORDS in Oct 68, TF 115 Swift boats steadily had increased river patrol operations. This freed TF 116 PBRs for operations on rivers and canals opened by prior Swift boat raids. In the Rung Sat Special Zone, two PCFs conducted routine patrols on the Soi Rap River. In addition, PCFs assigned inshore patrol stations off the lower Soi Rap and Long Tau Rivers conducted patrols on these rivers. On 18 Feb, one PCF began patrolling on the Vam Co River. As in prior months, Swift boat patrols continued on the more than 70 miles of the lower Ham Luong and Co Chien Rivers. During the entire month, two to three PCFs in company with an ATC maintained patrols on the Giang Thanh Canal, covering that portion of the Giang Thanh/Vinh Te Canal interdiction barrier along the Cambodian border. In addition, patrols and operations in support of ground forces began to take place on a near daily basis on the Bay Hap and Cau Lon Rivers on the southern Ca Mau Peninsula. Near mid-February, PCFs in the First Coastal Zone also began conducting patrols on the Cua Dai River, 26 miles southeast of Danang.

(C) Craft patrolling on all rivers carried out numerous gunfire support missions, and participated in frequent ground operations by providing blocking patrols and by landing or recovering troops. The latter aspect, operating with reconnaissance troops and embarking a reaction force on river incursions and raids, marked a significant change in the nature of TF 115 river operations. Enemy forces initiating fire fights with Swift boats now often found themselves under attack by troops who were supported by the concentrated fire power provided by the PCFs.

(C) Naval gunfire by TF 115 units scored heavily against enemy forces and installations

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again in February. A total of 758 naval gunfire missions including targets engaged on 50 river raids and patrols resulted in the destruction of 1,037 junks and sampans and 1,006 structures and bunkers plus another 866 junks/sampans/structures/bunkers damaged. Enemy personnel losses were 131 killed, 50 wounded, and 9 captured. In 28 hostile fire incidents and two mine detonations, TF 115 units sustained one KIA and 24 WIA. Material losses were one Swift boat sunk and six boats damaged.

(C) In March, coastal activity showed a seasonal increase as the number of junks and sampans detected by MARKET TIME surveillance units rose to 43,754. Patrol craft continued to bring pressure on enemy positions and communication/liason routes along the coast with 576 naval gunfire support missions executed in response to tactical intelligence or requests from forces ashore. A new area of river operations by Swift boats became well established during March as patrols and operations with the VNN Coastal Group 14 on the Cua Dai River became part of the First Coastal Zone normal patrol operations.

(C) On 3 Mar the enemy launched a rocket attack apparently aimed at the pier area and power ships at Cam Ranh Bay. Fragments from one of the incoming rounds killed one crewman on a STABLE DOOR Unit Boat patrolling in the area and caused moderate damage to the boat. Navy units remained at battle stations while sporadic rocket fire was received during the next few hours. Suspected launching sites were taken under fire by PCF 73 and Picket Boat 51 with unknown results.

(C) Also during March, several operations were carried out by SEALs under CTF 115 operational control. These operations--usually probes of VC bases or attempts to capture members of the VCI--resulted in over 20 enemy killed or captured and numerous enemy documents captured.

(C) Weather and sea conditions continued to improve in April and detections of junks and sampans increased. Patrol effectiveness improved significantly as the percentage of detected craft which were checked by inspection or boarding rose from 63 percent in March to 73 percent in April. Routine river patrol operations continued on the Giang Thanh Canal as part of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO and in the First Coastal Zone on the Cua Dai River. The latter river patrol campaign, extending 8 miles into an area harboring strong enemy units, was given the code name Operation SEA TIGER.

(C) During the month, activity on the Cua Dai River increased sharply with the two-boat patrols carrying out 78 gunfire support missions, including 16 instances of hostile fire suppression. Naval gunfire support missions carried out during normal MARKET TIME patrols during April totaled 452. This included 20 cases of hostile fire suppression. MARKET TIME patrols also provided blocking patrols or inserted troops along the coast in direct support of 10 ground operations. There were no friendly casualties or material losses due to enemy action in normal MARKET TIME operations. As in previous months since the beginning of Operation SEA LORDS, the river incursions by Swift boats continued to score heavily against enemy units along the rivers and canals of IV CTZ.

(C) The USCG WPBs Point Garnet and Point League sailed for MARKET TIME patrols on 6 and 18 Apr, respectively, entirely manned by VNN personnel with the exception of the commanding officer. Known as the SCATTOR Program (Small Craft Assets, Training, and Turn-over of Resources), VNN sailors relieved their USCG counterparts on the WPBs one at a time

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until the entire crew except for the commanding officer, was manned by the VNN. The US commanding officers were relieved by a VNN counterpart at such time as the boats were officially turned over to the Vietnamese Navy. (See ACTOV section of this chapter for additional information on turnover of USN assets to the VNN.)

(C) Coastal activity increased again in May as weather and sea conditions continued to improve in the coastal waters of RVN. Normal MARKET TIME patrols conducted 336 naval gunfire support missions in addition to 40 cases of hostile fire suppression and two evading craft taken under fire. In addition, patrols provided blocking and troop insertion along the coast in direct support of six ground operations.

(U) On 10 May, USS Vance (DER-387) completed her MARKET TIME assignment marking the end of Seventh Fleet DER participation in coastal surveillance which had begun with the onset of Operation MARKET TIME in March 1965.

(C) Operation SEA TIGER in the first Coastal Zone on the Cua Dai River continued at a steady pace with 110 gunfire support missions, 26 instances of hostile fire suppression, and one enemy water mine attack. In addition, 11 ground operations along the river were supported.

(C) SCATTOR 1 and 2 were terminated on 16 May with the turnover of the USCG WPBs Point League and Point Garnet to the VNN at ceremonies in Saigon. The two WPBs with USCG advisors conducted their first MARKET TIME patrols on 18 May in the III CTZ. SCATTOR 3 commenced on 27 May with the arrival of a VNN lieutenant on board WPG Point Clear.

(C) June commenced with the VNN assuming coastal patrol responsibility for the Fourth Coastal Zone, operating from the Coastal Surveillance Center at An Thoi.

(C) As the weather and sea conditions continued to improve in the First, Second, Third Coastal Zones, detection of junks and sampans increased again. Patrol effectiveness improved significantly as over 87 percent of the detected craft were either inspected or boarded. Operation SEA TIGER in the First Coastal Zone continued at a slower pace as the enemy avoided contact. Normal MARKET TIME patrols conducted 452 naval gunfire support missions, suppressed hostile fire on 36 occasions, and took four evading craft under fire. In addition, units provided blocking patrols or inserted troops along the coast in direct support of eight ground operations. SEAL units attached to TF 115 carried out nine special operations in the coastal area. During these operations, five made significant enemy contacts resulting in 13 VC killed and three captured.

(C) Operations for MARKET TIME and STABLE DOOR units were routine in July. In conjunction with SEA LORDS' DOUBLE SHIFT and routine requirements for NGFS these forces conducted 709 missions. Surveillance operations resulted in 67,374 detections, 36,415 inspections, and 13,201 boardings. A total of 245 junks and 1,426 persons were detained, of which 26 were VC suspects.

(C) STABLE DOOR surveillance resulted in 56,317 detections which led to detention of 49 junks and 136 personnel. Inshore Underwater Warfare Unit activity was relatively calm throughout the month and afforded time to conduct training and indoctrination of newly assigned personnel.

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(C) With enemy activity again at a low level during August, MARKET TIME and STABLE DOOR forces operated routinely in generally good weather. Although there were intelligence reports citing specific dates for initiation of enemy offensive moves, there were no major engagements. A change noted was a marked improvement in weaponry and in 75mm recoilless rifle accuracy by the enemy. Also, concentrations of claymore mines and RPGs were directed against MSFs and PCFs in the SEA FLOAT AO. The enemy was difficult to find and then was detected only in small numbers, the general indication being that the VC/NVA were moving from III to IV CTZ. There were no known infiltrations of personnel and logistics during August.

(C) Task Force 115 provided 614 NGFS missions in support of SEA LORDS, SEA FLOAT, and SEA TIGER. Gun damage assessment on these missions was 38.3 percent. Confirmed results of NGFS in August were: 107 enemy killed, nine VC captured, 248 junks and 1,155 structures/bunkers damaged or destroyed. Surveillance accounted for 76,265 detections, 39,254 inspections, and 18,874 boarded. As a result of the checks 189 craft and 976 persons were detained, of which 59 were VC suspects. At 1150 on 31 Aug while en route from An Thoi, Phu Quoc Island to Ha Tien, Kien Giang Province, a PCF crossed 6 miles into Cambodian territory where it received small arms fire which was not returned. As soon as the OinC realized his boat was in Cambodian waters he altered course to clear as soon as possible.

(C) Adverse weather conditions during September caused the number of detections of watercraft to drop more than 20,000 from the previous month. Enemy activity in the MARKET TIME/STABLE DOOR AO was generally light. On 1 Sep barrier aircraft reported a modified SL-6 type trawler in the Gulf of Siam approximately 100 miles west of Song Ong Doc. The trawler appeared to be heavily laden. TF 115 air and surface units maintained overt surveillance until mid-afternoon on 3 Sep when Seventh Fleet units assumed surveillance of the trawler. During the evening of 6 Sep the trawler was lost in the Paracel Islands, however, an almost certain infiltration attempt had been thwarted. The tempo of operations rose in October as TF 115 units conducted 603 gunfire missions. In the detection and inspection of water craft, 10 attempted to evade and were taken under fire resulting in destruction of eight of them and 13 VC killed. In ceremonies on 31 Oct in Saigon at the VNN shipyard, 13 PCFs were turned over to the VNN. The boats departed that afternoon for Qui Nhon and commenced MARKET TIME patrols in the 2d Coastal Zone. The Coastal Surveillance Center at Qui Nhon, Binh Dinh Province was turned over to the VNN on 5 Nov.

(S) An SL-4 type trawler was sighted on 16 Nov by MARKET TIME aircraft on barrier patrol, approximately 70 miles west of the U Minh Forest area. CTF 115 designated a ship to intercept and identify the trawler. USCGC Hamilton closed after dark and made positive identification by searchlight. At daybreak on 17 Nov, photographs were taken. At noon on 18 Nov, COMNAVFORV requested permission from CINCPACFLT to board and search the trawler. The message stated in part:

This second attempt at infiltration by the NVN in two and a half months indicates the enemy's hurting for logistics support as a result of combined interdiction efforts in III and IV Corps. It is considered that these attempts will be continued unless positive action is taken against them. Both the 1 Sep and the current infiltration are considered to represent sufficient evidence of hostile intent to invoke provisions of (Rules

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of Engagement). Request CINCPACFLT obtain CINCPAC concurrence in authorizing to board and search and to destroy if necessary SL-4 contact currently under surveillance. 182

(S) Within four hours CINCPACFLT had concurred with COMNAVFORV and requested authorization from CINCPAC while directing Com SeventhFlt to prepare to board and search. CINCPAC in requesting authority from JCS to board and search noted further attempts at infiltration by the enemy, "... can be expected to be repeated if this attempt is not dealt with decisively."

(S) In preparation for a possible visit and search COMCRUDESOP 7 FLT/CTG 70.8 directed that a five step approach be utilized:

Step I: Close trawler: Direct trawler to proceed to appropriate SVN port; provide escort. If trawler refuses, proceed with step two.

Step II: Direct trawler to stop for visit and search.

(A) If trawler shows CHICOM or other foreign flag, continue surveillance, but do not conduct visit and search.

(B) If trawler shows CHINAT, SVN or NVN flag, conduct visit and search. Submit appropriate reports to all concerned in accordance with appropriate directives.

Step III: If trawler fails to stop or refuses visit and search party, harass trawler by high speed runs, screening, etc.; repeat direction to stop for visit and search.

Step IV: If harassment of step three is not heeded, fire one warning shot in vicinity of trawler but not at trawler.

Step V: If trawler does not stop in answer to warning shot, destroy trawler. 183

(S) USCGC Hamilton continued close surveillance and was joined by USS Wilson with COMDESDIV 212 embarked who assumed surveillance responsibility at 190115H as officer in tactical command (OTC). The trawler after initial sighting changed course and rounded the Ca Mau Peninsula giving wide berth to RVN territorial waters as she proceeded north with apparent intention of eluding her escorts in the shallow water of the Paracel Islands. Early in the morning of 20 Oct, CINCPAC forwarded to COMSEVENTHFLT denial of permission to visit and search the trawler quoting JCS as follows:

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(A) The lack of adequate evidence of the commitment of a hostile act;

(B) The trawlers position in international waters; and

(C) The fact that the trawler does not constitute a threat at this time, your request to board and search is disapproved.

In light of the above, surveillance was continued to ensure the SL-4 did not double back and attempt to infiltrate once again. The trawler passed eastward of the Paracel Islands in the afternoon of 20 Oct as the Hamilton patrolled a station within the islands in a blocking position while the Wilson remained close aboard and USS Hull which had joined at 1600 that day assumed a backstop station. CTG 70.8 then directed that when it was confirmed the trawler did not intend to enter the Paracel group, the Hamilton and Hull could be detached to proceed on duty assigned. A reasonable assumption of the above trawler intent was when she passed 60 nautical miles north of Woody Island. CTG 70.8 further directed USS Wilson to continue close surveillance until the trawler's final destination could be determined or it entered Communist-claimed territorial waters. USCGC Hamilton and USS Hull were therefore detached at 201945H, however, the Hull remained in company until 210350H. At that time patrol aircraft cover was discontinued and two and a half hours later the SL-4 trawler entered CHICOM-claimed waters. USS Wilson continued the surveillance coming no closer than 15.75 miles to Hainan Island. Contact was lost 0720 on 21 Oct as the trawler either entered a bay on the northeast coast of Hainan or continued steaming close into the island. Surveillance was terminated at 0945 when no further contact could be made. 184

(C) North Vietnam apparently failed in another attempt to land a steel-hulled trawler on the Ga Mau Peninsula of RVN during the Christmas Holiday period. USN units, on 23 Dec, detected a trawler on a southwesterly course heading from the Paracel Islands and some 160 miles off the RVN east coast. It was identified as an SL-6 of 100-ton capacity, similar to the one used for the infiltration attempt on 1 Sep. If the ship had proceeded on course it could have arrived in the Delta late Christmas day or early on the 26th. It continued in the shipping lane toward Singapore, however, presumably because it realized it had been detected. The trawler loitered on an erratic course about 60 miles northeast of Singapore until 29 Dec, when she sailed to Repong Island, a small islet in the Anambas Group belonging to Indonesia. It anchored about 400 yards south of the island and remained there about 16 hours before leaving the next morning. This was probably an attempt to escape surveillance by merging possible radar returns of the trawler with those of the island. The vessel then returned to the Paracel Islands and anchored for several days near Lincoln Island. Upon leaving Lincoln Island the trawler entered CHICOM waters in the vicinity of Hainan as did the trawler in November.

(C) Additional coastal landing attempts in the coming months could probably be expected because of the serious supply problems which troubled VC/NVA forces in the Delta. The NVA may also have wanted to continue probes in order to test the effectiveness of the VNN, which by this time had assumed most of the MARKET TIME patrols along the Delta coast. 185

MARKET TIME Raider Campaign

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(C) MARKET TIME Raider operations had commenced in November 1968 when TF 115 Swift boats conducted a transit of the Giang Thanh and Vinh Te Canals, demonstrating the feasibility of operations on these waterways. During 1969, river incursions by Third and Fourth Coastal Zone PCFs continued to strike at enemy base areas along those rivers and canals of IV CTZ open to the Gulf of Thailand and the South China Sea; on the Co Chien, Ham Luong, and Soi Rap Rivers; and in the RSSZ.

(C) During January, Operation SEA LORDS river incursions by coastal surveillance craft reached a high level of 62 operations and penetrated deeper into enemy-dominated regions than ever before. Swift boats were employed many miles from the coast in an area extending from a few miles south of Saigon in the RSSZ to the Cambodian border. Also included in these operations were two river incursions by VNN Swift boats.

(C) The most significant trend in February was the employment of reaction forces with the Swift boats to engage enemy units along the waterways. Also noteworthy was the decrease in hostile fire incidents and the conduct of almost routine patrols on rivers along which the PCFs had had to fight their way in prior months. However, the enemy did deliver deadly accurate rocket fire from well prepared positions in several engagements and one Swift boat was sunk and another nearly lost.

(C) In March, enemy opposition was generally light as hostile fire was encountered on only 13 of more than 50 operations conducted. Several of these raids in the southern Ca Mau Peninsula were made with MSF troops embarked. The areas along the Bay Hap River and adjoining canals were frequently swept by RF troops from Cai Nuoc with PCF support. Special operations were carried out by a SEAL team at Cai Nuoc in the first step toward establishing a permanent USN presence in this region.

(C) VC base areas and water craft vital to enemy mobility in these areas were hit severely by the PCF guns and supporting aircraft. Nearly 700 junks and sampans and more than 1,600 structures/bunkers were destroyed or heavily damaged.

(C) Operations on rivers, such as the Bay Hap, Cua Lon, and Bo De, continued on an almost daily basis during April, and included several night patrols employing night ambush tactics. A total of 49 special river operations were conducted. Enemy opposition was generally light with hostile fire being suppressed without friendly casualties in all but three of 18 incidents.

(C) On 4 Apr, four PCFs made a 2-hour transit of the Quan Chanh Bo Canal and the six connecting canals and rivers from the lower Bassac River to the South China Sea through the Long Toan Secret Zone. Entering the canal 40 miles southeast of Can Tho, the four craft took targets of opportunity under fire as they moved along the Quan Chanh Bo, Lang Sac, An, and Saw Canals, and Lang Chim and Lang Nuoc Rivers. By the time they reached the open sea 70 miles south of Saigon, the river probe accounted for 11 sampans and seven bunkers destroyed and one structure damaged.

(C) On 10 April, three PCFs supported by a light helicopter fire team made the deepest penetration to date of the My Thanh River, proceeding inland to within a few miles of Bac Lieu. Hostile fire was received on only one occasion, shortly after the PCFs entered the river 48 miles southeast of Can Tho. Firing upon targets of opportunity in a prearranged free fire zone,

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the force destroyed 32 sampans and 18 structures, damaged six sampans and 91 structures, and killed five enemy.

(C) Operating from An Thoi and Cat Lo with the support of USS Terrell County (LST-1157) off the southern Ca Mau Peninsula, Swift boats continued to strike at VC base areas on the rivers and canals of IV CTZ during May. Nearly 50 separate missions were conducted, employing from two to eight PCFs supported by helicopters and OV-10 aircraft. In the southern Ca Mau Peninsula, operations on the Cua Lon, Bay Hap, Bo De, and Dam Doi Rivers and their tributaries were conducted with MSF troops embarked to conduct ground sweeps and provide a reaction force in the event of enemy contact. Raids into the enemy's secret zone at the mouth of the Bassac, Co Chien, and Ham Luong Rivers also employed embarked troops from local RF/PF units. While these operations continued to achieve the maximum possible damage in areas of known enemy strength, the emphasis was shifted toward pacification of the more populated areas north of the Bay Hap River. Psychological operations, consisting of leaflet drops and loudspeaker operations, urged cooperation with GVN authorities and the display of government flags in their villages and on their watercraft.

(C) Enemy base areas and fortifications along the navigable waterways accessible from the coastal waters along IV CTZ were hit frequently by the combined sea, ground, and air assaults of the Swift boat river incursion operation during June in 43 separate missions. An additional 14 missions were conducted in the normal GAME WARDEN AO into canals along the Bassac, Co Chien, and Ham Luong Rivers. Enemy opposition was generally light as only 18 incidents of hostile fire were encountered.

(C) During July there was a marked increase in MARKET TIME Raider activity over the preceding month as hostile fire incidents numbered 39, up from 18, and 60 missions were conducted. These operations, in support of SEA LORDS and SEA FLOAT missions employed from two to 10 PCRs supplemented by helicopters, OV-10 and OH-6A aircraft, and USCG WPBs. Other support came from UDT, EODT, SEALS, PRUs, RF/PF troops, and ARVN soldiers. During the month, significant enemy material losses amounted to 163 craft and 171 structures destroyed. In 13 of the most important engagements of the month, enemy killed totaled 67; friendly casualties were one wounded.

(C) August continued to be a busy period for the MARKET TIME Raiders as they conducted nearly 90 separate missions in support of SEA LORDS and SEA FLOAT. The Swift boats continued responding to requests for insertion and extraction of UDT, SEAL, and ARVN forces. Enemy-initiated hostile fire incidents increased once again to 43. Enemy losses were 70 known killed plus 23 probable, and 11 captured. Material losses also increased: 214 craft destroyed and two captured as 706 structures were destroyed or heavily damaged. Although these operations continued to achieve maximum damage in secret zones and enemy base areas, the primary emphasis continued to center on the pacification of the Ca Mau Peninsula under Operation SEA FLOAT/TRAN HUNG DAO III.

(C) The Swift boats of the MARKET TIME Raiders employed new tactics in September letting the boats drift with the river current to intercept VC traffic. Another tactic was to have the lead PCF proceed out at maximum speed steering a zigzag course with the remaining boats in column at a slower speed. When the lead boat displaced approximately 2,000 yards, it returned to the formation and commenced another run. The rationale was to lure the enemy into thinking there was a single boat on patrol and attacking, whereupon the remaining boats would

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immediately close and concentrate their fire power on enemy positions. Throughout September and October the Raiders continued to concentrate their efforts in the lower Ca Mau Peninsula, primarily in the SEA FLOAT AO.

(C) During November and December the forces of the MARKET TIME Raiders were used extensively in SEA LORDS and SEA FLOAT to such a degree that their identity as MARKET TIME units was obscured except as they could be identified as PCFs. The operations of the units as they were "chopped" (change of operational control) to the SEA LORDS missions are covered with those sections.

SEA FLOAT/TRAN HUNG DAO III Campaign

(C) A new operation entitled SEA FLOAT/TRAN HUNG DAO III, which involved Swift boat participation, was activated on 27 Jun. This was a joint USN/VNN operation to establish a secure floating VN marketplace on the Cua Lon River. Since October 1968, US and RVN naval and marine forces had conducted operations in the lower Ca Mau Peninsula, including numerous Swift boat river incursions and assault actions by the MRF. These operations had exerted pressure on the enemy and induced a degree of pacification in the area. In order to exploit the advantages gained and to establish firmly the government presence in this VC-dominated area, this joint operation was conceived. This effort was the first large scale operation by USN/VNN forces which had psychological goals as its major focus. It was designed to bring about resettlement and pacification in the vicinity of old Nam Can City in An Xuyen Province under the impetus provided by psychological operations and by the secure establishment of the floating VN marketplace on the river.

(C) A USN mobile advance tactical support base (MATSB), built on pontoons and towed to the area, provided the staging platform for the operation. Although the MATSB was within easy range of VC rockets and small arms fire, it was not attacked during the first six weeks in place. The reason was not completely clear, but the deterrent factor could have been the strong fire power of SEA FLOAT forces. While holding off any shooting action, the VC were quick to respond with a propaganda campaign against SEA FLOAT. Nearly every day leaflets were attached to tiny log rafts and floated past the MATSB. The leaflets called for an end to "U.S. Aggressive War" and warned that the VC would "Blast the American Navy out of the water."

(C) "Hanoi Hannah," in her daily broadcast on 15 Jul, stated that SEA FLOAT would be at the bottom of the Cua Lon River at 172359H July. However, at month's end, SEA FLOAT had a record day of 348 visitors against a total of 60 visitors over the first three days of the operation in late June.

(C) On 28 Jul, DEPCOMUS, COMNAVFORV, and CG, DMAC were briefed on SEA FLOAT activities. When DEPCOMUS questioned the objectives of SEA FLOAT versus the risk, COMNAVFORV explained the objectives and indicated that two or three months would be required to evaluate properly the results of the operation. He pointed out that actual risks were not excessive.

(C) In mid-July COMNAVFORV approved a plan to recruit and train 50 Kit Carson Scouts (KCS) for employment with the SEA FLOAT forces. Utilizing building materials provided by

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SEA FLOAT, the KCS would build their own houses and with their families eventually settle in old Nam Can City. Until the construction was completed, the scouts, of which there were 15 by month's end, and their families would be housed and fed at SEA FLOAT.

(C) A SEAL mission was conducted on 5 Sep with the objective of liberating the family of a Hoi Chanh who had rallied the previous day. The SEAL team and 5 KCS were inserted and then traveled by sampan to the hamlet where the Hoi Chanh had been security chief. As the hamlet was entered four males were taken under fire resulting in one KIA, later identified as a VC guerrilla. The wife and five children of the Hoi Chanh departed with the patrol to the extraction point via sampans and back to SEA FLOAT by helicopter. At the extraction point, the Hoi Chanh pointed out six CHICOM boobytrap grenades which were rendered safe by the KCS. In addition to freeing the family, seven kilograms of documents and 11 VC flags were captured and 400 pounds of salt destroyed. There were no friendly casualties.

(C) A VNN Special Forces camp was established early in the month on the Cua Lon River in the vicinity of old Nam Can. Further evidence of SEA FLOAT success was a sign in the city which stated, "Sampan Motor Repair Shop Open For Business". Tours of SEA FLOAT AO were given for many groups throughout the month including COMNAVFORV, CJGS, CG DMAC, the District Chief of Nam Can, and an NBC news team. River Assault Craft (RAC) were added to SEA FLOAT assets for a 30-day trial. Also, RF troops established a base camp and perimeter on the north side of the Cua Lon River on 22 Sep.

(C) More than 50 missions were conducted by the SEA FLOAT/TRAN HUNG DAO III forces in October. Day and night PSYOP patrols were conducted along the rivers and canals in the AO with airborne units conducting similar missions in areas inaccessible to watercraft. The trial use of RAC was termed a success by Commander SEA FLOAT who recommended the units remain with minor changes in individual craft. The successful KCS program at month's end numbered 23, all of whom moved ashore from the MATSB prior to 23 Oct when Operation SOLID ANCHOR began. This operation was to set up construction of a coastal junk group and PCF base at old Nam Can. The KCSs supplemented the RF and VN Special Forces camps established the previous month as a part of SOLID ANCHOR base defense. COMNAVFORV showed his intense interest as he visited SEA FLOAT three more times on 6, 13, and 15 Oct bringing with him CNOVNN, CINCPACFLT and Commander, Third Const Bde. Among the results of SEA FLOAT forces for the month were 23 sampans destroyed on 6 Oct alone. On 16 Oct, along the Buong Canal, a mission came under heavy attack from claymore mines, 81mm mortar, B-40 grenades, and AK-47s. After suppression of the hostile fire, troops were inserted and destroyed a nine bunker/trench complex and various weapons and munitions. There were no friendly casualties.

(C) Land clearing began for construction of the coastal junk and PCF base at old Nam Can City under Operation SOLID ANCHOR. Three SEABEE teams were assigned during November, building SEASIA huts, laying matting for vehicle support, and improving the camp area. Also working in the AO were a VNN Polwar team, RD Cadre, MSE team, VNN reaction force, and VNN river craft. On 13 Nov SEALS conducted a mission to capture six district level VCI. After helicopter insertion, the team with two KCSs and a guide located six hootches and took 16 detainees. The hootches, identified as belonging to VC were destroyed. The detainees were extracted by helicopter and the SEALS continued the patrol locating 20 more persons. Initial interrogation indicated they were civilians who desired to go to SEA FLOAT Annex. The SEALS assisted in loading them and their possessions into sampans and sent them to the Annex. One of the 20 was identified as the wife of a VC and was detained. The day's operation netted 17 VC

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detained, 19 civilians relocated to SEA FLOAT Annex, and nine hootches, five sampans, and 300 pounds of rice destroyed.

(C) Large numbers of friendly forces continued to operate in the SEA FLOAT AO during the month of December. There were more than 60 missions and over 250 gunfire support missions conducted. The forces conducted day and night PSYOP patrols along the rivers and canals. Aircraft provided the PSYOP missions in areas not accessible to the watercraft. VC banners indicating they would kill persons who rally to the government showed the enemy's concern with the progress of the GVN presence in the lower Ca Mau Peninsula.

Operation GAME WARDEN

(U) The GAME WARDEN task force, TF 116, commanded by a US Navy captain and headquartered at Binh Thuy in Phong Dinh Province, operated on the major rivers of the III and IV CTZs and the RSSZ. The TF's principal watercraft was the river patrol boat (PBR), a commercial fiberglass recreation boat build by the United Boat Builders of Bellingham, Washington, and converted by the addition of armament and some armor. The boat's singular features included Jacuzzi waterjet propulsion, extremely shallow draft, and high speed acceleration--all assets on the debris-filled, ambush-prone rivers of RVN. The principal aircraft used in this operation was the UH-1B helicopter, nicknamed "Seawolf." This armed helicopter, with .50 caliber machine guns and air to ground rockets, provided excellent reconnaissance and airborne fire support capabilities to the forces. The objectives of Operation GAME WARDEN were to enforce established curfews; to interdict VC infiltration, movement, and resupply efforts; to assist the GVN to reopen designated water LOCs under enemy control; to participate with other FVMAF in eliminating the illegal VC insurgency; and to maintain the Long Tau River open to ocean traffic and clear of mines between the sea and the Port of Saigon.

(C) At the beginning of 1969, the GAME WARDEN order of battle was: 186

RIVDIV 511	USS Hunterdon County	Vam Co Dong River
RIVDIV 512	Binh Thuy	Phong Dinh Province
RIVDIV 513	Binh Thuy	Phong Dinh Province
RIVDIV 514	Rach Gia	Kien Giang Province
RIVDIV 515	Tan An	Long An Province
RIVDIV 531	Nha Be	Gia Dinh Province
RIVDIV 532	My Tho	Dinh Tuong Province
RIVDIV 533	My Tho	Dinh Tuong Province
RIVDIV 534	Tra Cu	Hau Nghia Province
RIVDIV 535	Tuyen Nhon	Kien Tuong Province

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RIVDIV 551	Mobile Base I	Upper Mekong River
RIVDIV 552	YRBM-16	Upper Hau Giang River
RIVDIV 553	Hiep Hoa	Hau Nghia Province
RIVDIV 554	<u>USS Jennings County</u>	Hau Giang River
RIVDIV 571	YR-9/APL-46	Co Chien River
RIVDIV 572	YR-9/APL-46	Co Chien River
RIVDIV 573	Sa Dec	Vinh Long Province
RIVDIV 574	YRBM-16	Upper Hau Giang River
RIVDIV 591	Nha Be	Gia Dinh Province
RIVDIV 592	Nha Be	Gia Dinh Province
RIVDIV 593	<u>USS Harnett County</u>	Vam Co Dong River
RIVDIV 594	Nha Be	Gia Dinh Province
MINDIV 112	Nha Be	Gia Dinh Province
MINDIV 113	Nha Be	Gia Dinh Province
SEAL Team Det "A" 4th Plt	Vinh Long	Vinh Long Province
SEAL Team Det "A" 5th Plt	My Tho	Dinh Tuong Province
SEAL Team Det "A" 6th Plt	Nha Be	Gia Dinh Province
SEAL Team Det "C" A Plt	Sa Dec	Vinh Long Province
SEAL Team Det "C" C Plt	Vinh Long	Vinh Long Province
HAL-1 Det 1	<u>USS Hunterdon County</u>	Vam Co Dong River
HAL-3 Det 2	Nha Be	Gia Dinh Province
HAL-3 Det 3	Vinh Long	Vinh Long Province

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HAL-3 Det 4	Dong Tam	Dinh Tuong Province
HAL-3 Det 5	YRBM-16	Upper Hau Giang River
HAL-3 Det 6	Dong Tam	Dinh Tuong Province
HAL-3 Det 7	Binh Thuy	Phong Dinh Province

(C) At the beginning of the year, the river patrol force increased its pressure on the enemy by a further extension of its area of operation. In addition to continued patrolling of the main rivers of the Delta and RSSZ and participation in the on-going campaigns of Operation SEA LORDS, e. g., Operation GIANT SLINGSHOT, Vinh Te Canal Campaign, and Rach Gia-Long Xuyen Canal Campaign, on 2 Jan, PBRs joined with other US forces in Operation BARRIER REEF. This campaign involved the expansion of SEA LORDS extending from the GIANT SLINGSHOT AO along the Lagrange and Ong Lon canals from Tuyen Nhon to An Long, in Kien Tuong and Kien Phong Provinces.

(S) The enemy had not taken kindly to the presence of US forces in his former havens. Intelligence reports continually alluded to the enemy intention to increase his mining efforts, and mining incidents became a particular problem along the Vinh Te Canal and BARRIER REEF. The current mine threat in RVN consisted of the following types of mines: command-detonated mines, drifting contact mines, limpet mines, and magnetic/acoustic influence mines.

<u>Type Mine</u>	<u>Threat Zone</u>	<u>Countermeasure</u>
Command-detonated	Country-wide	Chain drag sweep behind a wide variety of craft.
Drifting contact	Discovered on Saigon LOC but applicable on all rivers	Visual detection and avoidance
Limpet (shaped charge attached by swimmer)	Major harbors focusing around Cam Ranh Bay but likely elsewhere	Extensive harbor patrols, sentries, and random use of concussion grenades
Magnetic/acoustic	Discovered on Dong Ha LOC but likely on all major LOCs	Security of river banks was paramount as mine assembly takes several hours. A variety of magnetic/acoustic sweeps were developed.

(C) There were five enemy attacks on commercial shipping on the Long Tau River, the major ship channel to the port of Saigon, during January. Three of these incidents occurred on 3 Jan. The Italian ship Rapido received rockets from both sides of the river, 25 miles southeast of Saigon. Later, 10 miles southeast of Saigon, two rockets landed between the Easo Bangkok and the Cape Town Maru. The Overseas Rose also received rockets from both banks of the river, 14 miles southeast of Saigon later in the day. There were no hits or casual-

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ties in any of these attacks. Return fire by PBRs during the Overseas Rose incident resulted in secondary explosions. On 11 Jan the SS Angkor and the SS Crustacia were subjected to a rocket and small arms attack 22 miles southeast of Saigon. One rocket hit the Angkor causing light damage but no casualties. The MSTS ship Lynfield Victory was also attacked on 12 Jan with no hits or casualties.

(C) The enemy continued to avoid large scale unit contact during the month and relied on attacks-by-fire, harassment, and terrorist/sapper activity which increased in frequency as the month progressed. This was believed to be due, in part at least, to the disruptive effect that naval units had caused to his resupply and infiltration timetable.

(C) On the evening of 17 Jan, PBRs and PRUs operating in the RSSZ, 4 miles southeast of Nha Be, killed the seven occupants of two sampans. The PRU reported one of the sampans had been towing an object and requested to be reinserted. The PBRs returned with a light helicopter fire team overhead and found the object in question which was 6 feet long and 18 inches in diameter. Noises from the river banks caused the units to retire from the scene temporarily; however, after obtaining additional PRUs and EOD personnel at Nha Be, they returned to the area. The EOD officer evaluated the object as a mine and received permission to take it back to Nha Be for disarming. The mine was brought ashore at 2330 and disarming began. At 2345 the mine exploded, killing three, seriously wounding six, and slightly wounding 12, all USN personnel.

(C) Another mining incident occurred on 22 Jan when the cover boat of TU 116, 5.2 was mined on the Vinh To Canal, 8 miles southwest of Chau Doc. The PBR suffered extensive hull and engineering damage and four crewmen were wounded. The bulk of the PBR was subsequently refloated and towed to YSBM-16 for repairs. The mine was evaluated as a command-detonated, moored type.

(C) In February, enemy-initiated incidents were relatively infrequent until the 23rd of the month, when attacks indicated the beginning of the new offensive. After the initial attacks, enemy activity remained high until the last day of the month when it declined to the level of the pre-offensive period.

(C) On the afternoon of 14 Feb six PBRs were requested by the senior sector advisor of Tra Cu to block a canal 3-5 miles east of Tra Cu. The request was initiated as a result of the inability of pinned-down RF/PF forces to pursue VC troops escaping from the fire fight. The PBRs had previously been requested to place 60mm mortar fire into the same area in support of the Vietnamese troops. The PBRs requested Seawolf cover for the incursion. With the arrival of two Seawolves, the PBRs entered the canal. The Seawolves placed strikes in the area and at targets along the canal. As the PBRs advanced up the canal, they took evading personnel under fire, killing 11 enemy, one of whom was a VC tax extortionist. Seawolf strikes accounted for an additional 16 of the enemy killed. There were no US casualties.

(C) There were seven enemy attacks on commercial shipping during the month. All of these occurred during the period 23-27 Feb. The SS Ocala Victory was attacked twice on 23 Feb, once 20 miles southeast of Saigon and the second time 11 miles southeast of the capital. The first attack was believed to be a command-detonated mine; the second attack was an RPG attack. Neither caused any damage. The same day, the SS Angkor came under RPG attack when about 11 miles southeast of Saigon with no damage incurred. On 24 Feb, 17 miles southeast of Saigon, the SS Lawrence Victory and the SS Elwell were passing in midstream on the Long Tau River

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when they came under attack from the east bank of the river. No hits were taken and there were no casualties. On 27 Feb, in a 4-hour period, three different ships on the Long Tau River came under hostile rocket attack. The SS Amaria was fired on 10 1/2 miles from Saigon, one rocket hit the ship causing minor damage. The Japanese ship Waco Maru received two rockets 13 1/2 miles from Saigon, taking one direct hit and incurring minor damage. The previously mentioned Lawrence Victory received seven rockets at a point 18 miles southeast of Saigon, taking two hits on the starboard side and suffering minor damage. There were no friendly casualties during any of these attacks.

(C) GAME WARDEN forces extended their areas of operations again in March, as patrol craft were committed to the waterborne patrol and joint operations in support of the Goto Mountain campaign, 16 miles north-northwest of Rach Gia on the Tri Ton Canal. The PBRs also assumed some patrol responsibilities in the Rach Gia Bay area to prevent enemy infiltrators from utilizing the relatively shallow waters close into the shore. The normal resource control and interdiction functions in the rivers and canals of the Delta and RSSZ and major participation in the various interdiction campaigns of Operation SEA LORDS continued. GAME WARDEN forces logged over 220,000 detections, the highest number to date. In addition, the versatile PBRs accomplished numerous transportation, security, gunfire support, and humanitarian missions. The much called upon and quick reaction UH-1Bs of HAL-3 contributed a total of 734 hours of combat and engaged in such missions as preplanned and reaction strikes, targets of opportunity, and support type strikes.

(C) The enemy continued to exhibit his ability to attack merchantmen on the Long Tau River, Saigon's vital lifeline to the sea. Nine separate attacks were recorded during March four of which resulted in some minor damage to the ships and two resulted in personnel being wounded.

(C) GAME WARDEN forces continued operations throughout the Mekong River Delta and the RSSZ during April. In addition to their major tasks of population and resources control along the major waterways, PBRs participated in random canal incursions, MEDCAPs, and psychological warfare operations. At the end of the month, 70 PBRs were assigned to support TF 194 (SEA LORDS) operations. The remaining 144 boats assigned to TF 116 supported normal GAME WARDEN operations and those portions of the interdiction campaign that came under the operational control of CTF 116. These expanded operations necessitated the relocation of some patrol craft from the major Delta waterways and brought about a realignment of forces which occurred on 20 Apr. The new structure was as follows: TG 116.1 - Lower Bassac Patrol Group; TG 116.3 - Central Delta Patrol Group; TG 116.5 - Upper Delta Patrol Group; and TG 116.9 - RSSZ Patrol Group. Examples of the employment of the assigned task groups are given below:

1. Task Group 116.1 conducted evaluation and indoctrination of RUDD (Remote Underwater Detection Device) in the Bassac River and conducted quick reaction operations, as contingencies arose, utilizing Kinh Phong RF. It also supported Kien Giang Province operations in the Rach Gia area and conducted intensive evaluation of STAB (Strike Assault Boats), using these recently delivered LSSCs (Light SEAL Support Craft) on patrols of restricted Bassac tributaries. In addition, TG 116.1 provided support for sector sweeps and carried out intensified patrols of the Can Tho crossing to provide better coverage of this critical area.

2. Task Group 116.3 units supported 9th Inf Div LRRP operations in interdicting suspected commo-liaison routes and in establishing anti-infiltration positions along the My Tho River, supported random PBR/PBU operations, and joined with the National Maritime Police

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for a combined blockade of Thoi Son Island from 0600-1700 on 28 Apr.

3. Task Group 116.5 units conducted combined USN/VNN operations in the upper Mekong River/Bassac River region, concentrating on infiltration interdiction from Base Area 704 (located in Cambodia in the region where the Mekong River crossed the border). It also conducted border patrol operations with two PBRs on station continuously in the vicinity of Tan Chau District of Chau Duc Province to prevent inadvertent border crossings by US personnel and craft. On 28 Apr, TG 116.5 commenced a 5-day incursion/patrol of Tri Ton Canal for the purpose of interdicting crossings, monitoring waterborne traffic, and training USN and VNN personnel in live firing PBR ambush tactics.

4. Task Group 116.9 units provided support for PRU, SEAL, and RF company operations and continued to conduct USN/VNN operations to ensure safe passage of free world shipping in the Long Tau Channel to Saigon.

(C) On 19 Apr, Light Attack Squadron FOUR (VAL-4) became operational. Utilizing Bronco aircraft (OV-10A) the squadron consisted of two detachments of five aircraft each, positioned at Vung Tau (TE 194.9.8.2) in support of GIANT SLINGSHOT operations and Binh Thuy (TG 116.8) supporting GAME WARDEN operations. These 10 aircraft were supplemented by a maintenance pool of four aircraft at Binh Thuy.

(U) Another noteworthy occurrence during April was the presentation of Navy Unit Commendations to the USS Garrett County (LST-786), USS Hunterdon County (LST-838), USS Jennings County (LST-846), and USS Harnett County (LST-821), for their meritorious service from 10 Nov 66 to 30 Jan 68 and from 1 Mar to 30 Sep 68, while serving as mobile support bases for GAME WARDEN forces.

(C) During this month, there was a dramatic decrease in the number of attacks on Allied merchant ships on the Long Tau Channel, with only four attacks taking place. In three of these attacks--SS Bucyrus Victory on 5 Apr, Vietnamese merchant ship Phu Quoc on 15 Apr, and SS President Pierce on 29 Apr--the enemy missed his target. The USNS Perseus was hit on 27 Apr, but only minor material damage resulted. In all instances, immediate response to the attacks was instrumental in suppressing additional fire.

(C) TF 116 units maintained constant pressure on the enemy throughout the month of May as regular operations along the vital waterways of the Mekong River Delta and the RSSZ continued, as did participation in the on-going Operation SEA LORDS interdiction campaign. At the end of the month there were 200 PBRs assigned to TF 116; 40 of these were assigned to support TF 194 (SEA LORDS) operations and the remainder were employed in normal GAME WARDEN functions and those portions of the interdiction campaigns which came under the operational control of CTF 116.

(C) The 20 UH-1Bs and 11 OV-10As assigned to TF 116 accumulated over 960 flight hours in combat missions during the month in addition to normal surveillance patrol flights.

(C) A particularly noteworthy demonstration of mobility and flexible response was conducted on 3 May when six PBRs of RIVDIV 574 and their crews were airlifted by Skycrane helicopters from Go Dau Ha on the Vam Co Dong River to a point on the upper Saigon River. The air distance travelled was 16 miles and the feat was completed in three hours. It was estimated

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that four days would have been required had the boats used the water route to the area. In this case, the PBRs were on station and seeking out the enemy on the same night.

(U) The Honorable John H. Chafee, Secretary of the Navy, presented the Presidential Unit Citation to the Delta River Group at Binh Thuy on 22 May. The award was in recognition of the meritorious and heroic service of the group for their actions at the time of the Tet offensive during the period 31 Jan through 9 Apr 68.

(C) Enemy attacks on merchantmen on the Long Tau Channel to Saigon increased significantly in May as nine such incidents were recorded. Five attacks occurred on 12 May. As in the past, however, most of the attacks were ineffective. Only two ships were hit and casualties were three wounded. Increased aerial surveillance was ordered in the wake of the 12 May attacks. Allied reaction was swift, but the enemy remained elusive and casualties inflicted by friendly firepower were unknown.

(C) During June there were a number of relocations of TF 116 assets as GAME WARDEN forces responded to enemy activity and expanded their area of operations. On 9 June, a river division was relocated to the upper Saigon River to patrol the area between Phu Cuong and Dau Tieng. Two days later the southern limit of this patrol area was extended by four miles.

(C) In order to counter the increasing enemy rocket attacks on shipping in the Long Tau Channel--15 such attacks during June--COMNAVFORV conceived a special RSSZ operation designed to prevent the attacks by destruction of known VC base areas, havens, LOCs, and sources of supply in the Nhon Trach District of Bien Hoa Province. The operation, in the DOAN 10 area of the RSSZ was coordinated by the CG, II FFORCEV and was conducted from 24-30 June. Participating units included two battalions of the Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force, reinforced by RF companies and National Police; one company of the 1st Australian Task Force, reinforced by a RF company; US Army helicopters; one company of the 199th Light Inf Bde in the capacity of a ready reaction force; VNN RAGs; RF companies and USN units under CTG 119.6 including SEALs, PBRs, ASPBs, and a Zippo (a Monitor with flame throwing equipment). Overall results of the operation were 51 enemy killed and two captured. The foregoing, in conjunction with another joint operation, CHOUNG DOUNG 26-69, which involved RF troops and USN assets against VC base camps in the RSSZ, and increased aerial surveillance and PBR patrols, were believed to have greatly hindered the enemy's freedom of movement and stopped the attacks on friendly shipping which ceased after 21 June.

(C) In addition to the special efforts expended in the RSSZ, GAME WARDEN forces maintained their pressure on the enemy throughout the Mekong Delta and continued their participation in the SEA LORDS interdiction campaigns. At the end of the month, there were 207 PBRs assigned to Task Force 116. SEA LORDS campaigns were supported by 106 of these boats and the remainder were employed in normal GAME WARDEN functions and those portions of the interdiction campaigns which came under the operational control of CTF 116. GAME WARDEN aircraft at the end of June consisted of 30 Seawolves (UH-1B)--of which six supported SEA LORDS. These aircraft accounted for over 850 hours in combat missions in addition to their normal surveillance patrols.

(C) GAME WARDEN forces continued their resources and population control activities throughout the Mekong Delta, RSSZ, and along the upper Saigon River during July. During Operation DOUBLE SHIFT (9-25 Jul) four river divisions were relocated to the Tay Ninh area

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to assist in the GIANT SLINGSHOT Campaign, necessitating transfer of 16 PCFs to CTF 116 from CTF 115. GAME WARDEN aircraft assets, which flew 957 combat hours, remained unchanged.

(C) Judicious employment of the various waterborne and airborne resources in night waterborne ambushes, transportation and support for VN RF/PF troops, support of SEAL and PRU operations, daily chain drag sweeps of the Long Tau shipping channel, traffic inspection, resource and population control, and MEDCAPS all served to thwart enemy attempts to harass Allied shipping on the Long Tau River. The effectiveness of these actions was indicated by only two attacks occurring during this month.

(C) SEAL activities were conducted throughout RVN and of particular consequence were the series of raids, part of Operation RANGER, which had as their main objective an enemy prisoner of war camp in the Than Phu sector of Kien Hoa Province. The camp was located on 12 Jul and as a result of actions by SEALs, PRUs, Seawolves, and Army aviation support, 25 VC were killed, 14 captured, 15 detained, 70 bunkers destroyed, 79 sampans destroyed, and a grenade factory partially destroyed. Five ARVN soldiers were liberated when the camp was overrun. Friendly losses were five wounded and four aircraft damaged.

(C) Two attacks on merchant shipping occurred on 6 Jul. In the first instance, a rocket fired at SS Steel Admiral detonated 15 feet from the ship causing only superficial damage. During the early hours of the same day, a second incident occurred when a sapper attack with a water mine severely damaged the SS Welfare causing it to sink in the Soi Rap River outside the main shipping channel. There were no personnel casualties from either incident.

(C) Throughout August, the GAME WARDEN forces continued pressure on the enemy in I CTZ, Mekong Delta, along the upper Saigon River, and in the RSSZ. Additionally the River Patrol Force provided major support to on-going and some recently activated SEA LORDS operations and to efforts on Mang Thit-Nicholai and Cho Gao Canals. During the month an average of 220 PBRs was assigned to the force.

(C) In operations on the Mang Thit-Nicholai and Cho Gao Canals, activity was light with only four fire fights recorded. Navy SEALs participated in a series of operations in response to intelligence on suspected VC POW camps in the area but achieved no success in locating them. There were no US casualties during the period in which 19 enemy were killed.

(C) There was one case of hostile fire on merchant shipping during August when the SS Mondia came under rocket fire that was off target and no hits were recorded. Two merchant ships were successfully mined during August but their watertight integrity in each case kept the ships afloat. On 20 Aug the Japanese ship Hikari was mined by a 200-250 pound mine, blowing an 8-foot hole through the bottom of her stern. One crewman was killed and two were wounded. Eight days later, the Dutch ship Kenia had a hole 15 X 20 feet ripped in her port side by an estimated 400-pound explosive charge. No casualties were reported.

(C) With a reduced number of craft caused by ACTOV turnovers and concomitant assumption of patrols and area responsibilities by the VNN, activity for USN units of the River Patrol Force decreased somewhat during September. A further reduction of craft resulted from SEA LORDS pre-empting boats for the interdiction effort. The resources and population control, the night patrols, and daily chain drag mine sweeping operations continued. The aircraft of TF

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116 in September were 29 Seawolves and 13 Broncos which participated in 598 and 247 missions respectively totalling 1,840 flight hours.

(C) During October 140 of the 180 PBRs in-country were assigned to SEA LORDS. In a continuing effort to maintain pressure on the enemy in the RSSZ and Duong Island complex, cordon and search operations were used against people providing support to the VC. Night patrols and small unit operations, Operation WOLF PACK, was activated 9 Oct to conduct extensive sweeps of the RSSZ. It was a combined operation of USN, RVNAF, and Thai forces. Meanwhile, another 49 PBRs were turned over to the VNN on 10 Oct.

(C) Successes in October led to Operation WOLF PACK II beginning 14 Nov and lasting four days. It was a combined operation using the same units as WOLF PACK plus units of the 1st Australian Task Force. The mission was to seek out and destroy elements of the 10th VC Sapper Group (DOAN 10). The operation was a lopsided success with 34 enemy killed and light Allied casualties. Captured material included: nine individual weapons, one crew served weapon, 25 rounds of 75mm howitzer ammunition, and 10 kg of TNT; while 19 sampans, 12 structures, 13 bunkers, 8,700 pounds of rice, and 1,300 pounds of salt were destroyed. GAME WARDEN activity continued to decline during December. As the VNN received turnover craft and assumed responsibilities for patrols, the USN patrols were reduced. Indicative of the decrease in USN operations was the sharp decline in the number of craft detected, inspected, and boarded, and the corresponding increase of the VNN.

Mobile Riverine Force

(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 original force authorized was a MRF consisting of a command staff, one support squadron, and two river assault squadrons (RIVASRON). Each RIVASRON was made up of 26 armored troop carriers (ATC), two command and communications boats (CCB), five monitors (heavily armored converted landing craft), 16 assault support patrol boats (ASPB), 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 support squadron contained the major ship units--barracks ships (APB), LSTs, a landing craft repair ship (ARL), large harbor tugs (YTB), and a net laying ship (ANL). Each of the two RIVASRONs had the capability to lift one reinforced infantry battalion from the Mobile Riverine Base to the area of combat operations.

(U) Growth of the MRF had continued over the years and, in June 1968, a third RIVASRON had been formed. In July 1968, the MRF had been reorganized into two Mobile Riverine Groups (MRG ALFA and MRG BRAVO); and in October, the fourth and last planned RIVASRON had been formed. The MRF then reached a full planned strength of four RIVASRONs, totalling 184 river assault craft, four barracks ships, three repair ships, two non-self-propelled barracks barges, two support ships, two resupply ships, and various support craft.

(C) As 1969 began, offensive operations consisted of frequent applications of small unit

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force over wide areas. This strategy was intended to have major effect toward the breakup of the infrastructure, enhancement of pacification, disruption of enemy plans, and the demoralization of enemy forces.

(C) The activities of MRG ALFA remained generally routine as troop lift operations were continued mainly in Kien Hoa Province in support of the 2d Bde, 9th Inf Div. Constant pressure was applied to enemy forces there in support of the accelerated pacification effort. Mobile Riverine Group BRAVO, operating mainly with the 3rd and 4th Bns, VNMC, advanced into Chuong Thien, Kien Giang, Phong Dinh, and northern Ba Xuyen Provinces. Detached units of the MRF conducted coordinated operations in the northern Delta as components of Operation SEA LORDS campaigns.

(C) In early January, MRG ALFA initiated Operation WATER TRAP, a major cordon and search operation of Thoi Son Island, in the My Tho River south of Dong Tam. Twenty-four river assault craft of RIVASDIVs 92 and 111, two infantry battalions, eight PBRs, and VNN units participated in this operation which was targeted against VC guerrilla and swimmer/sapper units located on the eastern end of the island. The island population was temporarily moved to three collection points, screened by the National Police, issued new identification cards, and exposed to civic action programs. Meanwhile, river craft assumed blocking stations and the island was swept by infantry units seeking VC. A total of 1,353 people were gathered at the three collection points, and 70 VC were apprehended as the operation ended on 7 January.

(C) Rotation of river assault division assignments took place during the month. On 12 Jan, boats of RIVASDIV 91 stood down preliminary to the planned turnover of 25 river assault craft to the VNN on 1 Feb. Vietnamese naval personnel aboard RIVASDIV 91 units had undergone on-the-job training since early December 1968. River Assault Squadron 13 joined MRG ALFA and RIVASDIV 132 was relieved by RIVASDIV 92 as the assault force of Operation GIANT SLINGSHOT. River Assault Division 132 returned to the MRB and supported the 4th Bn, 47th Inf. River Assault Division 131 assumed utility duties and supported the 3d Bn, 34th Artillery; RIVASDIV 112 assumed support duties for the 3d Bn, 60th Inf; and RIVASDIV 111 came off the line and assumed base defense duties.

(C) River Assault Squadron 15 had begun reconnaissance operations in enemy BA 483 in southern Kien Giang Province in late December 1968, and these operations continued into January. Eighteen river assault craft, working in coordination with the 2nd and 3d Bns, VNMC, conducted patrol and troop landing activity along the Can Cao Canal. Ground contact with enemy forces was sporadic throughout the campaign which lasted until 7 January. Despite intelligence reports of significant enemy forces in the area, the enemy employed hit-and-run tactics and avoided contact.

(C) River Assault Squadron 15, consisting of 17 ATCs, six monitors, one CCB, 2 ASPBs, and one LCM-6 (flame charging unit) with the 2nd VNMC Bn began find, fix, and destroy operations along the Song Cai Tu and Song Cai Lon rivers in enemy BA 480 on 11 Jan. The operation was planned in order to interdict enemy forces suspected to be in the region. BA 480 had been used as a staging and storage locale for the conduct of offensive operations in Chuong Thien, Kien Giang, and Phong Dinh Provinces. Numerous troop insertions along beaches took place although contact was with enemy ground forces of squad size or smaller. After troop landings, river assault craft established blocking and interdiction stations and checked a total of 189 sampans throughout the operation which lasted until 18 Jan. Enemy attempts to repulse the riverine

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forces took form as eight enemy-initiated firefights resulted. Of the total of 26 USN wounded, five occurred as an ATC was sunk by a water mine on the Song Cai Tu. Two sailors and one VN Marine were killed as the mined craft sank almost immediately.

(C) By far the highlight of February was the turnover of 25 river assault craft from the USN to the VNN on the first day of the month. Combining these craft with eight ASPBs received under the MASF program, the VNN formed two River Assault and Interdiction Divisions (RAID) which conducted successful operations in conjunction with the USN. Coincident with the turnover, RIVASDIV 91 was dissolved.

(C) Standard watermobile, airmobile, and infantry activity continued in February as MRG ALFA operated primarily in several districts of Kien Hoa Province. On two occasions, river assault craft came under particularly heavy and well-aimed fire during enemy initiated firefights originating from the river banks. On 24 Feb, units of RIVASDIV 131 received combined rocket and automatic weapons fire from both banks of the Song Ba Lai at a position three miles northeast of Ben Tre. Six craft were hit resulting in 11 USN wounded and light damage to the boats. Again, on 27 Feb, units of RIVASDIV 112 came under heavy rocket, recoilless rifle, and automatic weapons fire from both banks of the Song Ba Lai at a position 4 miles northeast of Ben Tre. In this attack there were 12 USN wounded and five of the river assault craft received hits with minor damage. In both instances fire was returned and suppressed.

(C) Enemy swimmers with SCUBA gear were sighted in close to the USS Vernon County (LST-1161) at MRB ALFA at Dong Tam on two successive days--25 and 26 Feb. In both cases, concussion grenades were dropped into the water, and subsequent hull inspections by EOD personnel had negative results.

(C) A VC attempt to emulate the MRF occasioned disastrous results for the enemy. Elements of the 3d Bn, 60th Inf in night positions along the Rach An Binh, 3 miles southeast of Mo Cay, detected three large motorized sampans moving northward along the waterway, reconnoitering the banks by fire. The soldiers quickly set up an ambush and took the sampans under fire. Twenty one of the enemy were killed and three sampans were captured with no friendly casualties.

(C) Water blockades along the Song Can Tho and Kinh Xa Mo in Phong Dinh Province, begun on 30 Jan by MRG BRAVO, continued into February. The 21st ARVN Inf Div had been conducting reconnaissance-in-force operations to prevent massing of VC forces in the area. The river assault craft, working in conjunction with elements of the 21st ARVN Div, established a water blockade along the Song Can Tho from the Cai Rang Bridge in Phong Dinh Province to a point 8 miles west of Can Tho, and along the Kinh Xa Mo from Thuan Mon to the junction of the Kinh Xa Mo and Song Can Tho. One company each of the 2d VNMC Bn and the 295th Phong Dinh RF Co were embarked as ready reaction forces. During the operation, which lasted until 3 Feb, over 7,000 sampans were inspected. Ground forces reported only light and sporadic contact throughout.

(C) Enemy swimmer sightings occurred within MRG BRAVO on 5, 7, and 9 Feb. In each case, results of swimmer search and hull investigations were negative.

(C) Operating with 160 river assault craft in March because of the transfer of 25 boats to the VNN in February, the Mobile Riverine Force again ranged the Delta in watermobile assault operations in coordination with the US Army and RVNAF. Task Group 117.1 continued opera-

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tions in Kien Hoa Province with the 2d Bde, 9th Inf Div. The resurgence of enemy-initiated fire fights against river assault craft--first noted in February--carried over into March and heavy contact was gained by ground units on several occasions. Task Group 117.2 and the VN Marines conducted a successful strike into enemy BA 480 in Chuong Thien Province, and intense combat activity resulted as the river assault craft and troops forced heavy contact with the enemy.

(C) A plan for the collocation of both task groups of the MRF took effect on 4 Mar as the units of TG 117.2 joined with TG 117.1 at the My Tho anchorage. The common mobile riverine base allowed for a more efficient utilization of assets and permitted reduction of the requirements for base defense from two divisions to one, thereby allowing the extra division to be employed in a line capacity. Tactical flexibility was also maintained should the need arise for two task groups.

(C) Naval units of the MRF participated in operations which were characteristically diversified as to type of mission and area of employment during April. Reconnaissance in force, search and destroy, patrol, ambush, troop lift, inspection, fire support, blocking force, escort, and PSYOP duties were carried out by river assault craft, often in conjunction with US Army or RVNAF, as they operated from the GIANT SLINGSHOT AO to the southernmost reaches of the Ca Mau Peninsula. The long term riverine assault operations in Kien Hoa Province continued as the combined Army/Navy units again inflicted severe losses on the enemy.

(C) The recurring danger of enemy swimmer/sapper activity against river craft was in evidence again as three mining incidents or attempts were recorded against MRF craft operating in Kien Hoa Province and enemy BA 480. On 22 Apr, while in transit across BA 480 enroute to the MRB, after completion of Operation SILVER MACE II, RIVASDIV 132 assault craft were engaged in an enemy-initiated firefight on the Cai Tu River, 8-1/2 miles southwest of Vi Thanh. During the action, a watermine exploded 60 feet off the starboard bow of CCB-132-1 and caused minor flooding which was brought under control. Potential disaster was again averted on 24 Apr when a VC command-detonated mine was discovered attached to the anti-swimmer net of APL-26 between the bow and pontoon. The homemade mine, weighing approximately 150-175 pounds, was discovered at 0730. Fish floats were seen attached to the barrier while it was being raised prior to getting underway; inspection by EOD personnel revealed the mine with the detonator lead severed. Speculation was that the detonator wire was cut during a minesweep patrol by a base defense boat. Lastly, ASPB-132-3 was sunk on 29 Apr on the Cai Tu River as an enemy mine of unknown type was detonated beneath its stern during the operation in enemy BA 480 in Chuong Thien Province.

(C) The main thrust of MRF activity in May continued as before in the Kien Hoa Province AO. Three excursions lasting up to a week were made by detachments of 6-8 river assault craft into the Can Giuoc District of Long An Province in support of the 5th Bn, 60th Inf. Attrition against the VC was again substantial as 947 enemy were killed by mobile riverine forces.

(C) The need for the entire spectrum of base and boat defensive measures was re-emphasized as several potential enemy swimmer attacks against MRF were pre-empted. In each case where enemy swimmers or indications of swimmers were sighted, concussion grenades were dropped and hull inspections were conducted by UDT/FOD personnel.

(C) Two events took place in June which significantly affected the composition, future em-

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ployment, and status of the MRF. First, the 2d Bde, 9th Inf Div was scheduled for phase out of MRF operations and redeployment during July and August as a KEYSTONE EAGLE element, and second, a large reduction in USN river assault craft (RAC) took place as a total of 64 RAC, valued at \$18.5 million, were turned over to the VNN under the ACTOV program.

(C) The turnover of the 64 RAC took place in three phases on 10, 15, and 21 June. Specific craft turned over are shown below:

<u>CRAFT</u>	<u>10 June</u>	<u>15 June</u>	<u>21 June</u>	<u>Total</u>
ATC	12	12	11	35
ASPB	8	8		16
MONITOR	2	3 (1 Zippo)	3 (1 Zippo)	8
CCB	2	1	1	4
Refueler	<u>1</u>	—	—	<u>1</u>
Total	25	24	15	64

VNN personnel had undergone on-the-job training while integrated with USN RAC crews during preceding months in preparation for the operation of these craft.

(C) River Assault Squadrons 9 and 11 were decommissioned on 10 and 27 June respectively.

(C) The MRF activities were concentrated in Kien Hoa Province during June and consisted primarily of assault landings, troop sweeps and ambushes, blocking forces, escorts, sniping and burn/defoliation missions, although PSYOP and medical civic action programs were conducted as well. Riverine assault operations of limited duration also took the MRF into Go Cong, Long An, and Vinh Binh Provinces. The total of 544 enemy killed by the MRF, although substantial, was the lowest figure since January 1969, indicating the reduced tempo of operations.

(C) Mobile Riverine Force operations decreased even more in July as the 2d Bde, 9th Inf Div stood down in preparation for KEYSTONE EAGLE redeployment. Enemy killed were down to 63. Primary emphasis on MRF activity was in defense of the base at Dong Tam in Dinh Tuong Province with secondary efforts in support of ARVN and RF/PF units. Escort, burn, defoliation, and MEDCAP missions were conducted as usual. Task Force 117 at the end of July consisted of 113 craft in five divisions, two of which were assigned to River Assault Squadron 13 and the remainder to RAS 15.

(C) The Army-Navy Mobile Riverine Force, which had operated in the Mekong Delta since February 1967, was disestablished on 25 Aug and COMRIVFLOT ONE/COMRIVSUPPRON SEVEN/CTF 117 were phased out. The two remaining divisions referred to in the preceding paragraph were designated Riverine Strike Group and placed under the command of CTG 194.7, a component of the SEA LORDS task organization. The deactivation of this Mobile Riverine Force was made possible by the turn over of the major portion of its assets to the RVN.

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Operation SEA LORDS

(S) In an atmosphere of counterinsurgency warfare an innovative force of Navy personnel in water craft had begun unconventional forays into areas of III and IV CTZ, when in Oct 1968, COMNAVFORV directed that Operation SEA LORDS (South East Asia Lake-Ocean-River-Delta Strategy) commence for conduct of joint operations involving all three Navy task forces. These were to be coordinated combat operations to destroy enemy forces and base logistics systems. Land and water LOCs were to be cleared and defended. Pacification efforts were to be concentrated in areas of high population density and economic importance. The operations, then, were essentially a dramatic extension of river incursions using the most suitable craft available dependent upon threat, mission, navigational requirements, etc. SEA LORDS had no assets of its own but under operational control of CTG 194.0 "borrowed" such craft as were needed from TF 115, TF 116, and, until August 1969, TF 117.

(S) The concept of Operation SEA LORDS was coordinated naval/ground operations employing the integrated effects of substantial portions of MARKET TIME, GAME WARDEN and the MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE. SEA LORDS was designed to provide naval support to the land campaign which was being conducted in III and IV CTZ. The broad objectives were to interdict the enemy's commo-liaison routes, destroy his base areas, open waterways to friendly commerce and pacify certain areas. These objectives were accomplished by a concentration of forces through riverine strike operations and raider operations, both along inland waterways and from the coast, followed by intensified interdiction efforts to keep the enemy out of pacified areas. 187

(S) Operation SEA LORDS had been particularly successful in wresting the initiative from the enemy in areas formerly considered under his complete domination. Enemy LOCs were dealt a severe blow, and many of his lucrative fields of extortion were virtually eliminated. His heretofore secure areas for rest, training, resupply, and recruiting were disrupted. The population in the Delta was heartened by the US and GVN presence and the people in some areas were returning to their normal pursuits.

(C) Throughout 1969, SEA LORDS campaigns continued the spectacular successes which had marked its first three months. This success prompted continuation of the 1968 campaigns of GIANT SLINGSHOT, SEARCH TURN and TRAN HUNG DAO I, and with continued success throughout the year these were expanded. Additional anti-infiltration barriers were established along the Cambodian border and other operations were initiated as the success of SEA LORDS denied the enemy use of major rivers and he began using secondary rivers and canals.

(C) The SEA LORDS order of battle at the end of 1969:

CTF 194/COMNAVFORV	Saigon	
CTG 194.0/DEPCOMNAVFORV	Binh Thuy	
CTG 194.1	Binh Thuy	DUFFLE BAG
CTG 194.2	Song On Doc	BREEZY COVE
CTG 194.3	Rach Gia	SEARCH TURN
CTG 194.4	Chau Doc	BORDER INTERDICTION
CTG 194.5	Cam Ranh	STABLE DOOR
CTG 194.6	Phu Cuong	READY DECK
CTG 194.7	Dong Tam	Administration, Maintenance, ACTOV, No operational campaign

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CTG 194.8
CTG 194.9

Cua Viet
Ben Luc

TF CLEARWATER
GIANT SLINGSHOT

(C) In an imaginative manner SEA LORDS employed such forces as, SEALS, UDT, EOD, ground troops, tri-service aircraft and naval waterborne assets in closely coordinated joint and combined operations. These varied from an insertion and later extraction of a small SEAL team on a reconnaissance patrol to large scale operations using all of the assets listed above. One such extensive operation was SILVER MACE II, a description of which follows.

(C) SILVER MACE II, a coordinated SEA LORDS strike operation of limited duration was conducted from 7 - 18 Apr as USN, USAF, USA, VNN, and VNMC forces combined to strike deep into the VC sanctuary in the Nam Can Forest area of the Ca Mau Peninsula at the southern tip of RVN. Under the tactical command of CTG 194.7, forces participating in this operation included 29 river assault craft of RIVASRON 13, three battalions of VNMC (about 2,400 troops), 25 VNN RAG boats, 13 PCFs of TG 194.5, and various gunfire and logistical support units such as USS Carronade (LFR-1), USS Crockett (PG-88), USS Mercer (APB-39), USS Westchester County (LST-1169), USS Hampshire County (LST-819), USS Satyr (ARL-23), USS Krishna (ARL-38), Navy Seawolf helicopters, SEAL and EOD teams, and a substantial force of VNN supply craft. A US Army surgical team and a MEDEVAC helicopter were aboard the Mercer to render medical assistance.

(C) Units rendezvoused in the Gulf of Thailand off the western mouth of the Cua Lon River and on the opposite side of the peninsula in the South China Sea east of the Bo De River in preparation for scheduled beach assault landings on 7 Apr. After airstrikes and beach preparatory fires by Navy units, riverine assault landings commenced as the 4th VNMC Bn went ashore in the vicinity of Nam Can on the Cua Lon River and the 6th VNMC Bn was landed near Tan An on the Bo De River. All landings were unopposed and without incident. The first incident of the campaign occurred at 1050 on the 7th, on the Dam Noi River, when a command-detonated mine exploded 30 feet astern of one of four PCFs escorting a VNN resupply force from Ca Mau to the operating area. No personnel or material casualties were sustained. The task element later received heavy automatic weapons fire farther downstream at 1130. One MSF soldier aboard a PCF was slightly wounded but no material damage was sustained as the boats continued toward the AO.

(C) The only significant enemy ground contact of the operation occurred on 8 Apr as the 4th VNMC Bn twice established contact: first with a VC squad in the morning, and again at 1355, when heavy contact was gained with an estimated platoon near the south beach of the Song Cua Lon, 3 miles east of Nam Can. A helicopter and fixed wing aircraft placed a strike consisting of bombs, napalm, and strafing fire on the enemy position with unknown results.

(C) Reconnaissance in force operations continued as over 60 assault landings were made throughout the area during the operation. Further enemy contact was very light as VNMC troops swept the area, discovering substantial weapons caches, destroying VC bunkers and structures, and detaining suspicious persons. PCFs conducted gunfire support, river raids, and troop lift activity throughout the operation. Wide areas along the Ong Quyen, Ban Thanh, Cai Chon, Duong Keo, Cai Nhap Canals and the Bo De, Dam Noi, and along the Cua Lon Rivers and navigable streams in the southeast Ca Mau area were searched by the USN/VNN and VNMC teams.

(C) Eight PCFs, with 6th VNMC Bn troops embarked, sailed the Duong Keo River during

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the late afternoon of 12 Apr for sweep operations in the day's objective area. At 1734, a large scale, enemy-initiated fire fight by an estimated two VC companies was unleashed as the PCFs, in column formation, reached a position 4 miles upstream from the river mouth. Detonation of two claymore mines from the northwest bank was immediately followed by intensive B-40 rocket, recoilless rifle, .30 and .50 caliber machine gun, rifle grenade, and small arms fire. PCF 43 was hit by recoilless rifle and B-40 rounds which disabled her steering gear and fatally wounded the officer in charge. The boat beached at high speed in the center of the ambush site as B-40 rockets continued to smash into her. Uninjured crewmen and UDT personnel aboard set up a hasty perimeter around the boat as PCFs 5 and 31 returned alongside to assist. Seawolves reacted in five minutes and placed heavy machine gun fire into the area, suppressing the enemy fire. All personnel were removed from the beached PCF and PCFs 5 and 31 cleared the area. Later, a fire in PCF 43 reached ammunition stores on board and created an explosion which destroyed the craft, one of few that have sustained irreparable damage in the war.

(C) During an overflight of the AO in a light observation helicopter on the morning of 16 Apr, Commander CTG 194.6 spotted enemy personnel setting up a probable ambush on the Cua Lon River. River assault craft traversing the area at the time were halted and VNMC artillery fire was placed on the site, causing two secondary explosions. One company of VNMC was landed on the site but no contact was gained; however, a potential ambush of the river assault craft had been averted.

(C) Operations concluded on 18 Apr as all units departed the area. This operation demonstrated again the capability of riverine forces to conduct conventional amphibious operations in conjunction with riverine operations in remote areas with minimal outside logistical support. Results of the operation showed 38 VC killed plus 47 sampans and 209 structures destroyed. More than 4,400 assorted rounds of ammunition and over 380 enemy weapons were captured. Seven hostile fire incidents were encountered in the campaign, including an enemy-initiated fire fight on the Cai Tu River in Chuong Thien Province on 22 Apr as the force was en route to the mobile base after completion of the SILVER MACE II operation. Friendly losses were five killed, 46 wounded, one PCF destroyed, and two damaged.

(C) In late July a realignment of the TRAN HUNG DAO and BARRIER REEF forces evolved into a general border interdiction campaign. SEA LORDS' MARKET TIME RAIDER patrols were expanded to support Operation SEA FLOAT/TRAN HUNG DAO III on the lower Ca Mau peninsula. Operation "DOUBLE SHIFT" gave support to GIANT SLINGSHOT in the Tay Ninh AO. In addition two new campaigns, on the Song Mang Thit-Nicolai and the Cho Gao Canals were initiated during the month. Although SEA LORDS assets were used for these operations, the purpose of the campaigns was to keep this major commerce route open rather than interdiction, and therefore these activities are covered in the section on River Patrol Force.

(C) Notwithstanding the expanded SEA LORDS role, there was a general downward trend in the overall enemy activity, first noted in April and continuing through July. There appeared to be two basic reasons for this decline: first, the enemy required time to perceive patrol operations and develop counter-tactics, to include establishing new infiltration points and river crossings; second, there had been a general reduction in the level of enemy military activity during the past several weeks.

(C) During August, Operation SEA LORDS, combining the efforts of the Coastal Surveillance, River Patrol, and Mobile Riverine Forces (the two remaining squadrons of the latter

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being assigned as SEA LORDS assets after 25 Aug) in conjunction with other US and GVN forces, placed additional emphasis upon interdicting enemy infiltration routes from Cambodia. At the same time, these forces played a vital role in pacification efforts along the canals and waterways of the III and IV CTZs. Further, these forces continually harassed the enemy in his base camp areas. Overall activity for the SEA LORDS campaigns in terms of enemy KIAs reached a new high of 585, up 60 percent from the previous month. Hostile fire also increased, up to 253 incidents. Friendly losses were disproportionately higher rising more than 100 percent over the July figures as 13 KIA and 90 WIA were recorded.

(C) In a still expanding SEA LORDS, a new campaign was begun on 25 Sep in the An Xuyen Province of IV CTZ. The campaign named BREEZY COVE was centered along the Ong Doc River and was identified by the task designator of CTG 194.2. October also marked the first anniversary of Operation SEA LORDS. During the year over 1,200 firefights occurred in which there were 3,070 enemy killed, 296 captured while friendly losses were 186 killed and 1,451 wounded. Caches totaling over 500 tons were captured or destroyed. The eminently successful interdiction operations reduced the amount of supplies and munitions brought into RVN and substantially hindered the movement of the enemy throughout III and IV CTZ. Waterways, once used with impunity by the enemy, were now closed to him, backing up his supplies. This, in turn, had lessened the frequency and intensity of enemy "high points." Equally important were the intangible results of SEA LORDS campaigns which afforded inhabitants along the canals and streams greater safety and freedom of movement in areas formerly controlled by the VC, thus enhancing economic development and improving the image of the GVN.

(C) At a time when the NVA was trying to force Navy units off the interdiction barriers, SEA LORDS forces during November increased the interdiction density on the barriers along the Cambodian border. In response to intelligence reports placing the forward element of the NVA 1st Div in northwestern Kien Tuong Province and additional reports indicating the transit of sizeable VC/NVA units into the Crows Nest area of Cambodia, reinforcement of the barriers was carried out in order to disrupt enemy infiltration south across the Plain of Reeds into Dinh Tuong Province, or should he choose to move west inside Cambodia, to oppose his eventual attempts to infiltrate into the Seven Mountains area or U Minh Forest. The friendly build-up of forces was augmented by sailing USS Benewah on 12 Nov to a new station in the vicinity of An Long and debarking CTG 194.7 at Dong Tam en route to provide support for the already greatly expanded BORDER INTERDICTION campaign. By relocating the RAC of RAD 152, previously assigned to the Vam Co River area, having GIANT SLINGSHOT units conduct operations along the upper Vam Co Tay, and reinforcing the WBGPs with units based at Tuyen Nhon the increase of forces was completed. During the month of November, combined SEA LORDS forces operating in the various campaigns accounted for 254 enemy KIA and 22 captured. Friendly losses were 16 KIA and 104 WIA.

(C) In December SEA LORDS activities were increased as enemy killed totaled 378, with 47 wounded through all campaigns. This large increase in enemy casualties was accompanied by a decrease in friendly casualties: 16 killed and 84 wounded. The increased action in the interdiction campaigns was due to enemy attempts to infiltrate men and supplies in preparation for an expected Winter-Spring offensive.

(C) Captured documents indicated that SEA LORDS efforts inflicted significant casualties on enemy units moving on the waterways in RVN. Real progress had been made in the barrier interdiction since the establishment of the SEA LORDS Operations. Much of the success could

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be attributed to timely coordination of operations among naval, ground, and air units of the many different forces in the operating areas. Many statistics were included in the various sections of the operations, however; there were many unquantifiable results which were just as important as the numbers. Intelligence gained from the interdiction operations was extremely valuable both in improving effectiveness of existing barriers and in planning for future operations. The initiation and continuance of a friendly presence in the AOs had a tremendous impact on the local populace and, at the same time, a negative impact on enemy forces. The delay and backlogging of enemy logistics made it impossible for his units to mount widespread coordinated attacks on a given timetable. The SEA LORDS Operations contributed to the pre-emption of enemy operations throughout the year.

GIANT SLINGSHOT Campaign

(S) In November 1968, plans had been laid to commence Operation GIANT SLINGSHOT as a part of SEA LORDS. Reacting to intelligence that disclosed infiltration south and east of the Parrot's Beak area of Cambodia into Dinh Tuong Province and the western approaches to Saigon, respectively, GIANT SLINGSHOT had been initiated in early December 1968 when patrols were established on the Vam Co Dong and Vam Co Tay Rivers west of Saigon. This operation required the reassignment of patrol forces from patrol areas in the Delta. In all cases, the patrol gaps left in the GAME WARDEN areas had been filled by MARKET TIME Swift boats whose employment offshore was not maximized due to poor sea conditions militating against their continuous employment. River assault craft from TG 117.2 were also employed in GIANT SLINGSHOT to lift quick reaction forces, and in the case of the ASPBs, to conduct patrols. On 12 Dec, units assigned to GIANT SLINGSHOT had been increased in response to orders from COMUSMACV to tighten the defenses around Saigon. At year's end, 54 PBRs and 29 river assault craft were committed to GIANT SLINGSHOT, and plans were being laid to close the remaining gap in waterway interdiction lines between the Mekong River and Moc Hoa on the Vam Co Tay River. 188

(C) Operation GIANT SLINGSHOT represented the longest and, during January, the most productive segment on the interdiction line. Extending from 5 miles southwest of Tay Ninh down the Vam Co Dong River to the Soi Rap River south of Saigon and up the Vam Co Tay River to Moc Hoa, 50 miles west of Saigon, the GIANT SLINGSHOT Campaign ran along and across enemy supply lines from the Parrot's Beak area of Cambodia into the western approaches to Saigon. Operations by river patrol and mobile riverine units with US Army and RVNAF ground forces were carried out almost daily on both rivers. Significant quantities of enemy supplies were discovered in 44 arms and rice caches near the two rivers. These results were not achieved without cost as patrol units encountered hostile fire 68 times. Losses included 23 craft damaged and two PBRs sunk.

(C) Enemy activity remained at a high level along the two major rivers in the GIANT SLINGSHOT AO during February. Patrol craft participated in nearly 60 ground operations by inserting small reconnaissance patrols, company-size landing forces, and by providing blocking patrols. Twice during the month major operations, KEEL HAUL I and II, utilized convoys of patrol craft and heavy assault craft. These convoys were formed to carry out river ambushes and ground sweeps on the Vam Co Dong between Hiep Hoa and Co Dau Ha. Ground and naval forces accounted for 123 enemy killed, eight captured, six Hoi Chanh, nine detained, 10 sam-

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pans captured and 48 junks/sampans destroyed. Enemy opposition came in the form of more than 70 hostile fire incidents and seven booby trap detonations. In addition, enemy attacks-by-fire and light ground probes on bases came with the post-Tet high point, beginning on 23 Feb.

(C) Contact with the enemy continued to be frequent during March. The more than 150 units committed to this operation worked closely with US/RVNAF ground forces along their patrol routes. A measure of the high degree of coordination existent between US and RVN forces was revealed by the variety of reconnaissance operations supported by Navy river craft; troop insertions were made of ARVN, RF/PF, CIDG, PRU, National Police Field Force, and Armed Propaganda Team personnel along with 1st Cav Div (Ambl) and 25th Inf Div soldiers at various times throughout the month. River craft participated in nearly 100 operations with these troops, ranging from the insertion of small night reconnaissance patrols to area sweeps by battalion-size forces.

(C) During the night of 15 March, USS Harnett County, one of the support LSTs, received a 107mm rocket which impacted on the port side main deck bulkhead. The round penetrated the bulkhead and exploded in the wardroom. Three Navymen and one US civilian were wounded by the explosion. Extensive damage to the wardroom was caused by the blast and flooding that resulted from a ruptured water pipe. The attack occurred approximately 2 miles west of Ben Luc. Subsequent questioning of the local populace revealed that the rocket had been launched from a paddy dike on the west side of the river about 30 yards inland.

(C) River patrol craft, river assault craft, minesweeping craft, and supporting units from TF 116 and TF 117 continued interdiction operations along the Vam Co Tay and Vam Co Dong Rivers during April. Until 7 Apr, Swift boats carried out patrols on the Vam Co River when this segment of GIANT SLINGSHOT was taken over by PBRs in order to allow increased Swift boat patrols on the lower Ham Luong and Co Chien Rivers in the normal GAME WARDEN area of operations. Also participating in this interdiction campaign were VNN River Assault and Interdiction Division (RAID) 70 and 71. As in prior months, numerous operations were carried out in support of friendly ground sweeps and patrols of the river banks.

(C) Of particular significance during this month was the loss of two helicopters. On the morning of 28 Apr, Seawolves 37 and 38 engaged a target of opportunity, consisting of numerous sampans, about 7 miles northeast of Moc Hoa. They placed strikes on the target and received no return fire. Then, while turning away from the target to clear the Cambodian border, the wing aircraft, Seawolf 37, received destructive fire and radioed he was going down. The aircraft crashed and exploded on contact. The lead aircraft spotted one crewman of the downed aircraft attempting to clear the wreckage and turned to provide cover and extraction. At this point, the lead aircraft received fire that damaged the oil system and caused a forced landing about 35 meters from the crash site. The crewmen evacuated the aircraft and set up a defensive perimeter. One raced to the burning helicopter to aid the man attempting to free himself. An unarmed Army UH-1 arrived on the scene and made a run in to pick up the downed personnel. Heavy automatic weapons fire wounded both door gunners of the UH-1. As the personnel were loaded aboard, one man from Seawolf 38 was killed by enemy fire after he was seated in the rescue aircraft. The US casualties were four killed and four wounded, including the door gunner. Seawolf 38 was observed to be hit by a mortar firing from an unknown location and burst into flames from a direct hit. Both aircraft had gone down just inside the Cambodian border.

(C) Task Group 194.9, composed of nearly 150 assorted craft, maintained a fast tempo

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of operations in the GIANT SLINGSHOT AO during May. Enemy opposition was most frequent along the Vam Co Dong River although the total of 75 hostile fire incidents for both rivers represented a substantial decrease from that encountered in prior months. The number of contacts initiated by patrol craft also decreased slightly to 69 successful ambushes or evading craft taken under fire. Both friendly and enemy losses decreased, reflecting the decline in enemy activity.

(C) A combined cordon and search operation, known as CAESAR II, was conducted on 17-24 May in an area bounded on the west by the Vam Co Dong River and extending eastward to QL-4, connecting Ben Luc and Tan An. Afloat units of RIVASRON 13 and VNN RAID 70 provided blocking forces and waterborne ambushes as an adjunct to ground operations conducted by the 199th Lt Inf Bde and ARVN forces. Enemy contact was light and the results of the operation were 14 VC killed, four sampans destroyed, and one sailor wounded.

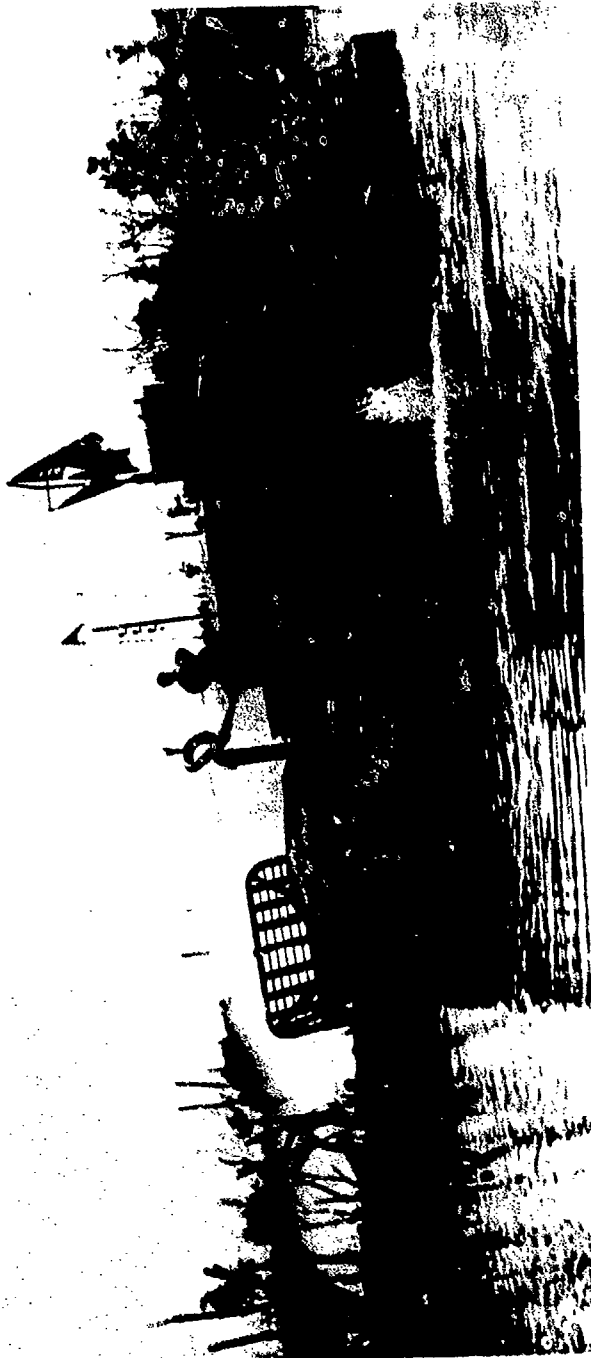
(C) On the night of 22 May, a new combined Army-Navy operation, known as BUSH-WHACK I, was begun on the Vam Co Dong River. Utilizing newly developed tactics, the concept of operations called for Army elements to embark in PBRs and to provide flank security on the shore adjacent to waterborne ambushes set by the PBRs. The general area of operations extended from Ben Luc to the confluence of the Vam Co River tributaries. Three VC were captured in this operation, along with a sampan loaded with small arms ammunition, rocket boosters, and mortars.

(C) The total number of hostile fire incidents increased from 75 in May to 126 in June, resulting in a corresponding increase in casualties on both sides. Despite the increased tempo of activity during the month, a sharp decline in enemy-initiated action was noted during the last week in June.

(C) The enemy's elaborate use of booby traps was well illustrated on 9 June as two ATCs of TU 194.9.3 supported CIDG personnel in bunker destruction operations. Sixty CIDG troops swept along a 2 mile stretch of the Vam Co Dong River, 4-6 miles northeast of Tra Cu, while RAC conducted EAGLE FLOAT operations. Boobytraps consisting of hand grenades or B-40 rounds with trip wires were discovered along paths from VC bunkers to the river; other booby traps were found which were designed to detonate as boats beached along the shore. Minesweeping operations by RAC uncovered 100 feet of detonating wire. A total of 12 bunkers and 15 booby traps were destroyed in the operation, and a number of enemy documents were captured. A special bunker destruction operation, utilizing the high pressure water spray of the "Douche" boat, was conducted during the early morning hours of 10 Jun along an 11-mile stretch of the Vam Co Dong River. The spray destroyed 16 bunkers and five spiderholes, and detonated two booby traps. Again on the 12th, during a day-long operation, the "Douche" boat destroyed 12 bunkers, three booby traps, and four spiderholes. (Note: The "Douche" boat was another unique weapon developed for riverine warfare, and consisted of a water cannon mounted on an ATC. The water cannon projected a high pressure stream of water for a distance of up to 300 meters and could kill a man at a distance of 30 meters. It was developed for destruction of bunkers and spiderhole type fortifications along the river banks. Secondary explosions had occurred in many of the bunkers subjected to water cannon fire, and it had proved very effective in detonating booby traps.)

(C) On the morning of 19 Jun, a PBR patrol escorting craft carrying RF/PF troops for the relief of an overrun LRRP position, came under automatic weapons and RPG fire as the

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"DOUCHE" Boat destroying boobytraps and bunkers

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troops were being inserted 4 miles southwest of Tay Ninh. As the boats attempted to suppress the enemy fire, an additional patrol and Seawolf aircraft were scrambled to the area. The Seawolves struck the area but enemy fire continued. The first patrol withdrew to rearm. Returning with a third patrol and a Monitor, Allied forces continued to hit the enemy and then withdrew to permit use of artillery fire. When this fire was lifted, the ground troops made a sweep of the area and found 50 of the enemy killed. There were no friendly casualties.

(C) July saw increased activity on the upper Vam Co Dong River and, in response to observed large scale enemy movements and intelligence reports of impending enemy action in this area, additional naval forces were directed to the upper Vam Co Dong and Saigon Rivers in Operation DOUBLE SHIFT. The addition of two river divisions and two LHFTs to Tay Ninh, two river divisions to Go Dau Ha, and two river divisions to Phu Cuong on the Saigon River; CTF 117's provision of a River Assault Division in the Tay Ninh/Go Dau Ha area and the VNN RAID 71 deploying to Go Dau Ha virtually doubled the forces in the GIANT SLINGSHOT AO. Upon completion of the above moves and a concurrent movement of required logistics support, the following message was transmitted from CTG 194.9 to CTG 194.0: "DOUBLE SHIFT completed in double time with doubled units ready to give double trouble". 189

(C) These increased operations, consisting of heavy roving patrols and waterborne ambushes, continued for 15 days until enemy activity slackened to a degree which permitted the double units to revert to their previous assignments. DOUBLE SHIFT entailed 87 firefights, of which 70 were friendly-initiated and there were an additional 49 unilateral firings. Enemy forces killed were 34, with 64 probably killed. There were 33 enemy craft destroyed and one captured. Friendly losses were 11 wounded and eight watercraft damaged.

(C) The significance of the DOUBLE SHIFT operation was that it almost certainly forced the enemy to delay any planned assaults from the west and southwest of Tay Ninh. Tay Ninh had been prominently mentioned as an ideal site for the capital of the newly formed Communist Provisional Revolutionary Government and its assault and capture, in accordance with the "three pronged attack" as defined in COSVN Resolution 9, would have given the enemy a substantial morale and propaganda boost.

(C) During August an average of 72 PBRs, 29 RACs, three MSMs, and 49 VNN river craft were committed to GIANT SLINGSHOT. The number of hostile fire incidents (122 in August - 118 in July) and the number of two boat patrols conducted (1,752 in August - 1,765 in July) were virtually equal for both months; however, casualties were substantially greater for both sides during the latter month. Enemy killed increased from 147 to 216 and friendly forces went from four killed and 23 wounded to 10 and 69 respectively.

(C) The most significant incident of the month occurred on 14 Aug as one VNN and two USN ATCs were on routine patrol of the Vam Co Dong River 6 miles southwest of Tay Ninh City with a platoon of ARVN airborne troops when they were called upon to respond to an enemy attack on an ARVN base camp. The three units made 10 firing runs and concurrently provided illumination. Return fire was quickly suppressed as the US advisor to the camp coordinated TACAIR, gunships, and artillery strikes. Of the estimated three enemy battalions attacking, 73 VC were confirmed killed by body count while there were no US casualties and ARVN losses were 14 killed and 43 wounded. Two VC were captured along with 42 enemy weapons. The greatest proportion of GIANT SLINGSHOT activity and the largest number of caches located in this period were on the Vam Co Dong River near Tay Ninh City, lending credence to intelligence reports of

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the enemy's desire to attack in the Tay Ninh City area.

(C) In excess of 120 USN and VNN watercraft were committed to GIANT SLINGSHOT during September. These forces formed a barrier around the "Parrots Beak" area of Cambodia which extended to within 35 miles of Saigon and continued to be the most active and effective operation of SEA LORDS. Even so, hostile fire incidents which had averaged 130 per month for the preceding six months dropped to 56 in September. Casualties on both sides were down correspondingly as there were 146 enemy killed with no friendly KIA and only 33 WIA. Increased river bank activity and river crossing attempts during daylight hours indicated that the effectiveness of interdiction efforts forced the enemy to try to move during times of peak sampan traffic. A significant arms cache discovered 9 Sep only 14 miles southwest of Saigon consisted of: 6 boxes of TNT, 1,000 pounds of C-4, two hundred twenty-four 60mm mortar rounds, 150 B-40 rockets, 31 mines, 16 hand grenades, 10 AK-47s and 31 boxes of AK-47 ammunition. In a "turnabout is fair play" routine, TF 194.9 personnel observed two floats with VC propaganda leaflets attached. After examination, the floats were picked up, the leaflets removed, and turned over to NILO Tuyen Nhon. The favor was returned the following night as US/VNN leaflets were attached on the same floats and returned to the original position and released. On 3 Oct the 2d Bn VNMC was assigned to GIANT SLINGSHOT. RPG-53 VNN commenced operations along the Vam Co Dong and Vam Co Tay Rivers later in the month. Operation DEEP CHANNEL was conducted which was an evaluation of demolition methods for clearing, extending, and connecting the Lorange and Gay Canals near Tuyen Nhon where the canals come within 2 miles of each other. Ultimately this would provide a patrol route for river craft to seal off the Bo Bo Canal, a traditionally active infiltration route. Action picked back up slightly in October to 67 hostile fire incidents resulting in 279 enemy killed; US/VNN casualties were 13 wounded.

(C) On 2 Nov, while conducting routine waterborne traffic checks in the vicinity of Hiep Hoa, crewmen from two PBRs were approached by a local Vietnamese who volunteered to take the PBRs to an enemy weapons position. Upon arrival at the designated location, two claymore mines were found, aimed in a position to fire upon passing river craft. This unsolicited act of passing information directly to the friendly forces was a further indication of the success of PSYOP efforts. The continuing value of the interdiction efforts in general, and GIANT SLINGSHOT in particular, was shown by the discovery of three significant caches during the month. On 19 Nov, as a result of National Police interrogation of a 17-year old youth, a sweep was made during which 150 booby traps, 130 CHICOM grenades, 25 pounds of plastique, and three boxes of "toe-poppers," which were boobytrapped with a 122mm rocket, were found. The following day, 4 miles from Tuyon Nhon, a cache was located containing 36 carbines, 9,000 meters of electrical wire, five mines, and a box of fuzes. A third cache was found, in as many days, on 21 Nov. It contained over 5,000 rounds of small arms and fifteen 82mm mortar rounds.

(C) The GIANT SLINGSHOT Campaign completed its first year on 6 Dec. During the year, "brown water navy" units interdicted enemy infiltration and supply lines along the strategically located "Y" shaped rivers, the Vam Co Tay and Vam Co Dong, causing appreciable attrition as evidenced by the following statistics:

GIANT SLINGSHOT Statistics 6 Dec 68 - 6 Dec 69

	<u>By USN</u>	<u>By VNN</u>	<u>By Other</u>
Enemy KIA	921	118	870
Enemy Captured	23	7	202

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Enemy Ammunition Caches Uncovered	242	By all	
Weight in Tons	137	Total	
Sampans Destroyed	292		
Friendly KIA	28 USN	13 VNN	107
Friendly WIA	454	103	603

Due to the resultant slowdown in the movement of enemy personnel and supplies caused by naval forces operating on the GIANT SLINGSHOT rivers, the threat of enemy attacks on major population centers such as Tay Ninh City and Saigon was greatly reduced. In addition, these same river forces were instrumental in preventing the enemy from mounting a sustained offensive by helping to deny him the necessary manpower and material to do so.

SEARCH TURN Campaign

(C) Riverine operations in the Rach Gia Canal/Three Sisters mountains area of Kien Giang Province had evolved in late 1968 as the first SEA LORDS Campaign though the effort was not designated SEARCH TURN until February 1969. Using TG 117.2 and VNMC assets, these operations had pacified the area to the extent that 24-hour PBR/ASPB patrols had been initiated in the Rach Gia/Long Xuyen, and Cai San canals between the Gulf of Thailand and the An Giang Province boundary. The immediate outgrowth of the operations had been increased GVN presence along the canals, outpost development, hamlet resettlement, and renewed aggressiveness of RF/PF troops.

(C) Also emanating from operations in the Rach Gia AO were the first dramatic successes which encouraged expansion of SEA LORDS into a major role during 1969.

(C) Operations during January met only intermittent enemy opposition, including the mining of an ASPB. Patrols by PBR/ASPB were taken under hostile fire six times, resulting in light personnel casualties, two craft damaged, and one patrol boat sunk. Operations along the Can Gao Canal by Mobile Riverine Group (MRG) BRAVO early in the month met heavy enemy fire on four occasions. A week of mobile riverine operations southeast of Rach Gia along the Cai Lon River also encountered heavy enemy opposition, with eight fire fights and one ATC sunk by a mine on the 14th.

(C) In February, operations extended out from the Rach Gia - Long Xuyen Canal onto Ba The, Tri Ton, Chung Ban, Rach Soi, and the Ha Tien - Rach Gia Canals. Patrols were largely unopposed with no USN casualties in only five hostile fire incidents which were directed primarily at supported ground units.

(C) March also saw continued routine interdiction patrols and support of pacification efforts in the area northeast of Rach Gia city. By month's end, PBRs had begun patrols of the coastal area on the Rach Gia Bay where waters were too shallow for Swift boats of TF 115. The PBRs

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also joined with VNN river craft in support of ARVN operations along the Cai Be River south-east of Rach Gia City. Most of the enemy action here came on operations away from the regular patrol areas on the Gia-Long Xuyen and Soi Canals.

(C) Routine operations by patrol craft made no contact with enemy forces during April. Patrols by PBRs continued in the shallow coastal areas of Rach Gia Bay. Numerous special patrols on escort missions were carried out on adjoining and interconnecting waterways, such as the Bo The, Tri Ton, Gia-Ha Tien, and Can Gao Canals, and the Cai Be and Cai Lon Rivers. During these operations, hostile fire was encountered three times, resulting in three PBR crewmen wounded and minor damage to two craft.

(C) During May, patrol craft of TU 116.1.3 made minimal contact with enemy forces while on routine patrols in the Gulf of Thailand, Rach Gia Bay, and various other adjoining waterways. However, an increase in enemy activity over the previous month became apparent and was centered along a 5-mile stretch of the Cai Lon River 17 miles south-southeast of Rach Gia. Four fire fights occurred in this area, resulting in seven VC killed, four detained, and two sampans destroyed. Friendly casualties were one USN killed, one USN wounded, and minor damage to one PBR. The one KIA was the pilot of a Bronco (OV-10) aircraft, killed when a small arms round penetrated the canopy of the aircraft. The copilot took over, regained control of the aircraft at an estimated altitude of 35 feet over the river, and landed safely at Binh Thuy Air Base.

(C) Ten PBRs operated in the Gulf of Thailand, the Cai Lon River, the Gia-Long Xuyen, Ba The, and Tri Ton Canals, and various adjoining waterways in the SEARCH TURN AO during June. Units were positioned to interdict southward infiltration of enemy supplies and personnel from the Seven Mountains area of Chau Doc Province. The entire area was unusually quiet and the report of "routine patrol, negative contact" became commonplace during the month.

(C) During July SEARCH TURN came under operational control of JTF 116, in August it reverted to interdiction activities, and the task designation was changed to CTG 194.3, once again becoming a SEA LORDS asset. Following this period of relative inactivity, the area around the city of Rach Gia and the group of mountains to the north known as the Three Sisters became the site of increased enemy infiltration. To counter this buildup and to interdict the enemy's movements into the Delta, CTG 194.3, consisting of two PBR divisions, a SEA WOLF team, and an LST, was formed and tasked to dedicate 50 percent of its assets to offshore day and night patrols. Since intelligence indicated seaward infiltration between the Three Sisters and the mouth of Song Cai Lon, the remainder of this force was directed to respond to province and ARVN requests for support in the SEARCH TURN AO. To reduce travel time to the northern part of the AO a new ATSB was established 16 miles north of Rach Gia.

(C) In September TG 194.3 with an average strength of 30 PBRs and four Seawolf aircraft continued routine sorties, waterborne guardposts and interdiction patrols in addition to support of the 21st ARVN Div. On 20 Sep an aft gunner on a PBR was hit in the chest by an enemy grenade, which then fell to the deck. The quick thinking gunner retrieved the grenade, hurled it back into the nipa bush from which it emanated, where it exploded. The enemy suffered 76 KIA during the month against two KIA and four WIA USN casualties. A minesweeper drone (MSD) was successfully employed in October on the Cai Lon and Cai Be Rivers, in reaction to local intelligence, which demonstrated that the MSD could be effectively controlled from a PBR.

(C) SEARCH TURN units continued interdiction operations during November in Kien Giang

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Province and the Gulf of Siam. The forces also supported sector and 21st ARVN Div operations. Enemy-initiated fire fights remained fairly constant during the month; however, enemy killed increased sharply as a result of increased border crossing attempts. One of the rare losses of a PBR occurred in the AO on 20 Nov. After five PBRs inserted 100 troops of the 168th RF Co and a reconnaissance platoon 18 miles east of Rach Gia, the boats relocated into a blocking position. The troops immediately contacted a VC force of undetermined size, believed to be a part of the U Minh Bn. While providing fire support, the five PBRs came under heavy fire from B-40 and automatic weapons in tree line-concealed bunkers. Two of nine B-40s fired hit PBR 694 in the radio compartment, setting the fuel tanks on fire. The PBR was abandoned in flames, and secondary explosions occurred as mortar ammunition aboard the boat detonated. Black Ponys (USN OV-10s) and TACAIR were placed in the contact area. Upon completion of air strikes the remaining PBRs returned and extracted the troops. Enemy casualties were eight killed against two friendly wounded and one PBR destroyed beyond recovery.

(C) Interdiction efforts in the AO in December placed special emphasis on the Ba The, Tri Ton, and So Mot Canals in response to intelligence reports which warned of a possible all out enemy effort in the SEARCH TURN AO. To combat this possibility 391 WBGP were mounted, more than double the 177 of the previous month. Despite the intelligence reports and perhaps because of the operational preparations, the predicted enemy activity failed to develop and hostile fire incidents dropped. The year ended routinely in the AO with only three wounded in the last month.

BARRIER REEF Campaign

(C) The scope of Operation SEA LORDS was expanded again in early January 1969 as a new interdiction campaign, BARRIER REEF, was initiated to complete an interdiction line patrolled by US Navy craft extending from Ha Tien on the Gulf of Thailand along the Cambodian border to Tay Ninh in III CTZ northwest of Saigon. The BARRIER REEF area of operations (AO) extended from the GIANT SLINGSHOT AO on the Vam Co Tay River along the Lagrange Canal from Tuyen Nhon to Ap Bac and westward along the Ong Lon Canal to the upper Mekong River at An Long. On BARRIER REEF EAST, a division of 10 PBRs operated from Tuyen Nhon covering the Lagrange and Ong Lon Canals as far west as Phuoc Xuyen. These units, under the operational control of CTG 194.9, also made occasional probes onto Muoi Hai Canal, south of Ap Bac. A second PBR division operated from the YRBM-20 in the upper Mekong River at An Long to patrol BARRIER REEF WEST, the remainder of the Ong Lon and the Dong Tien Canals. This portion of the campaign was commanded by CTG 116.5 until 14 Jan when CTU 194.6.0 was activated.

(C) Patrol operations commencing on 2 Jan contributed to an important enemy defeat when the presence of patrol units supporting a PF ambush team, 18 miles east of An Long, twice turned back a heavy weapons company attempting to cross the canal on its way from Cambodia to the area west of Sa Dec. Reconnaissance aircraft visually spotted the company on the morning of the 14th and most of the enemy were killed by gunship strikes or were captured by the PF unit. The enemy reaction to these patrols, including the mining of two PBRs, indicated how effectively this interdiction campaign hampered enemy logistics. Chain-drag minesweeping operations by ASPBs were commenced late in January to meet the enemy mine threat.

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(C) The enemy mine threat that had developed in January on the Lagrange and Ong Lon Canals appeared to be neutralized by the chain-drag minesweeping carried out during February. While ground forces were not as available as in the GIANT SLINGSHOT Campaign, a total of 14 sweeps, reconnaissance probes, or ambushes were carried out jointly with RF/PF or CIDG units. Another aspect of BARRIER REEF operations was MEDCAP and extensive PSYOP carried out in the vicinity of the major enemy north to south crossing point on the Ong Lon Canal.

(C) In March, interdiction patrol and night ambush operations continued to frustrate enemy efforts to use the waterways between the Vam Co Tay River and the upper Mekong River. Three contacts were generated from more than 30 listening posts or night ambush positions set at likely enemy crossing points. Enemy opposition was confined to BARRIER REEF EAST where hostile fire was encountered five times. Two PBRs were damaged and four crewmen were wounded and two others killed in one of these incidents.

(C) Routine interdiction patrols and floating night ambushes continued as standard operating procedure along the Lagrange, Ong Lon, and Dong Tien Canals during April. Enemy contact was, in general, very light throughout the month with only four enemy-initiated fire fights. During the period 6-11 Apr, intensified patrols and night ambushes were conducted in support of 44th Special Tactical Zone operations. Troop insertions were conducted on five occasions; however, all resulted in negative contact.

(C) Contact with the enemy remained light again in May in the BARRIER REEF AO, with 13 fire fights occurring. Operating procedures included routine interdiction patrols, floating night ambushes, insertion and support of ground troops, and harassment and interdiction fire. Enemy casualties were 23 killed, seven captured, and 11 wounded. During 16-21 May, there was a reduced US presence on BARRIER REEF EAST due to a PBR division transfer for augmentation of operations in the RSSZ; however, a daily presence was maintained in this area by the remaining units of the task element.

(C) During June, revisions were made to the normal BARRIER REEF patrol line which extended from Tuyen Nhon on the Vam Co Tay River westward along the Lagrange, Ong Lon, and Dong Tien Canals to An Long on the upper Mekong River. This patrol line was established as a connecting anti-infiltration link between the GIANT SLINGSHOT and TRAN HUNG DAO AOs. On 6 Jun, patrols on BARRIER REEF EAST (Tuyen Nhon to a position west of Ap Bac) were reduced and the western portion of BARRIER REEF WEST was extended to include portions of the upper Mekong and Bassac Rivers and the Tan Chau/Chau Doc Canal from An Long to Chau Doc. The reduced presence on BARRIER REEF EAST was not considered to affect adversely the interdiction effort since the GIANT SLINGSHOT patrols on the north on the Vam Co Tay River effectively covered the area, and BARRIER REEF EAST was, in effect, a multiple barrier. A friendly presence was maintained in the area by the use of ASPBs based at Tuyen Nhon on a random basis. On 17 Jun, the eastern boundary of BARRIER REEF WEST was extended to Ap Bac, and on 20 Jun, the Cai Cai River was also added to BARRIER REEF, when six PBRs were airlifted to the river and took up their patrols.

(C) Enemy activity throughout the BARRIER REEF AO remained low during the month with only 10 hostile fire incident reports. The marked decrease in enemy infiltration across the canal since 1 Apr was evaluated by the task group commander to be the result of improved friendly operations. Prior to 1 Apr, RVNAF ground troops rarely swept beyond 2 km from the canal--they now operated 8-10 kms inland. This new aggressiveness, in conjunction with

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the employment of Monitors equipped with 105mm howitzers and Seawolves, seriously hindered enemy activity. Operating procedures remained the same as in past months with the use of interdiction patrols, floating night ambushes, insertion and support of ground troops, and harassment and interdiction fire.

(C) During July only two hostile fire incidents were recorded and there were no US casualties. An operation on the Cai Cai Canal, which began 20 Jun and terminated 21 Jul, achieved its objectives as there was a noted increase in local habitation and no known enemy infiltration during the period. PSYOP activity, with the exception of broadcasts, received a favorable reception from inhabitants of the canal banks.

(C) On 27 Jul just south of the Cambodian border, a friendly outpost observed a VNN ATC, flying its national ensign, proceeding at rapid speed up the Upper Mekong River. As the boat neared the border, warning shots were fired from the outpost without response from the ATC which continued north. At the border, the boat struck its colors and raised a white flag, whereupon it was intercepted by a Cambodian gunboat. Investigation indicated that the VNN ATC 1244 with seven personnel on board was en route to its base at Chung Thien. The location of the boat and intentions and status of its crew were unknown at year's end.

(C) By the end of July, with the phaseout of TF 117 imminent, and the evolution of TRAN HUNG DAO and BARRIER REEF becoming a general interdiction campaign, the two campaigns merged and are covered from 1 Aug under the new heading: BORDER INTERDICTION Campaign.

TRAN HUNG DAO Campaign

(C) In mid-February, the patrol campaigns on the Giang Thanh and the Vinh Te Canals were designated Operation TRAN HUNG DAO I. The AO extended from Chau Doc along the Cambodian border to Ha Tien on the Gulf of Thailand and completed the SEA LORDS interdiction barrier along the Cambodian border. VNN forces participating in this operation consisted of units from two coastal groups; (eight command, 23 Kien Giang, and 6 Yabuta junks), 80 reaction troops, four LCVPs, and two FOM (river craft left by the French).

(C) Although the PCF/ATC operations met with hostile fire only once during January, the mining of a PBR on 22 Jan near the entrance of the Vinh Te Canal wounded four crewmen and sank the patrol craft. The seriousness of the mine threat led to the suspension of patrols until the 28th when chain drap sweep operations by VNN LCVPs were commenced. Defoliation operations were carried out along the Ha Tien-Rach Gia and Giang Thanh Canals by units of Mobile Riverine Group BRAVO early in the month. Disagreement of local VN officials, however, delayed defoliation along the Vinh Te Canal, increasing the threat of enemy-initiated action along the canal banks.

(C) During February, daily patrols by PBRs on the Vinh Te Canal, and by PCFs supported by an ATC on the Giang Thanh Canal continued. Low water in the western portions of the Vinh Te Canal hampered operations somewhat and district and provincial forces remained reluctant to join in operations on this section of the infiltration barrier. With the commencement of SEAL operations along the Giang Thanh Canal, however, the employment of ground forces began to show improvement. On 20 Feb, additional VNN coastal and river assault units began their

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operations from Chau Doc on the Vinh Te Canal and northwestward along the Chau Doc River.

(C) The Vinh Te Canal portion of this campaign, patrolled by one PBR division, VNN junks, LCVPs, and Monitors, encountered six enemy-initiated firefights during March. Low water limited operations at times, and the VNN units tended to remain near friendly outposts. The use of coastal group reaction troops, however, continued to show improvement. Several days of special blocking patrols on the Tri Ton Canal and general support of ground forces probing enemy positions on Nui Coto were also carried out by the Chau Doc based units. Both USN and VNN Swift boats continued daily patrols and support of SEAL operations on the Rach Giang Thanh. A new development in this segment of the interdiction barrier was the planting of mines along enemy infiltration routes and in likely enemy ambush positions on the river banks.

(C) The routine patrols of USN and VNN Swift boats, USN PBRs, and VNN junks and FOMs on the Giang Thanh and Vinh Te Canals were carried out with almost no interruptions from the enemy during April. Special SEAL, LDNN, and reaction team operations had similar results. Five enemy-initiated fire fights and two fire fights initiated by friendly forces occurred during the month.

(C) During May the river patrols by the USN and VNN PCFs and VNN junks on the Giang Thanh Canal encountered the same quiet and lack of enemy activity as during previous months; however, the situation along the Vinh Te Canal was entirely different as numerous sightings of VC attempting to cross the canal, fire fights, and mining incidents took place throughout the month. Intelligence reports indicated that infiltrating VC elements quite possibly were trying to reinforce enemy forces in the Seven Mountains area of Chau Doc Province. The canal between the area just north of Tinh Bien and Chau Doc, reported the highest concentration of enemy activity. From 19 May through the end of the month, there were four mines destroyed in a small area just southwest of Chau Doc. There were 22 fire fights which produced 35 VC killed and one VC captured at the loss of one US and two VN sailors killed and a total of 25 wounded.

(C) In order to combat the enemy's increased infiltration effort, PBR and VNN junk force patrols and ambushes, SEAL activities, and DUFFEL BAG sensor missions were intensified. Difficulties occurred near the end of the month as extremely low water levels prevented even the shallow draft PBRs from patrolling portions of the canal. On 26 May, nine US PBRs went aground at Tinh Bien and VNN junks, enroute to an ambush site 6 miles southwest of Chau Doc, ran aground several times. One VNN FOM equipped with minesweeping gear commenced sweep operations on 28 May. Running aground approximately 9 miles southwest of Chau Doc, the FOM reversed course and conducted a second run on the canal. Due to this low water level, approximately 56 km of the western half of the canal was without waterborne patrols; therefore, the number of aerial surveillance missions and night ambushes and patrols by ground forces was increased accordingly.

(C) In the entire TRAN HUNG DAO AO, USN and VNN forces reported 29 hostile fire incidents in June. The patrols and ambushes from Ha Tien northeast on the Rach Giang Thanh were uneventful as personnel and junk searches yielded negative results. On 20 and 21 June, two VNN PCFs and two USN PCFs were detached from TRAN HUNG DAO operations, leaving two USN and two VNN PCFs and 10 VNN junks to conduct river patrols from the base at Ha Tien.

(C) The intensified USN and VNN effort along the Vinh Te Canal evidently created a formidable deterrent to the enemy's infiltration attempt into Chau Doc Province as there was a no-

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ticable decrease in enemy activity as the month progressed. The low water problem in the canal that restricted the waterborne area in May gradually became less critical as the rains of the southwest monsoon filled the canal. Early in the month, the water was deep enough to support PBR operations west to the Cay Mit Locks. The deeper draft FOMs, junks, Zippos, and ASPBs were restricted to the eastern part of the canal. By 23 June, PBRs were able to transit the entire length of the canal and the junks could support operations to Tinh Bien.

(C) In consonance with the rest of the SEA LORDS operations, the TRAN HUNG DAO AO was relatively quiet during July. Most of the limited enemy activity was centered along the Vinh Te Canal. Intelligence reports continued to indicate the enemy was enlarging his efforts to infiltrate men, arms, and supplies across the Giang Thanh Canal into the Tram Forest and across the Vinh Te Canal into the Seven Mountains region. There was some buildup of units in this area, most significant of which was deployment of one Mine Sweep River (MSR) and two Mine Sweep Drones (MSD). Commencing 3 Jul, the minesweeping craft began daily sweeps on the Vinh Te Canal as far as deep water would permit, and also on the Upper Bassac River. This action was in anticipation of further enemy mining efforts and paid dividends as there were four mining incidents during the month, none of which caused damage or casualties.

(C) On the morning of 6 Jul, a Khmer Kampuchea Krom (KKK) officer hailed a PBR boat on routine patrol, 16 miles southwest of Chau Doc in Kien Giang Province, and indicated that approximately 300 KKK troops (described as an independent fighting force) desired to become Hoi Chanh. The PBR personnel, in coordination with ARVN forces, effected safe passage for 231 persons who brought with them 108 individual and 14 crew-served weapons.

(C) The restructure of Navy assets and evolution of the TRAN HUNG DAO and BARRIER REEF forces into a general border interdiction campaign closed out further reference to the former campaigns.

NOTE: Coverage of these forces after 1 Aug is included under BORDER INTERDICTION Campaign.

BREEZY COVE

(C) At the end of September PCFs operating in the lower Ca Mau Peninsula were replaced by PBRs and RAC operating on the Ong Doc River in a new campaign called BREEZY COVE. The operation was designed to prevent enemy infiltration, movement, and resupply along the inland waterways in the Ong Doc River area and to enhance the GVN pacification plans. In addition to the watercraft assigned an ATSB was positioned near the town of Song Ong Doc. On its Ammi pontoons were 105mm howitzers to provide artillery support for the new operation. On 4 Oct the enemy reacted to the new campaign with the first ambush of these forces. The enemy caught one of two patrolling PBRs in an ambush of 75mm recoilless rifle fire and heavy automatic weapons fire, forcing the crew to transfer to the second boat as the first PBR was knocked out. The friendly forces which took 12 casualties (one KIA) reacted with Seawolves and Broncos killing 14 of the enemy. The boat was later recovered and towed out of the canal for repairs.

(C) In November the forces in the BREEZY COVE AO were nearly doubled and combined operations were conducted as VNN and VNMC and PF troops worked with the USN boats. Once again PBRs on patrol were ambushed by the enemy using recoilless rifle fire. One boat was

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sunk and the other knocked out of commission. There were only light friendly casualties and both boats were later recovered and found to be repairable. An unfortunate incident occurred at 0530 on 22 Nov when two ASPBs in a WBGp observed an apparently camouflaged sampan entering the Ong Doc River from the Cui Canal. A small light on the sampan appeared to be extinguished as the craft turned onto the river. The sampan was taken under fire and illuminated as it beached on the north bank. The sampan and all occupants were recovered and found to be two children, a teenage girl and a 50-year old woman. They were immediately taken to old Song Ong Doc where they were treated by USN and VN corpsmen and evacuated to Can Tho. The woman suffered a traumatic amputation of the left hand and the other three suffered fragment wounds less serious in nature.

(C) On 4 Dec, six units departed the AO for operations in the BORDER INTERDICTION Campaign. Even so, activity increased significantly in the BREEZY COVE area. The enemy killed rose from 16 in November to 40 in December. Twice during the month, daytime patrols were attacked by VC units. The first, on 14 Dec, occurred 7 miles from the mouth of the Ong Doc River as PBRs received 6-8 rockets and automatic weapons fire. The size and coordination of the attack as well as daylight attack was a significant departure from the harassing attacks usually conducted against the SEA LORDS forces.

BORDER INTERDICTION Campaign

(C) Redeployment of two 9th Inf Div brigades, activation of new VNN RAIDs, and restructuring of TF 117 to become SEA LORDS assets prompted a review of Navy forces in III and IV CTZ. The purpose of the review was to enhance the interdiction of infiltration from Cambodia at a time when the enemy was possibly attempting to fortify his logistics base and to rebuild his personnel strength throughout the Delta. As a result, the BORDER INTERDICTION Campaign, an inclusive name now describing the TRAN HUNG DAO and BARRIER REEF WEST Campaigns, was increased in magnitude in August until it approached the GIANT SLINGSHOT Campaign in terms of forces committed and tempo of operations.

(C) Despite this buildup of friendly forces, the statistics for the month indicated that the enemy chose to avoid contact. Enemy killed decreased from 55 in July to 32 in August and the US casualties dropped from two KIA to one killed with eight wounded. On 31 Aug, two PBRs on the Vinh Te Canal sighted two persons, one of whom was carrying two AK-47s, waving from the bank and moving toward them. The pair indicated that they wanted to rally as Hoi Chanh and that there were nine more just across the Cambodian border who wished to do the same. A signal was given and all 11 men became Hoi Chanh and were turned over to NILO at Chau Doc.

(C) The BORDER INTERDICTION Campaign used an average of 120 USN/VNN craft during September. At the beginning of the month 300 RF/PF troops were inserted nightly in conjunction with 22 waterborne guardposts (WBGp). By the end of the month the WBGps increased to 60. In an effort to tighten the interdiction barrier and counter the compounding of interdiction problems due to seasonal flooding and inundation of large areas, a new tactic was used. Sampans were used by friendly forces to extend the WBGp coverage in a 3-sampan post 300 yards from a PBR. Conventional WBGp tactics were further altered late in the month by using single boat posts assigned to sectors in which they changed stations randomly. These craft were

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augmented by troops, sampans, air boats, and Kenner Ski barges to achieve the maximum probability of detection. By the end of October, 141 USN/VNN watercraft and six helicopters were assigned to the forces of CTG 194.4, the build up of which resulted in the casualty rate of the enemy more than tripling. Further evidence of the effectiveness of the new tactics and increased forces were several instances of enemy forces fighting in their attempts to cross the Vinh Te Canal while directing mortar attacks against the boats in a seldom used enemy tactic. The VNN continued to take on more of the responsibility of the war effort in the BORDER INTERDICTION AO, as elsewhere, when on 23 Oct, RPG 54 began operations along the Giang Thanh Canal after which Riv Div 551 was relocated to the Ong Doc Canal.

(C) The BORDER INTERDICTION Campaign forces were augmented in November to tighten the interdiction efforts along the Vinh Te Canal and averaged 87 WBGP's per day during the month. The expansion of operations and the new tactics of using one boat guard posts and Kenner Ski barge operations significantly affected enemy activity. Faced with heavy losses from abortive crossing attempts and a backlog of supplies in Cambodia at a time when the supplies were needed for the Winter-Spring Campaign, the enemy increased his aggressiveness against the water craft along the Vinh Te Canal. During November, the heaviest enemy-initiated fire fights yet recorded in the area took place lending credence to the supposition that the enemy preferred attempts to breach the border interdiction forces rather than effect the extensive commo-liaison reorganization necessary to make an end run of those forces. After two successful ambushes against river boats on 4-5 Nov, a sweep of the general area of the ambush site recovered 44 contact mines, which showed a clear intent to fight the interdiction efforts.

(C) BORDER INTERDICTION forces continued to increase both in number and effectiveness during December. The number of river craft assigned to the campaign increased from 180 on 1 Dec to 239 at the end of the year. During the same time period, these units increased the number of confirmed enemy killed from 57 in November to 120 in December. As a further measure of effectiveness, the significant increase in the number of enemy killed was accompanied by fewer friendly losses. There were three killed, 26 wounded compared to November's nine killed, 55 wounded. Various changes were made during the month in the campaign, many as a result of the seasonally decreasing water level in the Vinh Te Canal. Early in the month, the RAC's operating in the eastern sector of the canal were periodically grounding during transits to WBGP positions. As a result a 5-mile stretch was declared a "troops only" area. With the RAC's restricted from the area, all but six were relocated to the Cong Hoa and Ong Lon Canals. The remaining RAC's maintained a heavy lift capability for Chau Doc Province and would continue until low water forced further change. In addition, by 10 Dec, the water had reached such a low level, it forced curtailment of the extensive single boat WBGP's that had proved so successful the preceding month. It was determined that the resultant high banks made single boat operations too vulnerable. A third change brought an MSF battalion to the BORDER INTERDICTION AO to operate along the central portion of the canal where shallow water precluded normal water craft operations.

Operation READY DECK

(C) Soon after initial excursions on the upper Saigon River in July by Riv Div 554, regular combat operations began which ran 35 miles north of Saigon. TF 116 PBR's worked in conjunction with the 1st Inf Div. On 11 Aug Riv Div 571 was moved to Phu Cuong, Binh Duong Pro-

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vince doubling the waterborne craft in the AO. Working from that base the two divisions of PBRs conducted river patrols and troop lifts, and established waterborne guard posts. Operations spread out on the tributaries and canals upstream from Phu Cuong further cutting the enemy's LOC and interdicting his efforts to move men and materials against the CMD. Other combat forces, including the 5th ARVN Div, RF/PF forces and the 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div further expanded the operation. In mid-October these combined operations executed by PBRs of the RSSZ assets were officially designated READY DECK. Five days later in a move designed to make the operations more responsive to COMNAVFORV due to impending turnover, READY DECK became a SEA LORDS Campaign and the USN commander of CTU 116.9.1 assumed the designation CTG 194.6. READY DECK was the first SEA LORDS campaign to be commanded by a VNN officer.

(C) During November as the first full month of operations was completed, forces in the READY DECK AO used the WBCP extensively. In five similar operations during the month, 38 enemy were killed as well as miscellaneous weapons captured. Typical of the operations was one conducted on 1-2 Nov as two PBRs were positioned in a WBCP 13 miles northwest of Phu Cuong on the Saigon River. The two PBRs had been silently watching the river and its banks when a crewman spotted approximately 13-15 VC preparing to enter the river for a north to south crossing. Poized for action, the two boats held their fire until 10 swimmers were in the water stretching nearly from one side to the other. The PBRs then broke the guard post and took both banks and the swimmers under fire. Artillery from the 1st Inf Div was called into the area. With illumination provided by the artillery, the boat crews were able to search the area and found 10 VC KIA and eight packs were recovered. When all firing had ceased, the boats reset the WBCP.

(C) The READY DECK Campaign which began 15 Oct under USN command became a combined USN/VNN operation on 11 Dec. The Commander of the Third Riverine Area, a VNN officer, assumed the command of CTG 194.6 as the former US commander of CTG 194.6 assumed the position of deputy. There were some changes of assets with some US units being released from READY DECK and VNN units coming into the operation. Units assigned to CTG 194.6 at the end of the year were:

<u>Designation</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Number of Units Assigned</u>
TG 194.6	Whaler	1
TU 194.6.1 (RIVDIV 591)	PBR	9
RPG 51	PBR	8
RAG 24	RAC	18

On 11 Dec, READY DECK forces participated in one of the longest continuous riverine engagements of the war. As 12 boats of RAG-24 and two PBRs were in a defensive position providing support and security for VNN salvage operations attempting recovery of a PBR sunk a few days previously, at approximately 2019 hours, 10 VC were observed approaching the boat positions. It was determined they were armed with automatic and semiautomatic weapons, and satchel charges. When the VC were approximately 100 yards away the RAC and PBRs opened fire with organic weapons. Immediately, a helicopter was scrambled from Lam Son on priority

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basis. A Black Pony on routine patrol was diverted to the contact area and began air strikes at 2046. The strikes continued until 2130 when the Black Pony had expended its ordnance and departed the area. The helicopters then commenced their strikes and continued until approximately 2215. Artillery illumination was requested and response came from the 25th Inf Div within 10 minutes. At 2223 two VC were illuminated by flares 200 meters north and 60 meters inland from the main RAG element located on the east bank. A minute later at least 30 VC on the west bank opened fire with B-40 rockets and automatic weapons fire. At 2258 hours, two more Black Pony aircraft were on station and began air strikes on the enemy positions. They departed at 2320 and NIGHTHAWK aircraft from Cu Chi arrived at 2355 and commenced air strikes. The sounds of men splashing into the river were heard at 0100, and 10 minutes later, at least two VC were closing the boats from the west side with one person on the bank nearby. The area continued to be illuminated and at 0126, the VC again opened fire from the west bank as four more swimmers slipped into the water. Three of these were killed and the other one was probably killed. From 0235 until 0320, artillery was spotted into the area by the USN advisor. At that time a B-40 rocket was fired by six VC on the west bank and the next few rounds of artillery landed directly on their position as they scrambled up a hill for cover. The northern RAG element was attacked by 18-20 VC who rushed their position at 0335. At that point many of the friendly units were running low on ammunition as they were firing into VC on both banks. A Black Pony aircraft was scrambled once again but due to engine malfunction did not arrive until 0415. In the meantime, the riverine craft and PBRs were still receiving concentrated enemy fire from both banks. At approximately 0430, both Black Pony and Spooky aircraft were providing continuous air strikes and illumination. One VNN PBR and two RPC were en route with additional ammunition and a VN flare ship was on station over Phu Cuong. The PBR arrived in the area at 0520 and the two RPC at 0610. Because of dense fog and smoke, the fixed wing aircraft departed the area at 0545. Illumination from the flare ship lasted until nearly day break when the possibility of further attack was considered unlikely. With the fighting over, an assessment of the lengthy engagement was made placing enemy killed at 37 and, almost miraculously, no friendly casualties.

ACTOV

(S) By fall of 1968 Vietnamization (though the term was not used until President Nixon took office) had become a matter of national political urgency. In October 1968 COMUSMACV had directed that a program be expedited for an accelerated turnover of assets to the RVNAF (ACTOV). The swing toward this line of thinking had been clearly expressed by SECDEF in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee when he said, "our orientation has been more on operations than on assisting the South Vietnamese to acquire the means to defend themselves." COMNAVFORV had immediately begun the task of formulating extensive plans for turnover that were to encompass the entire VNN and require the greatest efforts of personnel under his command. COMNAVFORV, in pressing for acceptance of the ACTOV program, stated:

Accelerated Turnover Plan was predicated, as directed, on providing VNN with Force structure and capability to meet current threat with little or no assistance. If it is decided that U.S. is to remain in RVN, we should return to original

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of these ships should depend on visible improvement in Vietnamese Navy performance and adequate capabilities to man and support them. 191

(S) The basic principles of ACTOV which have not changed were turnover of:

1. The "Brown Water Navy" first to be completed Jun 70.
2. Most blue water assets by Jun 71.
3. Logistic support assets by Jun 72.

(S) To meet these goals, rapid personnel expansion, a comprehensive training program, phase-in of large numbers of Vietnamese into USN boat crews, and improvement of the VNN were required. Moreover, these programs had to be implemented under combat conditions. The execution of ACTOV required the VNN to nearly double in size in 18 months, no mean task for a force plagued by major problems. The VNN suffered from poor morale which in turn led to high desertion and AWOL rates. The available naval assets were for the most part used inefficiently and poor maintenance led to rapid deterioration of the meager equipment owned by the VNN. Labor skills were not available to supply the Naval Shipyard with more than a 60 percent manning level. Wages were low in comparison with other areas of the economy, training facilities were overburdened, administrative problems abounded, and there was virtually no dependent care or housing.

(C) USN assets could not simply be turned over to the VNN without solving some of the problems which had built up over the years. Assistance in terms of advice, money, and supply would come from Pacific Area commands and Washington but, for the basic work, COMNAVFORV would call once again on the officers and men of the "Brown Water Navy". Immediate requirements were to increase:

1. Recruit training fourfold.
2. VNN advanced training school capacity three times.
3. Offshore training four times.
4. English language training nearly 30 times.

(S) In October 1968, VNN strength had stood at 17,500 and was required to nearly double in the next 18 months. Force ceilings requested and approved were:

FY 68	16,985
FY 70	31,645
FY 72	33,122

With 29,500 men 31 Dec the VNN expansion surpassed its goal. Modernization of the VNN also was on schedule at the end of 1969; however, problems still existed in the form of officer shortages, lack of a responsive promotion system, an inadequate standard of living, and lack of skilled shipyard workers. The officer shortage would become more acute as ACTOV continued. The problem was attacked by urging JCS to promote the maximum number of officers during the year. Further, an intensified English language training program for officers was being developed and approval was sought to send prospective VNN officers to the USN Officer Candidate School, Newport, R.I. It was expected that corrective measures would alleviate the officer problem by the end of 1970.

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(C) Since VNN pay raises were automatically accompanied by an increase in the cost of living, programs were instituted to allow the VNN to care for their personnel with payment in kind. A self-help dependent shelter program, with a goal of 2,500 units to be completed by Jun 70, was begun in the fall of 69 with over 75 completed by the end of the year.

(C) Also a comprehensive training program was begun to permit the VNN to assume control of USN craft, bases, and operations. Construction was required at training facilities such as Cam Ranh Bay Naval Training Center which was built in 45 days. Student capacity was 1,200 and most instructors were Vietnamese. There was a COMNAVFORV Small Boat Orientation School in Saigon which provided its students with basic English training and taught the terminology and operation of the PBR, PCF, and river assault craft. The curriculum included engineering, first aid and gunnery. Graduates of the school were phased into US craft for 12 weeks of intensive on-the-job training prior to taking their place on the boat crew. When the entire crew was composed of Vietnamese, the craft was ready for turnover.

(C) To support the turnover of the "Brown Water Navy", ACTOVLOG, the logistics adjunct of the ACTOV program, was originated. The goal of ACTOVLOG was to develop and turnover to the VNN a strong infrastructure to support their expanded force. By the target date of July 1972 the VNN would be able to support their operating forces with only advisory assistance. When ACTOVLOG was conceived it was noted immediately that simply making the VNN logistics system larger to cope with a larger force was not the answer. The whole VNN logistics system would require revamping within guidelines based on the following premises:

1. The VNN required sufficient logistics structure for the expanded force.
2. Existing elements would form the base.
3. Turnover of USN structure would follow the same pattern established in turnover of craft, but would be carefully controlled so US would have the capacity to support the remaining US assets.
4. Logistics turnover was to parallel watercraft turnover.
5. USN would retain a logistics capability in-country until the VNN was self sufficient.
6. ACTOVLOG was to be a combined USN/VNN enterprise. Base construction, modernization, and turnover were a part of ACTOVLOG, with the first base at My Tho, Dinh Tuong Province turned over in Dec 69. At year's end, 10 bases were under construction and 19 in the process of modernization. 192

VNN INVENTORY PRIOR TO FY 69

AKL	- 1	Transportation Barge	- 7
Command Junk	-62	Tug Boats	
Fire Boat (LCM-3)	- 1	(4 LCM-3 - 2 LCVP)	- 6
Fire Boat (LCVP)	- 1	Utility Boat (100')	- 4
LCM-3	-10	Verdette (3000 class)	- 8

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LCM-6	-68	(3600 class)	- 15
LCM-6 (Fuel Barge)	- 5	(3700 class)	- 1
LCM-8	- 6	Water Barge	- 2
LCM Commandament	-14	Yabuta Junk	-153
LCMM	- 6	YOG	- 3
LCM-3 Monitor	-22	YR	- 1
LCM-6 Monitor	-10	YRBM	- 2
LCU	- 7	YTL	- 6
LCVP	-58	Repair Facilities	- 8
LSIL	- 5	Naval Bases	- 8
LSM	- 5	Shipyards	- 1
LSM-H	- 2	Supply Center	- 1
LSSL	- 6		
LST	- 3		
MLMS	-10		
Kieng Giang Junk	-31		
MSC	- 3		
Oil Barge	- 8		
PC	- 1		
PCE	- 6		
PGM	-20		
PPC	-27		
STCAN	-43		

Assets Turned Over 1 Jul 68 - 31 Dec 69

ASPB	-44	PBR	- 90
ATC	-48	PCF	- 33
CCB	- 5	REF	- 2
CSC (An Thoi)	- 2	RSI (Poulo Obi)	- 3
(Qui Nhon)		(Cu Lao Re)	
LCM-8	- 6	(Con Son)	
LCU	- 1	(My Tho)	- 1
LST	- 1	USN Bases	
MON	-10	WPB	- 9
		YTL	- 4

Assets to be turned Over in 1970

ASPB	-30	PCE	- 2
ATC	-39	PCF	-36
CCB	- 4	PICKET	-18
CSC (Danang)	- 3	REF	- 1
(Nha Trang)		USN Bases (Ben Luc)	- 3
(Vung Tau)		(Sa Dec)	
DER	- 1	(Cua Viet)	
HDU (Qui Nhon)	- 2	VNN Bases (An Thoi)	-11
(Nha Trang)		(Rach Sol)	
LCM-8	- 6	(Cat Lai)	
LCPL	-12	(Cuu Long)	
LCU	- 2	(Can Tho)	

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LST	- 4	(Long Phu)	
MON	- 4	(Saigon SC)	
New Bases	(Ha Tien) - 8	(Thuan An)	
	(Kien An)	(Hue)	
	(Tan Chau)	(Hoi An)	
	(Cu Mau)	(Long Xuyen)	
	(Chau Doc)	WPG	-17
	(Phu Cuong)	YOG	- 2
	(Long Binh)	YRBM	- 1
	(Nam Can)	YTM	- 3
PBR	-160	ZIPPO	- 2

Assets to be Turned Over in 1971

ARL	-1	VNN Bases	(Vinh Long)	-1
DER	-1	WHEC		-2
LCM-8	-6	YFR		-1
LCU	-2	YR		-1
USN Bases	(Qui Nhon) -4	YRBM		-1
	(Binh Thuy)			
	(Cat Lo)			
	(Chu Lai)			

Assets to be Turned Over 1 Jan - 30 Jun 1972

CSB	-1	USN Bases	(Dong Tam)	-4
HAU	(Danang) -1		(Nha Be)	
LCM-8	-2		(Cam Ranh Bay)	
LCU	-1		(Danang)	
		YDB		-1
		YLLC		-2

SCATTOR

(U) In the interest of furthering the Vietnamese Navy's efforts to increase its overall strength and realize its full potential, the USCG embarked on SCATTOR (Small Craft Assets, Training, and Turnover of Resources), a program to train VNN personnel in the operation and maintenance of in-country small craft assets (WPBs and associated support units). The ultimate goal was to enable the VNN to employ US craft to conduct effective MARKET TIME patrols. Turnover was the final goal but the primary concern of the USCG was training of VNN personnel. While training of VNN personnel was emphasized by the SCATTOR, it was essential that the present mission of MARKET TIME patrols not be hindered in any way. The success of the training program was dependent almost entirely on the quality of the personnel involved. Due to language, cultural, and attitude differences which placed a never before encountered stress on USCG personnel, COMCOGACTV directed that special attention be given to selection of personnel participating in the program. 193

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(U) The training sequence for SCATTOR began when the VNN prospective commanding officer (PCO) was assigned to a boat. Next, assignments of VNN personnel to the boats were the chief quartermaster and boatswain mates. A significant difference between SCATTOR and ACTOV was the former assigned the PCO as the first VNN member of the crew, whereas ACTOV assigned junior members of the crew first. As USCG personnel were replaced by their Vietnamese Counterparts, they were assigned to staff or instructor billets ashore.

(U) The training period consisted of 15 phases which were scheduled to be completed in 15 weeks. Upon completion of Phase 15, all remaining USCG personnel were transferred ashore with the exception of the CO who remained to make one complete operational patrol. To the greatest extent possible, the patrol was conducted entirely by the VNN crew. While the identity of the USCG officer as CO was in no way affected, his role on that particular patrol was that of an advisor and evaluator. When the VNN crew had completed all training, and at least one satisfactory operational patrol, a combined USN/USCG/VNN Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) was held. Upon successful completion of the ORI, an appropriate change of command ceremony was held.

AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS

(S) The SEVENTHFLT's Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), with its embarked Marine Battalion Landing Team (BLT) of some 1,900 to 2,000 USMC and Navy personnel known as the Special Landing Force (SLF), had been established by CINCPAC during the late 1950s as a balanced mobile contingency force to meet requirements throughout PACOM. 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 amphibious raids along the length of RVN fronting the South China Sea. Since April 1967 there had been two such forces, designated ARG Alfa and Bravo. 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 ICTZ which started in the summer of 1967 and lasted over a year, the two ARGs and their embarked SLFs often had been used concurrently. Also, due to the changed nature of the war in northern ICTZ as 1967 and 1968 progressed, the forces of the ARGs had gone ashore more often and stayed longer than originally envisioned. In such circumstances, the ships of the ARG often had stayed offshore in a supporting role and in some cases had left the combat zone for repair and upkeep. When the ARG had remained in a supporting role, the helicopter assault ship (LPH) provided a mobile secure landing field for the helicopters of the SLF and other U. S. MAF organic rotary wing aircraft.

(C) The major ships of the ARG were:

1. Amphibious Command Ship (LCC): contained communications, operational control center and other staff facilities to support the Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) and the headquarters element of the SLF.
2. Amphibious Assault Ship (LPH): designed to transport and land troops, equipment and supplies by means of embarked helicopters using the principles of "vertical envelopment".

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19.4, 19.5, 19.6, 19.7, 19.8, 19.9, 20.0, 20.1, 20.2, 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7, 20.8, 20.9, 21.0, 21.1, 21.2, 21.3, 21.4, 21.5, 21.6, 21.7, 21.8, 21.9, 22.0, 22.1, 22.2, 22.3, 22.4, 22.5, 22.6, 22.7, 22.8, 22.9, 23.0, 23.1, 23.2, 23.3, 23.4, 23.5, 23.6, 23.7, 23.8, 23.9, 24.0, 24.1, 24.2, 24.3, 24.4, 24.5, 24.6, 24.7, 24.8, 24.9, 25.0, 25.1, 25.2, 25.3, 25.4, 25.5, 25.6, 25.7, 25.8, 25.9, 26.0, 26.1, 26.2, 26.3, 26.4, 26.5, 26.6, 26.7, 26.8, 26.9, 27.0, 27.1, 27.2, 27.3, 27.4, 27.5, 27.6, 27.7, 27.8, 27.9, 28.0, 28.1, 28.2, 28.3, 28.4, 28.5, 28.6, 28.7, 28.8, 28.9, 29.0, 29.1, 29.2, 29.3, 29.4, 29.5, 29.6, 29.7, 29.8, 29.9, 30.0, 30.1, 30.2, 30.3, 30.4, 30.5, 30.6, 30.7, 30.8, 30.9, 31.0, 31.1, 31.2, 31.3, 31.4, 31.5, 31.6, 31.7, 31.8, 31.9, 32.0, 32.1, 32.2, 32.3, 32.4, 32.5, 32.6, 32.7, 32.8, 32.9, 33.0, 33.1, 33.2, 33.3, 33.4, 33.5, 33.6, 33.7, 33.8, 33.9, 34.0, 34.1, 34.2, 34.3, 34.4, 34.5, 34.6, 34.7, 34.8, 34.9, 35.0, 35.1, 35.2, 35.3, 35.4, 35.5, 35.6, 35.7, 35.8, 35.9, 36.0, 36.1, 36.2, 36.3, 36.4, 36.5, 36.6, 36.7, 36.8, 36.9, 37.0, 37.1, 37.2, 37.3, 37.4, 37.5, 37.6, 37.7, 37.8, 37.9, 38.0, 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, 38.5, 38.6, 38.7, 38.8, 38.9, 39.0, 39.1, 39.2, 39.3, 39.4, 39.5, 39.6, 39.7, 39.8, 39.9, 40.0, 40.1, 40.2, 40.3, 40.4, 40.5, 40.6, 40.7, 40.8, 40.9, 41.0, 41.1, 41.2, 41.3, 41.4, 41.5, 41.6, 41.7, 41.8, 41.9, 42.0, 42.1, 42.2, 42.3, 42.4, 42.5, 42.6, 42.7, 42.8, 42.9, 43.0, 43.1, 43.2, 43.3, 43.4, 43.5, 43.6, 43.7, 43.8, 43.9, 44.0, 44.1, 44.2, 44.3, 44.4, 44.5, 44.6, 44.7, 44.8, 44.9, 45.0, 45.1, 45.2, 45.3, 45.4, 45.5, 45.6, 45.7, 45.8, 45.9, 46.0, 46.1, 46.2, 46.3, 46.4, 46.5, 46.6, 46.7, 46.8, 46.9, 47.0, 47.1, 47.2, 47.3, 47.4, 47.5, 47.6, 47.7, 47.8, 47.9, 48.0, 48.1, 48.2, 48.3, 48.4, 48.5, 48.6, 48.7, 48.8, 48.9, 49.0, 49.1, 49.2, 49.3, 49.4, 49.5, 49.6, 49.7, 49.8, 49.9, 50.0, 50.1, 50.2, 50.3, 50.4, 50.5, 50.6, 50.7, 50.8, 50.9, 51.0, 51.1, 51.2, 51.3, 51.4, 51.5, 51.6, 51.7, 51.8, 51.9, 52.0, 52.1, 52.2, 52.3, 52.4, 52.5, 52.6, 52.7, 52.8, 52.9, 53.0, 53.1, 53.2, 53.3, 53.4, 53.5, 53.6, 53.7, 53.8, 53.9, 54.0, 54.1, 54.2, 54.3, 54.4, 54.5, 54.6, 54.7, 54.8, 54.9, 55.0, 55.1, 55.2, 55.3, 55.4, 55.5, 55.6, 55.7, 55.8, 55.9, 56.0, 56.1, 56.2, 56.3, 56.4, 56.5, 56.6, 56.7, 56.8, 56.9, 57.0, 57.1, 57.2, 57.3, 57.4, 57.5, 57.6, 57.7, 57.8, 57.9, 58.0, 58.1, 58.2, 58.3, 58.4, 58.5, 58.6, 58.7, 58.8, 58.9, 59.0, 59.1, 59.2, 59.3, 59.4, 59.5, 59.6, 59.7, 59.8, 59.9, 60.0, 60.1, 60.2, 60.3, 60.4, 60.5, 60.6, 60.7, 60.8, 60.9, 61.0, 61.1, 61.2, 61.3, 61.4, 61.5, 61.6, 61.7, 61.8, 61.9, 62.0, 62.1, 62.2, 62.3, 62.4, 62.5, 62.6, 62.7, 62.8, 62.9, 63.0, 63.1, 63.2, 63.3, 63.4, 63.5, 63.6, 63.7, 63.8, 63.9, 64.0, 64.1, 64.2, 64.3, 64.4, 64.5, 64.6, 64.7, 64.8, 64.9, 65.0, 65.1, 65.2, 65.3, 65.4, 65.5, 65.6, 65.7, 65.8, 65.9, 66.0, 66.1, 66.2, 66.3, 66.4, 66.5, 66.6, 66.7, 66.8, 66.9, 67.0, 67.1, 67.2, 67.3, 67.4, 67.5, 67.6, 67.7, 67.8, 67.9, 68.0, 68.1, 68.2, 68.3, 68.4, 68.5, 68.6, 68.7, 68.8, 68.9, 69.0, 69.1, 69.2, 69.3, 69.4, 69.5, 69.6, 69.7, 69.8, 69.9, 70.0, 70.1, 70.2, 70.3, 70.4, 70.5, 70.6, 70.7, 70.8, 70.9, 71.0, 71.1, 71.2, 71.3, 71.4, 71.5, 71.6, 71.7, 71.8, 71.9, 72.0, 72.1, 72.2, 72.3, 72.4, 72.5, 72.6, 72.7, 72.8, 72.9, 73.0, 73.1, 73.2, 73.3, 73.4, 73.5, 73.6, 73.7, 73.8, 73.9, 74.0, 74.1, 74.2, 74.3, 74.4, 74.5, 74.6, 74.7, 74.8, 74.9, 75.0, 75.1, 75.2, 75.3, 75.4, 75.5, 75.6, 75.7, 75.8, 75.9, 76.0, 76.1, 76.2, 76.3, 76.4, 76.5, 76.6, 76.7, 76.8, 76.9, 77.0, 77.1, 77.2, 77.3, 77.4, 77.5, 77.6, 77.7, 77.8, 77.9, 78.0, 78.1, 78.2, 78.3, 78.4, 78.5, 78.6, 78.7, 78.8, 78.9, 79.0, 79.1, 79.2, 79.3, 79.4, 79.5, 79.6, 79.7, 79.8, 79.9, 80.0, 80.1, 80.2, 80.3, 80.4, 80.5, 80.6, 80.7, 80.8, 80.9, 81.0, 81.1, 81.2, 81.3, 81.4, 81.5, 81.6, 81.7, 81.8, 81.9, 82.0, 82.1, 82.2, 82.3, 82.4, 82.5, 82.6, 82.7, 82.8, 82.9, 83.0, 83.1, 83.2, 83.3, 83.4, 83.5, 83.6, 83.7, 83.8, 83.9, 84.0, 84.1, 84.2, 84.3, 84.4, 84.5, 84.6, 84.7, 84.8, 84.9, 85.0, 85.1, 85.2, 85.3, 85.4, 85.5, 85.6, 85.7, 85.8, 85.9, 86.0, 86.1, 86.2, 86.3, 86.4, 86.5, 86.6, 86.7, 86.8, 86.9, 87.0, 87.1, 87.2, 87.3, 87.4, 87.5, 87.6, 87.7, 87.8, 87.9, 88.0, 88.1, 88.2, 88.3, 88.4, 88.5, 88.6, 88.7, 88.8, 88.9, 89.0, 89.1, 89.2, 89.3, 89.4, 89.5, 89.6, 89.7, 89.8, 89.9, 90.0, 90.1, 90.2, 90.3, 90.4, 90.5, 90.6, 90.7, 90.8, 90.9, 91.0, 91.1, 91.2, 91.3, 91.4, 91.5, 91.6, 91.7, 91.8, 91.9, 92.0, 92.1, 92.2, 92.3, 92.4, 92.5, 92.6, 92.7, 92.8, 92.9, 93.0, 93.1, 93.2, 93.3, 93.4, 93.5, 93.6, 93.7, 93.8, 93.9, 94.0, 94.1, 94.2, 94.3, 94.4, 94.5, 94.6, 94.7, 94.8, 94.9, 95.0, 95.1, 95.2, 95.3, 95.4, 95.5, 95.6, 95.7, 95.8, 95.9, 96.0, 96.1, 96.2, 96.3, 96.4, 96.5, 96.6, 96.7, 96.8, 96.9, 97.0, 97.1, 97.2, 97.3, 97.4, 97.5, 97.6, 97.7, 97.8, 97.9, 98.0, 98.1, 98.2, 98.3, 98.4, 98.5, 98.6, 98.7, 98.8, 98.9, 99.0, 99.1, 99.2, 99.3, 99.4, 99.5, 99.6, 99.7, 99.8, 99.9, 100.0

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3. Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD): transported and landed troops, equipment and supplies by means of embarked landing craft, amphibious vehicles, and helicopters.

4. Dock Landing Ship (LSD): transported and launched embarked landing craft and loaded supplies and equipment for assault across a beach.

5. Tank Landing Ship (LST): transported to and landed on a beach embarked vehicles and troops, and laterally used as a floating storage depot (or intracoastal shipping in RVN waters).

Additional ships employed with the ARG as the situation dictated were: the AP, a high speed transport to carry UDT and USMC reconnaissance units and the LKA or LPA, amphibious cargo ship and amphibious transport to carry additional supplies and/or troops and, in particular, to augment the ARG with their organic landing craft.

(C) Operation VALIANT HUNT, a search and clear (S and C) operation which had commenced 15 Dec 68, continued into the new year, terminating on 5 Jan. The 2/26 Battalion Landing Team (BLT) was re-embarked aboard ARG Alfa ships by helicopters and amphibious assault craft. While ARG Alfa was operating in support of VALIANT HUNT, ARG Bravo was engaged in embarking its BLT 3/26 and Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 164. On 13 Jan, eight days after termination of VALIANT HUNT, the largest amphibious operation since the Korean War was launched. Named BOLD MARINER, it was a combined assault against enemy complexes in the previously uncontested Batangan Peninsula in Quang Ngai Province. Using two ARGs simultaneously for the first time in RVN, the USMC forces joined with the 23d Inf (Americal) Div and the ARVN troops in the area. The USS New Jersey and two destroyers were offshore providing quick response naval gunfire support. The link up between Marines from the ARGs and the US/ARVN units was accomplished in less than four hours. Within another three hours the cordon and search forces were in position to begin sweeping. On 19 Jan, in a tunnel complex, along with 100 women and children, 56 males were captured. Interrogation of the males indicated they were members of the C-95th VC Sapper Company. This was believed to be the largest single enemy unit captured virtually intact in the Vietnamese War. There were 11,500 detainees processed in this phase of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign as BOLD MARINER terminated on 9 Feb.

(C) Three days after completing BOLD MARINER, DEFIANT MEASURE was initiated by ARG Bravo from waters off Quang Nam Province. The purpose of the operation was to find and destroy enemy positions within the Amphibious Objective Area (AOA) in the province to allow prepositioning of FWMAF prior to Tet. During this period, ARG Alfa left RVN waters for upkeep and repair, returning to the combat zone with forces as a mobile reserve response for Tet contingencies.

(C) With the buildup of substantial enemy forces west of Danang, ARG Alfa began Operation EAGER PURSUIT on 1 Mar with vertical envelopment using HMM 164 helicopters. This was a 10-day amphibious operation, followed up with EAGER PURSUIT II and continuing until 28 Mar. During this time ARG Bravo was used in support of USMC in-country operation, TAYLOR COMMON.

(C) April activities for both ARGs were routine as they both were in support roles for operations ashore and no assaults were initiated. In May ARG Alfa made two landings. The

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first, 20 miles southeast of Danang near the Quang Tin and Quang Nam Province borders, was a 16-day operation, DARING REBEL, which saw the first use of a gunboat firing in support of an amphibious operation as the gas turbine-powered USS Crockett, capable of speeds in excess of 35 knots, fired her 3-inch/50 caliber guns on bunker complexes. The second landing came three days after completion of DARING REBEL when ARG Alfa once again landed troops in Operation GALLANT LEADER, and the ships steamed for Subic Bay, P. I. and upkeep. ARG Bravo was largely in a training status during the month and no landings were conducted.

(C) The next significant amphibious action was in late June as CG, III MAF requested employment of ARG Alfa in an assault against enemy elements on Barrier Island, in Quang Tin Province. The operation, BOLD PURSUIT, began 27 Jun, two days after the initial request for approval of the operation. ARG Bravo spent most of the month in training exercises off Danang and Okinawa and then proceeded to Subic Bay where it remained through the month.

(C) Even as BOLD PURSUIT was ending, planning for MIGHTY PLAY was in process. This landing was made 10 Jul between Danang and Hoi An in Quang Nam Province by ARG Alfa. Also ARG Bravo made one assault during the month, BRAVE ARMADA. There were no significant operations during the month of August. 194

(S) During the first two phases of redeployment, ships of the ARGs were utilized to back-load some of the redeploying units and transport them to the redeployment sites. Upon completion of Phase II of the redeployment program, the SLF which had been assigned to the ARGs were all units included in the redeployment. Thus, the SLFs could no longer be introduced into RVN without specific authorization from JCS. This major change in the established pattern of ARG/SLF operations necessitated additional guidance to the task groups concerned. CINCPAC and CTF 76 had established a basic readiness posture for both ARG/SLFs as 120 hours reaction time for RVN contingencies. That was further defined as 120 hours from the time notification was received on board until the arrival of the ARG/SLF in the AOA. The requirement could be relaxed to a 7-day readiness posture when specifically approved by CINCPAC and when consistent with PACOM-wide readiness conditions. COMSEVENTHFLT could request a waiver from the 5-day alert posture for out of area operations when considered essential to the accomplishment of amphibious objectives in the western Pacific. Upkeep was normally to be accomplished at Subic Bay, P. I. to enable ARG maintenance and SLF training to run concurrently. At any time the ARG/SLF was at sea, it was to operate along the littoral of the east coast of RVN remaining outside the 12-mile limit from the RVN coast. 195

SEAL and UDT Operations

(S) SEAL (Sea, Air and Land) Teams had been organized, trained, and equipped to conduct unconventional warfare, counter guerrilla operations, and clandestine operations to include sabotage, demolition, and intelligence collection activities in maritime areas and riverine environments. In RVN their use had been largely restricted to one facet of the basic mission: that of counter guerrilla operations in a riverine environment. Their extensive training programs had equipped these teams with a unique ability to operate effectively as small, covert units. Most SEAL operations were conducted under the cover of darkness, a time which the enemy had learned to regard as his own. SEALs had developed the valuable capability of being able to set an ambush or approach an objective where and when the enemy least suspected them.

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(S) With the exception of an advisory effort which had begun in 1962, USNSEALs had not been employed in RVN until 1966. When an analysis of US major operations had focused on the advantage of small unit/reconnaissance efforts, the SEALs along with several other small units, were introduced into RVN. They had been utilized throughout the Delta to accomplish a variety of tasks aimed at taking the initiative away from the enemy by destroying supply caches, interdicting, and identifying and destroying enemy infrastructure. These missions were frequently performed on the basis of information derived from their own intelligence nets. The SEAL detachment had grown from a contingent of one platoon at its inception in 1966 to a total in-country strength of seven platoons at the end of 1969. A platoon consisted of two officers and 12 enlisted men. All platoons were augmented by Vietnamese Lien Doi Nhuoi Nhai (LDNN) - (VNN frogmen). These counterparts of the SEALs had been advised by the SEAL/UDT since 1962. From two to four LDNN were normally assigned with each SEAL team, providing them with a Vietnamese language capability and a knowledge of local customs. Hoi Chanh and VC PW parolees were sometimes used in SEAL operations.

(S) During 1969, SEALs conducted over 1,000 operations with the following results:

Personnel assigned:		103
Operations conducted:		1,000+
Results:		
Enemy:	KIA (BC)	395
	KIA (Prob)	135
	WIA	113
	CIA	147
	DETAINED	372
Friendly:	KIA	4
	WIA	41
	CIA	0

In addition there were large amounts of weapons, ammunition, supplies, and documents captured or destroyed. Although the enemy casualties were significant and the KIA impressive, the data do not reflect all SEAL missions. There were many operations conducted where no contact with the enemy was made. These were highly important intelligence gathering missions aimed at pinpointing enemy strengths and LOCs which were indispensable to the interdiction efforts of programs such as SEA LORDS and SEA FLOAT.

(S) Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT) had the primary mission of conducting pre-assault reconnaissance and clearance of beaches. The mission had been developed in response to needs of WW II in ridding the landing beaches of enemy obstacles prior to an opposed am-

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phibious landing. This requirement had not developed to an extent which could keep the UDT personnel fully employed in RVN; therefore, some of these men had been tasked with waterway and hinterland reconnaissance, demolition of underwater obstacles in the navigable waters of RVN, demolition of enemy bunkers/fortifications, underwater searches, and repair work on small craft. During 1969, there were three UDT detachments in-country in addition to those personnel embarked in 7th Fleet ships operating on YANKEE Station. One detachment operated in the Ca Mau Peninsula in support of SEA FLOAT/SOLID ANCHOR, another was located in Nha Be operating in the RSSZ, and the third operated out of Danang.

(S) Since UDTs were not primarily concerned with making contact directly with the enemy, they performed a variety of tasks on a reaction basis. Typical of the type of missions conducted were underwater searches of friendly shipping accomplished in conjunction with STABLE DOOR forces of TF 115 to protect harbors and the vessels in them. UDT personnel conducted 250 missions during the year, destroying over 1,600 bunkers, structures, and fish traps with demolitions. Also significant amounts of enemy munitions, supplies, and documents were captured or destroyed by UDT personnel. 196

Naval Gunfire Support

(S) Naval Gunfire Support (NGFS) for units ashore in RVN had been an extension of techniques learned from World War II and Korea. In RVN, NGFS had been used for support of in-country forces and to lesser extent softening of defensive positions for amphibious assaults over the beaches. During 1968, prior to the 1 Nov bombing halt, the gunfire ships had been used in Operation SEA DRAGON to interdict lines of communication and to destroy NVN vessels and vehicles transporting supplies. The use of naval gunfire was particularly valuable during periods of adverse weather or where terrain or anticraft hazards made air support infeasible. FWMAF in RVN, other than USMC, received their shore fire control parties from Sub Unit One, 1st ANGLICO, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (FMF-PAC) headquartered at MACV Annex, Saigon. For Marine units gunfire liaison was organic to each division headquarters and to the three 105mm howitzer battalions of each division. The NGFS system in RVN did not have any aircraft permanently assigned or organic. However, aerial spotters in low performance aircraft were regularly available to spot gunfire missions. ANGLICO spotter teams used voice communications for effective control of NGFS missions. Throughout the year personnel from 1st ANGLICO supported US, ARVN, Australian, and Korean forces operating within the range of naval gunfire. In addition to gunfire support, ANGLICO TACPs controlled all fixed wing and helicopter support for the 2d ROKMC Bde. The versatility of the organization was demonstrated by supporting over 60 operations in which its personnel controlled a total of 14,382 missions. Throughout the country, the ANGLICO operations followed the tempo of the units they supported. Naval gunfire was probably most effectively used during helicopter landing zone preparation and firing at built-up defensive bunker complexes. Naval gunfire was very impressive along the eastern portion of the DMZ where it was effectively tied in with sensors, antipersonnel radar, and integrated observation device. Other geographical areas of special importance in which ANGLICO controlled almost all supporting fires were on Barrier Island in I CTZ, Long Hia Mountains in II CTZ, and in the U Minh Forest in IV CTZ. Task Force South, in II CTZ, relied heavily on ANGLICO support to compliment artillery coverage on all ground operations between Phan Thiet and Phan Rang. 197

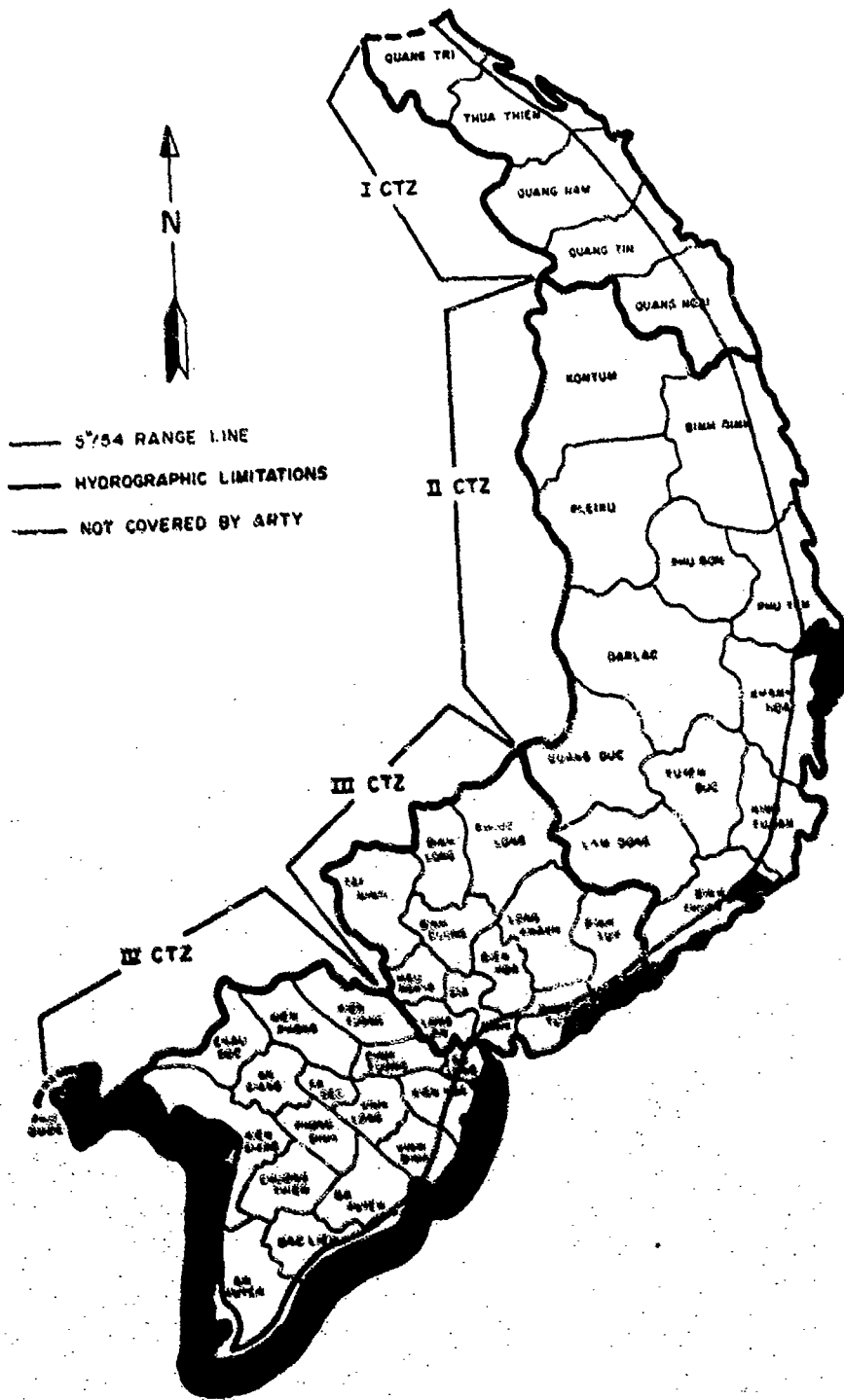
(S) The general ship types and armaments of those ships available for NGFS in SEASIA

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FIGURE V-12

were:

Battleship (BB)	16"/50, 5"/38
Heavy Cruiser (CA)	8"/50, 5"/38
Guided Missile Cruiser (LIGHT) (CLG)	6"/47, 5"/38
Destroyer, Guided Missile (DDG)	5"/54
Destroyer (DD)	5"/38 or 5"/54
Inshore Fire Support Ship (LFR)	8-Twin 5" Spin Stabilized Rocket Launchers, and 5"/38

(S) During 1969 NGFS was reduced to less than half that utilized the preceding year both in terms of rounds expended and average number of ships on the line. In January there was an average of 11 NGFS ships per day on the line which fired 41,200 rounds during the month. By December the average had fallen to 5.5 ships per day and 23,049 rounds fired monthly. There were two major factors reducing NGFS; first, the reduction of naval vessels due to military cutbacks had resulted in redeployment and mothballing of the only battleship, two of the four 8-inch gun cruisers and two of six 6-inch gun cruisers. Second, fewer targets existed due both to shorter range of guns and the large number of targets destroyed during the course of the war.

(S) The Quarterly Employment Schedule for Navy ships for the third quarter FY70 indicated that an average of four destroyers and one plus LFRs would be available for NGFS missions after the beginning of 1970 and no cruiser assigned until the fourth quarter. At least one of the four destroyers would be equipped with 5-inch/54 guns and 1 CTZ would have priority for its services. Figure V-12 shows the effective range of the 5-inch/54 gun from the 6-fathom curve.

(C) The total naval gunfire expenditures from 1 Jan to 31 Dec 69 were as follows:

<u>Caliber of rounds</u>	<u>Rounds expended</u>
16-inch/50	693
8-inch/55	10,785
6-inch/47	4,065
5-inch/54	52,540
5-inch/38	158,811
4.5-inch	11,733
3-inch/50	1,901
MK-7/SSR	60,161
MK-10/SSR	30,980
MK-12/SSR	2,338

(C) Naval Gunfire GDA 1 Jan 69 to 31 Dec 69.

<u>Naval Gunfire GDA</u>	<u>Total Damage</u>
Structures destroyed	4,950
Structures damaged	6,422

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	4,681
Bunkers destroyed	4,174
Bunkers damaged	164
Sampans destroyed	296
Sampans damaged	724
Secondary explosions	868
Secondary fires	119
Tunnels destroyed	7
Tunnels damaged	6,180 (meters)
Treeline destroyed	5,792 (meters)
Trenchline destroyed	2,650 (Bu)
Rice destroyed	8,200 (pounds)
Rice destroyed	596
KIA (confirmed)	243
KIA (probable)	171
WIA (confirmed)	9
WIA (probable)	213
POW's	11
Pack animals (KIA)	5
Pack animals (WIA)	21
Storage sites destroyed	7
Storage sites damaged	406
Caves destroyed	6
Caves damaged	30
A/W sites destroyed	136
Fighting holes destroyed	7,199 (meters)
Trails interdicted	12
Mortar positions destroyed	22
Ambush sites destroyed	11
Foot bridges destroyed	26
Bridges destroyed	15
Rocket positions destroyed	4
Rocket positions damaged	456
Cult. rated fields destroyed	80
Trails cut	5
Vehicles destroyed	79
Base camps destroyed	15
Wells destroyed	1
Radio jamming stations destroyed	1
FM Radio station destroyed	9
Masonry structures destroyed	6
Masonry structures damaged	12
Landing Zone's neutralized	3
Supply routes interdicted	2
Cattle pen destroyed	102
Catwalks destroyed	4
Roads cut	2
Kilns destroyed	20
Sleeping platforms destroyed	

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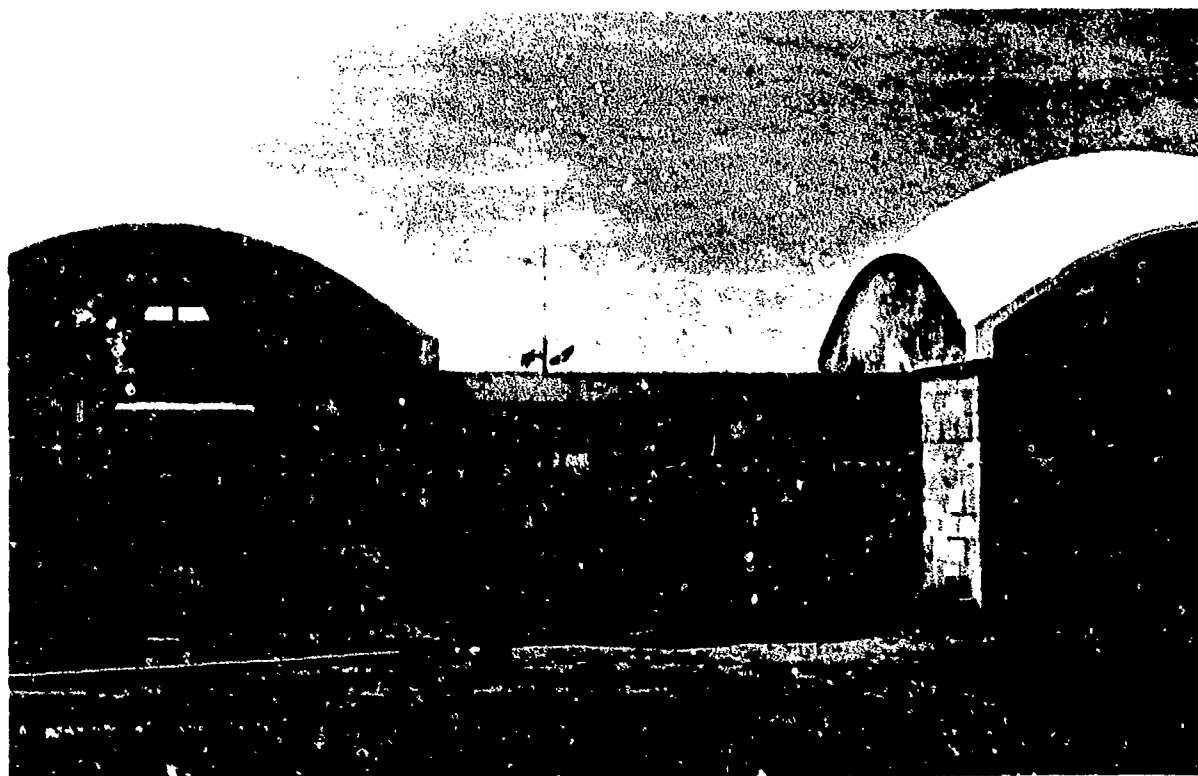
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Third Naval Construction Brigade

(U) In the spring of 1965 there had been 9,400 Seabees on active duty at various sea/shore locations with 10 Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB). On 7 May 1965, NMCB-10 had deployed from Okinawa to Chu Lai, RVN, to mark the arrival of the first major Seabee unit in the combat zone. From 1965 until mid-1968 the total Seabee force had mushroomed to a high of approximately 25,000 men. At peak strength in the summer of 1968 more than 10,000 men in three headquarters, 12 battalions, two Construction Battalion Maintenance Units, a Detachment and 15 Seabee Teams had been deployed in RVN. The guild up had required Presidential call-up of Seabee Reserve Units and deployment to RVN of US East Coast units. The mission, which did not change, had been to maintain a state of operational readiness able to provide rapid and effective construction support to Naval Operating Forces and other Free World Forces. The Seabee units were required to conduct defensive operations as the deployed situation dictated.

(U) At the beginning of 1969 there were 10 battalions deployed in I CTZ (Shown in Figure V-13), along with the brigade headquarters and a maintenance unit. The second maintenance unit was located in II CTZ at Cam Ranh Bay. The 15 Seabee Teams were located throughout III and IV CTZ. 198

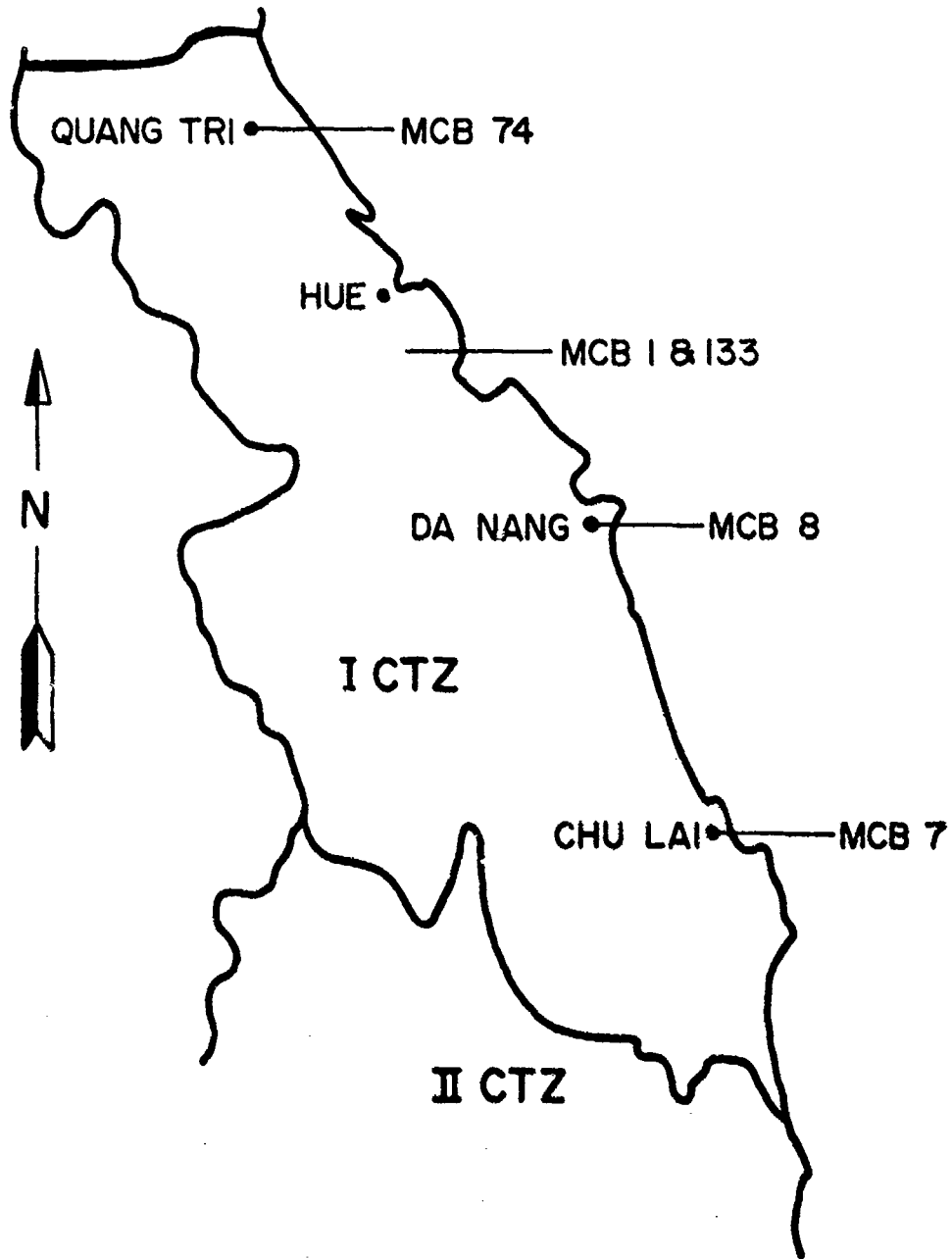
(U) See Chapter IX, Seabee Construction, for a discussion of construction activities by 3d MCB during 1969.



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**NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALIONS
DECEMBER 1969**



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FIGURE V-13

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US Coast Guard Operations

General

(U) Commander, Coast Guard Activities Vietnam (COMCOGARDACTV), headquartered in Saigon, exercised administrative control over four separate areas of USCG activity in RVN. These areas were:

1. Squadron One.
2. Aids to Navigation.
3. Port Security and Waterways Detail.
4. Merchant Marine Detail.

Squadron One

(U) Squadron One was the largest component of COMCOGARDACTV with a complement of almost 400 officers and men. The squadron consisted of twenty-six 82-foot WPBs. The USCG WPBs were a principal segment of TF 115, the MARKET TIME forces coastal patrol designed to prevent enemy infiltration by sea and to provide friendly forces with gunfire support. The WPB had proven to be a natural for the rigors of war zone deployment. Constructed to make rescues in Atlantic Ocean gales, they now withstood the demands of the SEASIA monsoons when other patrol craft had to seek refuge. They kept MARKET TIME stations continually manned by operating 70 percent of their time underway. Each WPB was armed with five .50 caliber machine guns and one 81mm mortar. The crews consisted of two officers, nine enlisted men, and one VNN liaison petty officer. Squadron One had been commissioned 26 May 65 and divided into two divisions: Division 11 at An Thoi and Division 12 at Danang. In February 1966, nine additional WPBs had joined the squadron and Division 13 was established at Cat Lo. Until June, WPBs had operated out of the three locations until Div 11 was dissolved and the remaining WPBs were redeployed to the other two divisions. In MARKET TIME operations WPBs performed a wide variety of tasks. Of these, perhaps the most important, and certainly the most time consuming effort involved the boarding and inspection of hundreds of junks and sampans daily. Junks were hailed alongside, and the VNN liaison PO inspected identification papers on board. Even if identification papers were in order, a boarding party was sent over to search the junk for contraband. The squadron boarded over 250,000 junks/sampans and inspected an additional 300,000 during 1969.

(C) At least six times in recent years, large steel-hulled trawlers from NVN or Communist China had attempted to infiltrate supplies to the VC ashore. One such incident had occurred during March 1968 when four trawlers, in separate locations, made infiltration attempts. One had been destroyed by USN and VNN forces near Nha Trang, another had been destroyed in a gun battle with a USCG cutter near the Ca Mau Peninsula. The third had turned back and the fourth had been engaged near Chu Lai by two WPBs, the Point Welcome and the Point Grey with assistance from the high endurance cutter (WHEC) Androscoogin. During the gunfight that had

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ensued, the trawler had sustained a direct hit on her bridge, killing most of her crew and preventing self-destruction. The vessel had eventually been captured and towed to Danang, where enough arms and munitions were found on board to supply an entire NVA battalion.

(U) While counterinfiltration operations remained the primary task of MARKET TIME units, WPBs were frequently called upon to provide gunfire support. Gunfire was normally directed at known or suspected enemy infiltration routes and storage areas, although USCG patrol boats were often requested to provide direct gunfire support for friendly forces on the beach. In February, the USCG launched its own program for training VNN personnel to operate and maintain WPB assets in RVN. The plan, known as Small Craft Assets; Training and Turnover of Resources (See section on SCATTOR in this Chapter), called for VNN personnel to be gradually phased on board WPBs and receive on-the-job training while the WPB continued to make their regularly scheduled operational patrols. As mentioned earlier, the first two cutters to complete the program, the Point Garnet and Point League, were officially turned over to the VNN in May. Six additional cutters were turned over during the remainder of the year. Under an agreement promulgated by the USCG, VNN, and USN, all Squadron One assets would be turned over to the VNN by Sep 70. (See section on ACTOV, this chapter.)

Aids to Navigation

(U) The need for an effective Aids to Navigation program had become apparent in the spring of 1966, when an energetic port development program had come into being, and the amount of shipping entering RVN had begun to increase dramatically. Ports such as Saigon had become saturated, and facilities had been utilized to the maximum. The ports of Vung Tau, Cam Ranh Bay, Danang, and others had been expanding to handle trans-Pacific and intra-coastal shipping. It had become obvious that an efficient Aids to Navigation program was needed to mark the channels and anchorages of the ports and to provide safe passage for all vessels. The responsibility for maintaining navigation aids in RVN had rested with the RVN Directorate of Navigation. To service marine aids, the Directorate had used an ex-Army cargo vessel, limited in operations by a small lifting capacity and work space. Due to the limited resources the directorate held a series of conferences with USAID and the US military commands. As a result of their recommendations, COGARDACTV had been directed to establish and maintain navigation aids in support of US missions. Within the first year and a half, 65 buoys had been installed by three buoy tenders deployed from Honolulu. Since then, the buoy tender (WLB) Blackhaw was responsible for servicing aids in RVN and functioned under the operational control of COMCOGARDACTV when on in-country deployments. Blackhaw established 40 additional buoys and serviced every aid on each deployment. Aids to navigation in use were standard USCG equipment. The color of the aid system in RVN, however, was reversed from the US system. The French lateral system was used, placing black buoys on the starboard side, and red buoys to port as the ship entered harbor. Buoy tending in RVN took on new aspects in most areas. Blackhaw generally went into a modified general quarters in the ports of Chu Lai, Cua Viet, and others and had come under enemy fire on numerous occasions. To ensure safety of the craft and crew, USN UDT personnel from harbor defense units (IUWU) were employed to check the moorings, chains, and buoys for explosives prior to lifting the buoy. The enemy was not the only hazard. Smaller ports such as Cua Viet and Tan My had entrances with shifting sand bars and heavy silting which caused changes of channel direction and loss of depth. One buoy in Cua Viet was placed on station marking the channel edge in 30 feet of water. Three months after the placement, silting caused the buoy to rest on a sand bar in the same geographical position.

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Port Security and Waterways Detail

(U) The Port Security and Waterways Detail with its four subordinate explosive loading detachments, functioned under the direction of the 1st Log Comd located at Long Binh. It provided logistics units with technical assistance for the safeguarding of all US shipping and other specifically designated shipping against infiltration, pilferage, ground attack, and other port hazards. In general, the Port Security and Waterways Detail's mission was broken down into three segments:

1. Advise the 1st Log Comd on matters pertaining to handling of explosives and port and waterways security.
2. Coordinate with USCG, COMNAVFORV, and the 18th MP Bde on port and waterway security.
3. Advise and assist subordinate commanders and the 18th MP Bde on the technical operation and employment of river patrol boats and other small craft employed in port and waterway security.

(U) The principal sub-divisions of the Port Security and Waterways Detail were the four Explosive Loading Detachments, located at Danang, Qui Nhon, Cam Ranh Bay, and Cat Lai. Each detachment was composed of one officer and seven enlisted, each of whom received special training in the handling of dangerous cargo prior to being assigned in-country. The primary mission of the detachments was to advise port officials on the safe handling of explosives and hazardous munitions from moored or anchored vessels to the transshipment site. Their secondary mission was to assist in the supervision of loading, unloading, and storage of explosives in a compatible manner to reduce the risk of fire and explosion. The precautions taken by the Port Security and Waterways Detail and the Explosive Loading Detachments had been justified in practice. Extra regulations had been prescribed for ammunition ships entering a RVN port. Such safety requirements as for a watch officer on deck 24 hours a day, ships facing bow out, and mooring lines singled up with axes by each, had been strictly enforced. When Cam Ranh Bay had come under attack in December 1968 two ammunition ships in port at the time had been able to get underway and sortie in 8 and 12 minutes respectively, without the aid of tugs normally used for such type ship.

Merchant Marine Detail

(U) The fourth major component of COGARDACTV was the Merchant Marine Detail (MMD) which was an adjunct of the USCG, serving to carry out the Merchant Marine functions as specified in Title 14 of the US Code. This detail further acted as direct liaison with foreign government agencies having functions similar to those of the USCG. The MMD in Saigon had been established in July 1967, with the responsibility of keeping merchant vessels underway with minimum delay in SEASIA. The detail performed all the regular Merchant Marine investigative duties and had all the authority of the domestic details with the exception of conducting hearings. Instead they investigated all casualties and acts of misconduct and forwarded reports to the Commandant of the US Coast Guard.

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(U) The Port of Saigon has been one of the most active in the Far East, and the majority of cases handled by the MMD were related to Saigon shipping. However, the detail was also responsible for all other deep water ports in RVN as well as a variety of others throughout SEASIA including Sattahip and Bangkok in Thailand.

(U) There were two other areas of USCG involvement in RVN which were not under the direction of COMCOGARDACTV. These were:

1. Squadron Three--Five high endurance cutters (WHEC) that operated as part of the Navy's 7th Fleet, and came under the administrative control of a Coast Guard commander in Subic Bay, P.I.

2. Loran stations at Tan My and Con Son Island that operated electronic navigational aids for aircraft and vessels operating throughout SEASIA. 199

Vietnamese Navy Operations

(C) The VNN's fleet of command ships, coastal group junks, and river assault group craft started the year in a relatively routine manner. With newly acquired vessels, the VNN underwent diverse and active participation in operations, especially in actions that were offensive in nature. The PBR and PCF crews recorded a high rate of utilization and they developed increased proficiency and self-sufficiency. RPG-51, comprising the VNN's 12 operating PBR's, assumed a new area of responsibility in January when it commenced 2-day patrols of the Long Tau shipping channel in addition to the patrols already being conducted on the Saigon and Dong Nai Rivers. The VNN acquisition of this responsibility freed US units for duty elsewhere in the Delta. A further example of the increased ability of VNN small boat crews was evidenced when a PCF was required to fire over a hill at an unseen enemy in proximity to a village. The US advisor in the village credited the VNN with routing an attack and described the shooting accuracy as "excellent".

(C) The VNN encountered increased enemy activity in February with particularly heavy attacks immediately after the announced VC Tet cease fire ended. The attacks appeared to be a show of force as they waned after only two days. River Assault and Interdiction Divisions (RAID) 70 and 71 were formed 1 Feb as COMNAVFORV turned over 25 more river craft to the VNN. The new RAID's were immediately assigned to the GIANT SLINGSHOT AO. On 12 Feb, COMNAVFORV's ACTOV plan was approved by DEPSECDEF which led to immediate training of VNN sailors preparatory to taking their place with US boat crews. Late in the month the TRAN HUNG DAO campaign was expanded to include VNN PCF and Fourth Coastal Zone junks, thereby increasing GVN presence along the Vinh Te Canal.

(C) In March the first of the VNN sailors who had undergone training under the ACTOV program the preceding month began arriving at 14 different bases in the delta. In comparison with February, the number of junks and persons searched was up over 100 percent in March which was in part attributable to increased junk traffic resultant from good weather. The remainder of the increase was due to the thoroughness of the inspecting force. The number of junks and people detained were zero for the month which was an indication of the ability of

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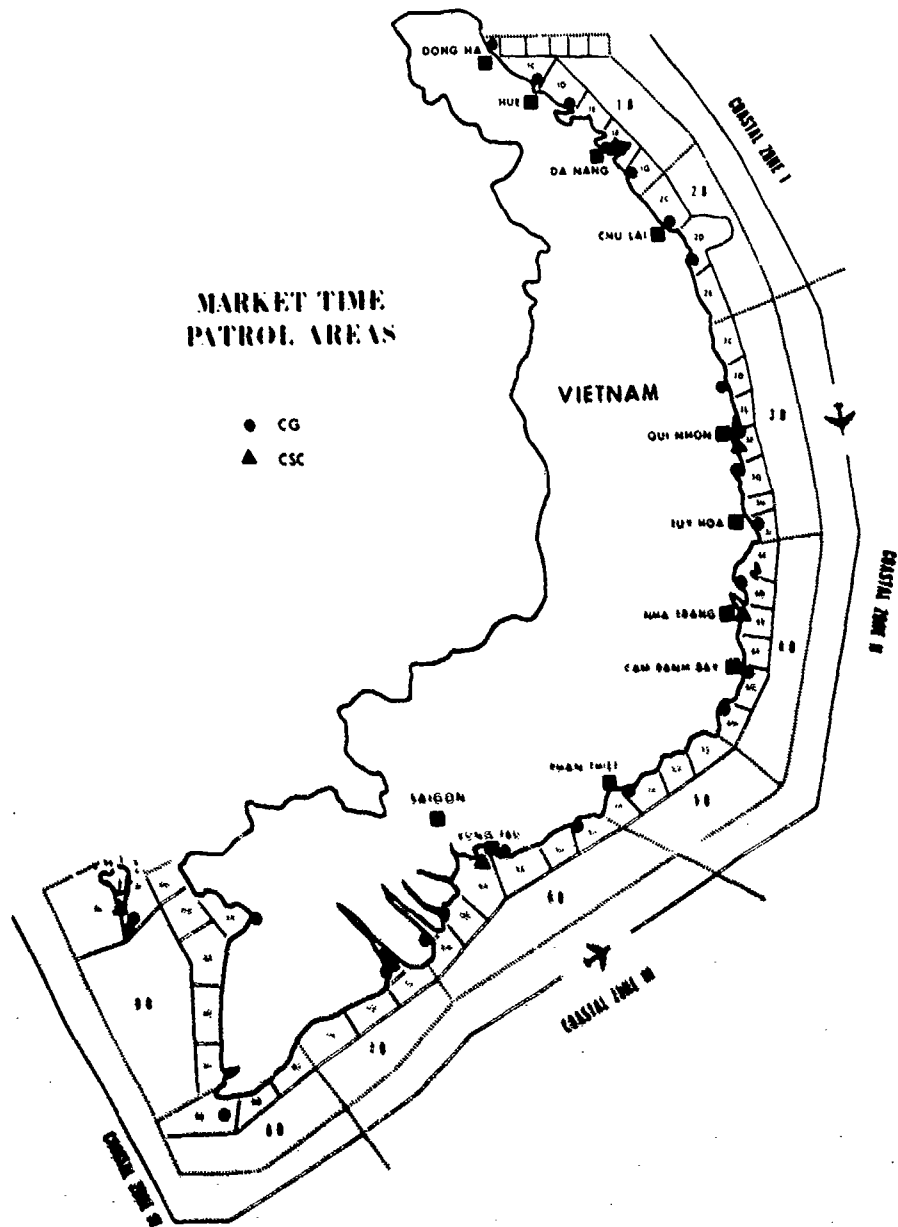
MARKET TIME forces to discourage coastal infiltration attempts in their AO. In April ACTOV continued to move forward smoothly with only minor equipment problems and some communication difficulty caused by a lack of a technical English vocabulary on the part of the Vietnamese sailors. However, the VNN PBR trainees showed enthusiasm and eagerness to learn in active patrols. USCG WPBs Point Garnet and Point League sailed on MARKET TIME patrols in mid-April manned by VNN personnel with the commanding officer as the sole US crew member. These cutters were to be turned over under the SCATTOR program. Near the end of April and the first of May, 88 VNN sailors, all high school and Saigon boat school graduates, began arriving at US Swift boat bases at An Thoi, Danang, Chu Lai, Qui Nhon, Cam Ranh Bay, and Cat Lo. Under the title Project START (Swift Training and Rapid Turnover), RVN navy men underwent on-the-job training which would lead to turnover of 49 PCFs (Swift boats) by July 1970. On 16 May the USCG cutters Point League and Point Garnet were turned over to the VNN at ceremonies in Saigon. On 17 May the first class of VNN personnel graduated from the diesel engine school at Danang.

(C) The Vietnamese Fleet Command units assumed sole responsibility for MARKET TIME surveillance operations in the Fourth Coastal Zone on 1 Jun. The one USN or USCG ship which patrolled in deep water off the eastern coast of the Ca Mau Peninsula began forwarding their reports through the Vietnamese Task Group 213.4 to CTF 115. On 27 Jun, three VNN fleet command units and Vietnamese PSYWAR team joined with TF 115 forces on the combined Operation SEA FLOAT/TRAN HUNG DAO III. (Further details on this operation can be found under MARKET TIME Operations, this chapter.)

(C) During July VNN units operated in all Coastal Zones and in the Third and Fourth Riverine areas. A total of 57 gunfire missions were fired during the month, many of which were in support of other Vietnamese units, demonstrating the RVNAF capability for coordination and mutual support. With incorporation of RAIDS 72 through 75 into Amphibious Task Force (ATF) 211, the VNN was able to magnify its participation in the riverine warfare effort which was reflected in the increased number of VNN operations during July.

(C) During August, activities of the VNN were routine. The RAGs in the Third and Fourth Riverine Areas conducted 2,161 amphibious assaults and over 1,300 river patrols. RAG 31 operated in support of a sweep by the National Police along a portion of the Mang Thit-Nicholai Canal near Vinh Long in the early part of the month. On 27 Aug the VC attacked a VNN hospital ship which was en route from SEA FLOAT to the SEA FLOAT Annex. The VNN reacted almost immediately with a heavy blanket of fire supported by a Seawolf which was already airborne. Within five minutes the SEA FLOAT MATSB reacted with 81mm fire directed on the ambush site, as MSF troops rushed to the scene. Despite the almost immediate counter-attack, the MSF sweep could produce no contact with the enemy; however, six double tube B-40 rocket launchers were captured with three B-40s still in them.

(C) Although the VNN RAIDS had operated with elements of the VNMC previously, it was not until 1 Sep that a reorganization of ATF 211 officially included both RAID and VNMC forces. The initial intent of the JGS was to employ all the elements of the ATF in IV CTZ under the operational control of the 21st ARVN Div. However, had the proposal been carried out RAIDS 70 and 71 would have vacated their assignments in the GIANT SLINGSHOT AO. The final decision was to retain ATG 211.1, of which RAIDS 70 and 71 were a part, in the GIANT SLINGSHOT Operation. ATG 211.2 was composed of RAID 73 and the 5th VNMC Bn under operational control



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FIGURE V-14

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of the 21st ARVN Div, while RAIDS 72, 74 and 75 along with 1st and 3d VNMC Bn were assigned to ATG 211.3 under operational control of the 7th ARVN Div.

(C) TF 212 was activated 19 Oct, bringing to 83 the number of VNN PBRs. They were employed on rivers and canals throughout III and IV CTZs. On 8 Oct, ATG 211.2, composed of RAID 73 and the 5th VNMC Bn, transferred its operations from the Dong Tam area to Ca Mau. The VN Marines moved overland while the watercraft including US units of RIVRON 13 and 15 transited the rivers and canals. Meanwhile, ATG 211.3 operations in the U Minh Forest which began 10 Sep had resulted in enemy losses of 233 KIA, 37 captured, 101 Hoi Chanh, and 53 suspects detained by the end of October. VNN and VNMC losses were 50 KIA and 194 WIA during the same period.

(C) On 5 Nov, along with the turnover of the Coastal Surveillance Center (CSC), Qui Nhon, the VNN assumed the responsibilities for MARKET TIME stations 3D through 3I. (See Figure V-14). With these additional seven stations, the VNN had 27 patrol stations under their operational control. On 17 Nov with receipt of two more WPBs, additional stations in the First and Third Coastal Zones were assumed. With a general lull in hostile action throughout RVN, there were few significant encounters with the enemy. The boats and craft of the RAIDS, RAGs, and RPGs continued in the interdiction surveillance operations.

(C) Activity continued at a low level throughout the month of December. Weather caused a slackening in the northern part of the country as the number of craft detected and inspected was down. Two more WPBs were turned over to the VNN from the USCG on 11 Dec and areas 1C and 1D of the MARKET TIME patrols were assumed by the VNN. In another significant event of the day, a VNN officer assumed command of the Upper Saigon River Operation READY DECK. The operation continued to be a SEA LORDS campaign and units retained their 194.6 task designator.

AIR OPERATIONS

Introduction

(C) During 1969, COMUSMACV had at his disposal approximately 246 fixed-wing aircraft and 239 helicopters of the 1st MAW, 3,500 Army helicopters, 650 Army fixed-wing aircraft (all in South Vietnam), and 1,200 USAF aircraft (including a few rescue helicopters) operating out of RVN. In addition, he had support from contingents of SAC B-52s in Thailand, Guam, and Okinawa, and from a fleet of naval aircraft staging from "Yankee Station" carriers in the South China Sea. He also had access to data gathered from several highly classified reconnaissance programs.

(U) This formidable array of airpower was absolutely essential to the MACV mission. The mobility of this airpower allowed US forces to roam the skies almost at will, shifting vast quantities of men and supplies, delivering or extracting troops and equipment from otherwise inaccessible areas, photographing and scanning even the most remote areas on a continuing basis, and delivering awesome firepower to targets in response to high level targeting plans or urgent tactical requests. The importance -- and value -- of this quick response capability of airpower

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in SEASIA could hardly be overestimated. Because of it, COMUSMACV was able to extend his forces while guaranteeing them a reasonable measure of security. In this respect, airpower performed a decisive service.

(U) Following the Nov 1968 bombing halt of NVN the characteristics of air operations in SEASIA underwent a dramatic change. No longer was there a struggle for air supremacy. Forces previously committed to defend strike formations and maintain air superiority over NVN were made available for intensified roles in interdiction and ground support. Quite properly, air operations in SEASIA became more subordinate to operations on the ground just as ground operations were subordinate to the political goals for which the war was being fought.

(U) In the following pages, no attempt has been made to give a comprehensive treatment of the role of airpower in SEASIA for the period under review. The magnitude of the effort was such that statistics, for all their inherent weaknesses, must be used to describe it. Moreover, the various functional roles were complex, often interrelated, and, due to the nature of the support, impossible to evaluate with accuracy except in a general way.

(S) Even in the functional approach, there has been compromise. Interdiction, for example, has been broken down into out-country and in-country operations. The former, which took place in Laos, was centered almost entirely on the COMMANDO HUNT campaign in Southern Laos and served not only to show how that particular operation was carried out but also to portray the difficulties and techniques that were common to interdiction efforts of that sort. In-country interdiction was even more vague. The interdiction of enemy troops and supplies in RVN was a continuous affair. There were surges from time to time but that function simply could not be segmented into Campaigns. If enemy troops or supplies could be hit before they came into contact with friendly forces, so much the better. But that could be at any time and almost anywhere, and often was so closely related to close support of ground troops as to be indistinguishable from that function. For that reason, representative examples have been chosen to portray the highlights, describe the concept, and relate the techniques used in implementing it.

(U) In other instances, such as reconnaissance the functional concept itself needed no elaboration and the magnitude of effort was best portrayed in rather cold statistics. Special emphasis, if any, must be reserved for a surge effort or an important change in policy, equipment, or technique. Search and rescue, another vital function, had all the warmth and drama one cared to give it, but again, for the purposes of the MACV history, the statistics told the basic story. The techniques used to pluck men from the jungles or the water under hazardous conditions were worth some mention but it would have been superfluous to relate individual rescues except to illustrate an important concept or technique. This rationale explains why many matters which received much detailed coverage in earlier command histories (i. e., the development of the B-52 support effort) has now been dealt with in a more statistical account of effort expended and results obtained.

(U) It remains to be noted that unquestionably the most valuable function of airpower in RVN was also the most difficult to analyze and describe. This was the function of "close support" of ground troops which, in magnitude alone, accounted for over four million sorties annually. There were several reasons for this. One was the fact that all services were involved and in different ways. The Army flew the vast majority of the "combat" and "combat support" missions with its armed helicopters. The AF, Navy, and Marines flew TACAIR (which by definition included interdiction) or "ground support." The services understandably differed in definition on

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what constituted "combat" or "combat support" missions and what constituted a sortie. Finally, as mentioned above, there was a grey area between interdiction and close support in which, for all practical purposes, the two functions were indistinguishable.

Ground Support

(S) Employing techniques dictated by circumstances and experience, close air support involved a variety of aircraft, performing a variety of functions, under an even greater variety of circumstances. Moreover, this support ranged from aid provided by a single aircraft, such as a helicopter gunship, a fighter/bomber, or the combined efforts of helicopter gunships, TAC-AIR, "SPOOKY" or "SHADOW" gunships, and even, as at Khe Sanh in 1968 and Bu Prang-Duc Lap in 1969, heavy B-52 strikes. Flexibility was the key to performing the varied functions, communications and the airplanes themselves were the keys to mobility, and the various weaponry the foundation for the firepower. The result was what might be called "ever-ready aid" for ground troops in the RVN.

(S) The magnitude of close air support in RVN during 1969 although reduced -- was such that statistics have been used to portray it. Figure V-15 reflects the 1969 monthly attack sortie rate as compared to 1968.

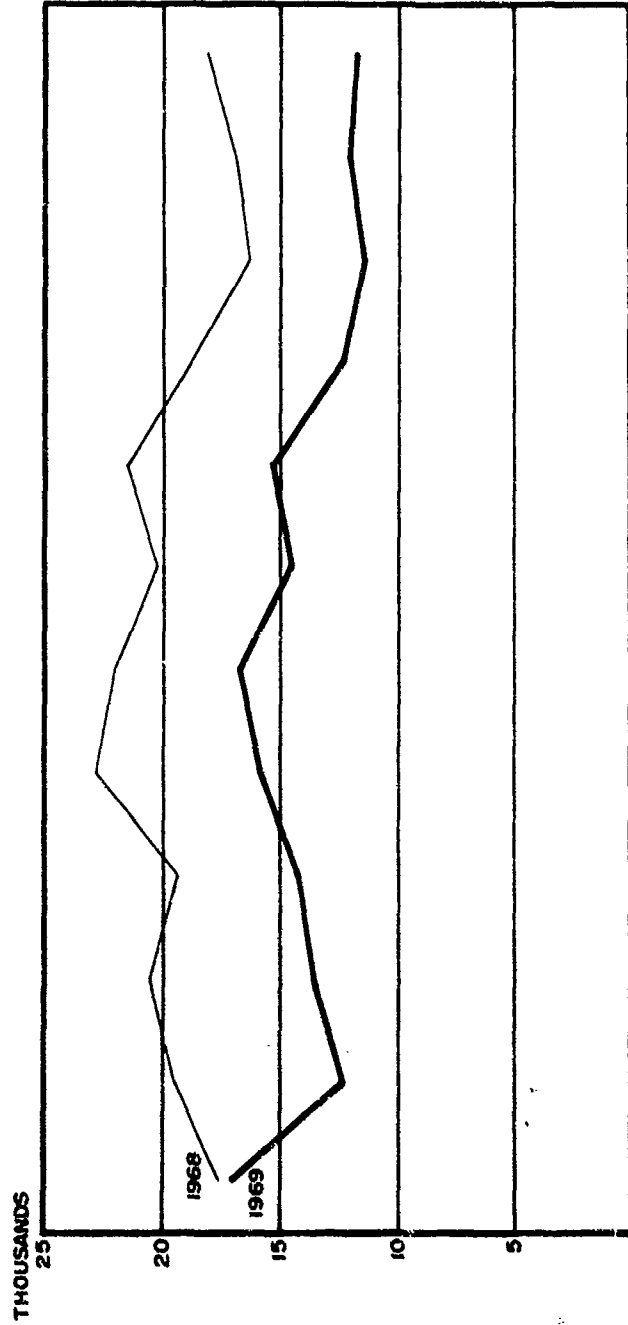
(S) The flexibility of close ground support during 1969 continued to play an ever-present significant role and helped retain allied superiority in the RVN. It ranged from such ingenious and sudden uses as that of an AC-119 using its 20 kilowatt target illumination lamp to provide light for a surgical operation going on down below, to carefully prepared operations designed to provide support as needed on a continuing basis. The latter category, which was more typical of close ground support than a spectacular incident such as a helicopter discarding its ammunition to make more room for a downed flier, were illustrated by several examples. One instance concerned the use of air power in support of fire bases. Another was but one from a number of episodes wherein aircraft were used to "prep" important helicopter landing zones.

(S) In mid 1969, the 25th Inf Div maintained approximately 20 fire support bases within its areas of operations in III CTZ. Usually about half of these bases were occupied at any one time, it being necessary periodically to move the two to six tubes of artillery and roughly 400 men to keep up with the tactical situation. These fire support bases were nearly always in hostile areas and, because of their size, vulnerable to being overrun by the enemy. This in turn required a solid and timely defense capability.

(S) The basic concept of defensive operations used by the 25th Inf Div to protect its fire support bases was to establish a perimeter around the base. This perimeter, 75 to 300 meters in depth, represented the last line of defense against enemy sappers and infantry and it was expected that fire coverage in the area would come from the FSB's own tube artillery and infantry weapons. Outside this area, however, was a large, specified circular defensive area which could be up to several kilometers in depth. This outer ring was divided in half, with defense for one half charged to friendly supporting artillery and the other half to air support. The latter would include fighters and both fixed wing and helicopter gunships, all under the direction of a USAF FAC. This control, plus the depth of the zone, meant that all supporting aircraft could operate simultaneously. 200

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ATTACK SORTIES - REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
USAF & OTHER



	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
USAF	9471	8555	9726	9351	9460	9227	8318	8614	6486	5633	6158	5669
USMC & USN	5462	1675	1166	2281	3360	4525	2920	2759	2745	2074	2288	2390
RAAF	221	217	249	241	239	234	240	241	180	242	241	240
VNAF	2069	2026	2429	2349	2912	2773	3092	3593	3022	3491	3523	3578
TOTAL	17223	12473	13570	14222	18971	16759	14570	15207	12433	11440	12210	11875
CY 68 AVG	11302	5861	237	2223	19623							

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FIGURE V-15

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(S) A striking example of this "sector system" of defense took place in June 1969 when the enemy attempted to overrun FSE CROOK, which had been recently constructed near major enemy base areas and directly astride one of his major LOCs into Tay Ninh Province. At 0250 on 7 Jun, the enemy launched a ground attack, supported by mortar fire. The base hurriedly called for air and artillery support in the designated areas. In response, USAF fighters raced in with high drag bombs and napalm while AC-119 and AC-47 gunships supported with flares and miniguns. 201

(S) After the enemy withdrew at 0630 hours, a sweep of the area revealed a body count of 323 KIA of which 207 were attributed to air power. Friendly casualties amounted to only seven wounded. Subsequent interrogation of PWs revealed that the enemy expected to overrun the base with ease. They were surprised at the amount of firepower brought in to stop them. (See Annex G for a detailed discussion of the defense of FSB CROOK.)

(S) The flexibility of airpower was further demonstrated in its use to "prep" landing zones in the A Chau Valley prior to and during the multi-battalion helicopter/airborne Operation APACHE SNOW in May and June. Ten artillery batteries had their tubes in position to support the operations but some of the chosen landing zones lay outside the artillery fans. It was therefore necessary to use TACAIR to suppress the heavy concentration of AA/AW weapons around the zones. 202

(S) In his request for TACAIR support, the CG, III MAF indicated that "heavy resistance to landing can be expected" and that "success of initial landings is dependent upon max TACAIR." 203 In particular, he wanted 94 preplanned sorties and 28 immediate sorties for LZ preparation and air cover during the combat assaults and subsequent contacts with defending enemy forces.

(S) Prior to the assaults, each landing zone was bombarded for 70 minutes by tactical aircraft and, in some instances, artillery. Final suppressive fire was delivered by air cavalry gunships and aerial artillery. The results of this air offensive were best described by the CG, III MAF, who observed the operation:


The resounding success of the initial assaults by Marine and airborne units on D-Day (10 May) of Operation APACHE SNOW represented a notable accomplishment of all concerned. Particularly gratifying to me was the air support elements to meet our request. . . This surge in air support was basic to the scheme of maneuver and met our requirements in full.

I personally observed the operation on D-Day, which involved a heliborne assault by five US/ARVN battalions into the objective area. I was particularly impressed by the timing of each of the air strikes, which were closely integrated into the assault plan. The control of the large number of tactical aircraft and helicopters in constricted air space was superb. The performance of the fighter pilots, ALOs, FACs, and other controlling agencies was totally professional.

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There is no doubt in my mind that the precise application of air power was instrumental in throwing a determined enemy off balance and assuring the success of the combat assault.²⁰⁴

(C) Perhaps the most impressive example of close air support in the RVN during 1969 took place between 8 May and 2 July in response to VC/NVA attempts to isolate and overrun the vital Ben Het CIDG camp. (See Annex H for a detailed discussion of the Ben Het--Dak To Campaign.) Much like the defenders at Duc Lap the previous August, the troops at Ben Het were in grave danger if the enemy succeeded in cutting land routes to the east and particularly if he were able to mass near enough to the camp to make large scale assaults.


(C) During the initial phases of the campaign, ARVN soldiers sought to obviate enemy strategy by search and destroy missions and by seizing strategic ground to the southeast. Airpower supported with dozens of sorties daily. In preparation for the heavier battle that was certain to come, the Kontum Air Liaison (ALO) was moved to Ben Het on 7 May and a Tactical Air Command Party (TACP) was set up at Dak To for around-the-clock operation on 9 May. Also, the number of FACs and FAC aircraft in the region was more than doubled with the force split between Pleiku and Kontum so that the TACP could capitalize on the variations of the monsoon weather.²⁰⁵

(C) Airpower became even more vital after the enemy successfully interdicted Route 512 between Ben Het and Dak To and began massing their forces near the CIDG camp. At this time, an AC-47 or AC-119 was on station at all times during the hours of darkness; as many as five FACs could be in the air at one time, each directing separate air strikes, ARC LIGHT was running in an average of 13.9 sorties per day, and the C-7s were flying in or air dropping cargo at an impressive rate. (See Transportation section of Chapter IX for additional treatment.) Indeed, the statistics alone for the two months operations gave a good idea of the role airpower played. The FACs flew a total of 571 sorties, the AC-47s and AC-119s more than a hundred; TACAIR accounted for 1,828 sorties, with 140 flown by VNAF pilots, 9 by RAAF pilots and 6 by Navy crews. The SAC B-52s flew 794 sorties on 140 separate target boxes, dropping in the process approximately 19,553 tons of bombs. The C-7s flew 103 supply missions, delivering 235 tons of supplies. Because the enemy concentrated fire on these slow moving craft, a total of 70 fighter escort sorties were flown to protect the Caribous.

(C) Intelligence experts credited air with 165 confirmed KBA, along with an undetermined portion of the 297 credited to joint artillery and TACAIR. The latter was also given credit for an estimated 10 other KBA. Two hundred and two secondary explosions were recorded along with 179 secondary fires. Some 1,334 bunkers and structures, 33 weapons positions, 2 bridges, and 120 fox holes and tunnels were destroyed with a comparable amount listed as damaged.

(C) As with so many battles in RVN, air support at Ben Het was not to be measured in sorties and bombs. Its real value lay in hitting the enemy at any time of day or night, in any kind of weather, and with tremendous firepower. Combined with artillery and other available forces, it could, as it did at Ben Het, keep the enemy off balance and damage him beyond his tolerance level before he could mass his forces for an effective attack.

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(S) An example of the use of airpower in a close support/spoiling role occurred during the period 11-13 Aug. This highpoint was triggered by a surge in Communist activity on the night of 11-12 Aug which, in turn, provoked such a rapid and massive reaction on the part of ARVN and US Forces that a total of 1,274 enemy soldiers were killed in the two day period.

(S) In support of the ground forces, a total of 410 TACAIR sorties were flown during daylight hours. At night, 33 SPOOKY (AC-47), 27 SHADOW (AC-119) and 23 SKYSPOT (radar bombing) missions were flown. In addition, the 834th Air Division flew 24 C-130, 7 C-123, and 14 C-7A sorties in support of six emergency resupply missions and one "combat essential mission." These craft carried a total of 405.4 short tons of ammunition and supplies. (See Chap IX for additional treatment of resupply activities.) Concurrently, hundreds of Army helicopters flew around the clock inserting and extracting troops, providing fire support, flying medevac (DUST-OFF) missions and the like. Additionally, helicopter sorties ran well into the thousands. 206

(S) Meanwhile, in the week prior to 11 Aug, B-52s struck numerous times in districts of Binh Long, An Loc and Loc Ninh provinces where the enemy troops were massing for the attack. "There is no question," the CG of II FFORCEV reported, "that extensive damage. . . was inflicted on the enemy as he massed for the attack." 207

(S) Air support of ground activity during the 11-13 Aug period had more than just a tactical significance, however. It was an admirable example of the one-team concept. It also demonstrated with impressive clarity the mobility and firepower of US and Allied forces and the decisive spoiling effect when those forces were committed properly.

TACAIR Sortie Rate

(S) The month of August witnessed the first phase of an overall reduction of TACAIR support in SEASIA when the 7AF was directed by PACAF to economize in force. Prior to this directive, the USAF had flown an average of 243 preplanned in-country sorties a day; however, effective 26 Aug, the USAF preplanned sortie rate was reduced to 200 in-country sorties a day -- a reduction of 17.5 percent. 208

(S) Whereas the direct reduction affected only USAF assets, the total number of in-country sorties flown (which included all FWMAF air assets) declined from a predirective average of 581 to a post directive average of 503. It must be noted however that a contributing factor to the overall decline in total sorties flown was the redeployment of 18 F-4 aircraft of the 1st MAW. The loss of these 18 Marine aircraft, which prior to their departure were flying a 1.0 sortie rate, resulted in an overall loss of 18 sorties a day. 209

(S) As part of the Secretary of Defense Project 703, further reductions in TACAIR support occurred on 1 Oct, when the JCS imposed a limitation -- retroactive to September -- of 14,000 sorties per month for USAF aircraft (attack/strike) operating in SEASIA. This latest limitation amounted to a reduction in USAF TACAIR sorties of approximately 3,700 flights per month. However, authorization was granted to exceed the limitation during any one month period of operation as long as the average of 14,000 sorties per month was realized at the termination of the fiscal year. Inasmuch as the USAF had already flown 14,689 sorties in September -- prior to receipt of the JCS directive -- an immediate reduction in the allocation of sorties was necessary to effect the change to the new sortie rate and also to make up for the September overfly. 210

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(S) For approximately one year (15 Oct 68 -- 7 Oct 69) prior to the receipt of the JCS directive, the distribution of effort between in-country and out-country sorties had been fairly well established at 55 percent in-country and 45 percent out-country. However, the onset of the northeast monsoon in Laos and the desire of COMUSMACV to increase the weight of effort in Laos -- to counteract the enemy's resupply program -- resulted in a new division of TACAIR sorties to 50/50 percent, effective 7 Oct. Later, as the enemy's truck traffic in Laos continued to increase, additional out-country strikes were required to impede the flow of supplies southward. Therefore, effective 28 Oct, the distribution of sorties between out-country and in-country was changed to 55 and 45 percent respectively. Although not effecting the availability of TACAIR "immediate" sorties, the redistribution of TACAIR employment -- when coupled with the overall sortie reductions -- resulted in a drastically curtailed allocation of sorties to be utilized by FWMAF and RVNAF forces in support of their ground schemes of maneuver. When compared with the 24 Aug in-country sortie rate, the combined reduction/reallocation actions taken in Oct resulted in an approximately 50 percent reduction of available in-country sorties.²¹¹

(S) The impact of the directed reductions and reallocations was not received by the field commanders as a fait accompli. The (III MAF, in his request for an examination of the allocation of preplanned air sorties to determine the feasibility of increasing the number of sorties allocated to ARVN I Corps, stated:

This headquarters has received a letter from the Commanding General I Corps in which he points out the drastic reduction which has been made in allocation of daily preplanned air sorties to ARVN forces. Preplanned sorties allocated to ARVN I Corps have dropped from a high of 16.1 per day during the month of June 69 to the present 2.3 per day. During November 1968, ARVN I Corps was allocated 63 percent of its requested preplanned sorties; during the same month (Nov) in 1969, the percentage dropped to 23 percent.²¹²

(S) COMUSMACV's basic position -- in response to continued requests for additional TACAIR support -- was stated in a reply to CG, I FFORCEV's request for additional gunship/flareship availability, and is quoted:

The number of aircraft fragged for operations in each CTZ is dependent on where the greatest enemy threat exists at a given time and the necessity to use air power with flexibility to counter that threat. Available assets will continue to be allocated in such a way as to counter the areas of greatest enemy threat throughout the entire RVN. Accordingly, one additional gunship has been fragged for support of II CTZ since receipt of your request. Continuous assignment is not to, repeat not to, be expected as increased threat in other areas of RVN will necessitate reallocation of assets as the situations warrant.²¹³

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MISTY BRONCO

(C) To counter the unconventional tactics of the enemy and provide 7AF the wherewithal to render more efficient and timely support to ground commanders, Headquarters USAF, in May 1968, had directed TAC to conduct an armed FAC/gunship, phased response evaluation. The phased response concept -- involving an armed FAC aircraft in conjunction with a gunship aircraft -- was concerned with reducing the AF response time to "immediate" air support requests. Under this concept, the two aircraft would provide continuous AF strike presence over an Army maneuver unit and make AF fire support as immediately available as registered artillery.

(S) The test phase, nicknamed MISTY BRONCO, was conducted from 4 Apr to 13 June 1969 using six OV-10A aircraft supporting the 2d Bde, 25th Inf Div. The primary mission of the armed OV-10A aircraft continued to be the basic FAC mission, e. g., strike control, visual reconnaissance, artillery adjustment, and escort. However, arming the OV-10A supplemented the mission by providing limited but immediate tactical ordnance to support troops in contact (TIC) until requested tactical air arrived. It also permitted the FACs to attack fleeting targets until additional fire support was able to respond. The OV-10A's ordnance included four M-60C machine guns with 2,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, and rocket pods holding 14 2.75-inch WP marking rockets and 14 2.75-inch HE rockets.

(C) All ordnance expended by the MISTY BRONCO FACs was in accordance with the current Rules of Engagement and conducted under the same clearance procedures established for employment of tactical air strikes. As a general rule, no expenditure of ordnance was authorized unless other supporting fire, e. g. artillery, light fire teams, or tactical aircraft was not readily available.

(S) In the evaluation period, 508 armed sorties were flown during the daylight only. These sorties produced 107 opportunities for the FAC to expend ordnance in support of ground force requirements. Ordnance was expended on 98 of these support opportunities. On seven opportunities, the FAC did not expend due to availability of other fire support; on the other two opportunities, there were no expenditures due to an inoperative gunsight and failure to receive timely strike clearance, as reflected below:

MISTY BRONCO SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES vs OCCASIONS FOR ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE

<u>Target Category</u>	<u>Support Opportunity</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Additional Fire Spt N/R</u>
Troops in Contact (TIC)	32	25	7
Fleeting/Perishable	50	48	33
Non-Time Sensitive	25	25	25
Total	107	98	65

(S) In seven of 32 support opportunities, in immediate support of TIC situations, the FAC provided sufficient fire power to the ground commander that TACAIR or ground organic fire support was not required. The FAC also provided interim fire support on 18 other occasions. The remaining support opportunities were mainly FAC-acquired targets during which the FAC expended his ordnance on 73 targets. No additional fire support was required on 58 of these occasions.

(S) The overall results of the MISTY BRONCO evaluation were very favorable and the ground commanders were enthusiastic with the new concept. The armed FAC provided a limited but highly responsive airstrike capability to the ground commander and was immediately available for TIC situations. The response time for AF strike support to an immediate close air support request was greatly reduced by the nearly immediate response of the FAC. (The average FAC response time, from the ground commander's initial request until the FAC expended his ordnance on the target, was 5.1 minutes. The majority of this time -- 3.7 min -- was delay caused while obtaining ground clearance to fire.) Additionally, during FAC reconnaissance flights, small groups of VC/NVA, enemy vehicles, sampans, etc., could be contained by the armed FAC until heavier fire support could be brought to bear. In many cases the FAC's fire power was sufficient to destroy the target. The following provides a summary of MISTY BRONCO sorties and strike results.

MISTY BRONCO SORTIES AND STRIKE RESULTS

<u>Sorties Flown</u>	<u>Munitions Expended</u>		<u>Ground Fire</u>	
	<u>HE Rds</u>	<u>7.62mm</u>	<u>Received</u>	<u>Aircraft Hits</u>
508	1,171	84,105.	11	2

Total BDA achieved from 4 April through 14 June 1969:

15 KBA (confirmed)	6 Structures damaged
77 KBA (probable)	1 Motorcycle destroyed
13 Sampans destroyed	7 Secondary explosions
6 Sampans damaged	5 Secondary fires
7 Transportation units destroyed	4 Bunkers damaged/destroyed
2 Rafts destroyed	2 Fighting positions uncovered
7 Structures destroyed	2 Tunnel entrances uncovered
500 lbs rice, 100 lbs of salt, and one bag of cement were destroyed	
Enemy guns were silenced on two occasions while in support of TIC	

(S) In response to the enthusiastic indorsement of the ground commanders and the very favorable test results, the Commander, 7AF directed that all remaining OV-10A aircraft operating in RVN be armed to provide this vitally needed concept of air support to all US ground forces. ²¹⁴ However, a shortage of armament technicians delayed completion of the project until 1970.

Air Support for Troops in Contact

(S) In the summer of 1968 the Air Force sent a team of analysts to RVN to study forward air controller operations. The team collected detailed information on air support to friendly troops in contact, immediate and preplanned strikes, communications, delivery accuracy, and the allocation of strike effort among different types of targets. Although this was a short-term effort and only covered tactical air operations supporting the 25th Inf Div in III CTZ, the team was confident that the sample was representative of overall US air operations in RVN.

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(S) Findings derived from the data in the study were:

1. Ground commanders requested tactical air support in less than 8 percent of their engagements with the enemy; these engagements typically involved large numbers of enemy troops. The bulk of the ground contacts requested either artillery or armed helicopter support.

2. Primarily as a result of the small number of air support requests, less than 10 percent of the total attack sorties in RVN were in support of troops in contact; the remainder attack interdiction targets or areas of suspected enemy activity.

3. The response time (from time of enemy contact to bomb delivery) was not appreciably longer for sorties flown from strip alert than from airborne aircraft diverted to the contact (about 130 minutes for strip alert compared to 120 minutes for diverts).

4. Over 50 percent of the air strikes hit targets preplanned over 24 hours in advance, where intelligence was many times not current.

(S) However Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Systems Analysis) ODASD (SA) analysts believed that the proportion of air sorties devoted to support of troops in contact was surprisingly small -- especially since the sample only included 201 ground contacts -- and conducted a search for additional data on the subject. A source of data was discovered in the daily MACV Evening Telecons, which included a count of the countrywide total US/VNAF attack sorties flown every day divided into those devoted to "immediates", and within that category, those devoted to direct support of troops in contact.

(S) The following statistics were developed by ODASD from the MACV Evening Telecons:

ATTACK SORTIES IN RVN
(Daily Average)

	1969				
	<u>May</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>
Total Attack Sorties	609	537	439	377	394
Immediate Sorties	204	151	98	96	125
Sorties in Support of Troops in Contact	93	46	35	27	43
% Immediate	33	26	22	25	32
% Troop Support	15	8	8	7	11
% Immediates in Support of Troops in Contact	46	30	36	28	34
US KIA*	39	26	16	12	15

* The degree of combat activity is indicated by the level of US combat deaths.

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(S) Based upon the foregoing statistics the ODASD analysis reached these conclusions:

1. The AF figure of 10 percent was a good approximation of the average percentage of total attack sorties flown in support of Allied troops in contact.
2. The number of total attack sorties, immediate sorties and sorties in support of troops all varied directly with US KIA indicating a relatively consistent response to the changing tempo of combat.
3. The percentage of total sorties used in support of troops varied approximately in the same direction as US KIA.
4. From 67 percent to 78 percent of all attack sorties in RVN were preplanned, depending on the intensity of combat activity; only 28 percent to 46 percent of all immediate sorties were used to support troops in contact.

(S) Although the AF survey had not covered gunship sorties, the ODASD survey did explore the subject and found, "...about one-third of all gunship sorties support troops in contact with the enemy." This finding validated the AF's position that, "The bulk of the ground contacts request either artillery or armed helicopter support."²¹⁵

(C) Publication of the foregoing ODASD (SA) report brought forth an Air Force rebuttal, which was based on "...a significant portion of the data was misinterpreted resulting in a series of erroneous findings." The major points of disagreement, and rebuttal are quoted:

1. Ground commanders request tactical air support in less than 8 percent of their engagements with the enemy; these engagements typically involve large numbers of enemy troops. The bulk of the ground contacts requested either artillery or armed helicopter support.
2. Primarily as a result of the small number of air support requests, less than 10 percent of the total attack sorties in South Vietnam support troops in contact (TIC); the remainder attack interdiction targets or areas of suspected enemy activity. While it is acceptable to say, as you have, that 10 percent of the attack sorties in SVN are used to support TIC, it is not correct to say that the other 90 percent are directed on a preplanned basis against fixed targets and suspected enemy targets. The FAC OPS sample clearly indicates that nearly 90 of 661, or about an additional 15 percent of the missions fill immediate requests to strike fleeting and lucrative immediate targets and, as shown below, the remaining 75 percent (the preplanned sorties) are used to support the current needs of the ground forces.
3. The response time (from time of enemy contact to bomb delivery) is not appreciably longer for sorties flown from strip alert than from airborne aircraft diverted to the contact (about 130 minutes for strip alert compared to 120 minutes for diverts). In the FAC OPS study, the time interval from the start of a ground contact until first ordnance delivery is defined as fire support reaction time rather than response time. It averaged 129 minutes for a sample of four ground alert missions and 118 minutes for a sample of five division diverts of preplanned missions. However, the definitions and corresponding data in your reports that make reference to Tactical Air Response Times are quoted erroneously. Our definition is that segment of Fire Support Reaction Time beginning when the DASC (or Division TACP in the case of Division diverts) receives a request for air support and ending with the first TOT. Similarly, we emphasize in 68-4 that these data were available only for ground alert missions and not available for

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division divert aircraft. A further qualification of the results made explicit in our report is that 40.2 minute average increment for divert aircraft is not TAC Air Response Time. Apparently this went unheeded, if not unnoticed. Hence, in your report the response time data for air diverts, as shown in tabular form, is in error. Also, it is noted in our 68-4 that FAC OPS data includes the holding time within TAC Air Response Time; it is not separated as shown in your table titled, 'Air Support Response Time.' Although not broken out in our report, the time from Air Force receipt of a divert request until the fighter rendezvous with the FAC averages in the neighborhood of 10 minutes.

4. Over 50 percent of the air strikes hit targets preplanned over 24 hours in advance, where intelligence is many times not current. The section of your report covering preplanned sorties is erroneous in toto, being based on procedures that were operative prior to 30 May 1968. Since that date, the method of allocating them is, in essence, that 70 percent of the preplanned sorties are allocated by area on a weekly basis, to the major ground commanders to meet operational requirements within their areas of operations. These strikes are used for small unit operations, long range reconnaissance patrols, cordon and search, column cover, landing zone preparation and cover and to counter enemy initiated attacks. Thus, these sorties are allocated by area and not by specific targets. The remaining 30 percent of preplanned sorties are allocated daily, but again by area - not target, to support higher levels of conflicts or to add firepower on newly acquired enemy targets. Thus, preplanned sorties are allocated to the ground unit well in advance but the actual targets are assigned by the ground commander just prior to the actual employment. Hence, the latest intelligence information is used in target selection. 216

Out-of-Country Interdiction

(S) After the termination of the ROLLING THUNDER bombing campaign in November 1968, all US out-of-country air interdiction effort in Southeast Asia was centered in Laos. There it filled two main purposes. One was to support anti-communist efforts throughout Laos, but particularly in the threatened regions of the BARREL ROLL areas and the Bolovens Plateau region of the Panhandle. The other purpose was to interdict the flow of Communist war materials from North Vietnam into the Ho Chi Minh Trail system of Laos and thence into the northern provinces of South Vietnam. To this end, over the past several years, Laos had been divided into named and lettered areas to reflect high threat areas, types of interdiction and appropriate rules of engagement to be applied. (See Figure V-16).

(S) The Communist Pathet Lao and NVA customarily increased their activity in Laos during the dry season (northeast monsoon) requiring a corresponding increase in interdiction effort. By the same token, the southwest monsoon hindered both air operations and Communist ground operations. (See Annex B on monsoon seasons SEASIA.) The dry season of late 1968 and early 1969, therefore, saw the usual increase in activity throughout Laos, however, it also witnessed something much more ominous. A great surge of war materials passing into and through Laos was strong evidence that the Communists were preparing for another major offensive in the northern provinces of RVN perhaps on the scale of the 1968 Tet Offensive. "I share the concern which Joint Chiefs have expressed concerning enemy logistical activity," the US Ambassador to Laos wrote in early January 1969. "Southward movement accomplished would indicate prospects of trouble in northern provinces of South Vietnam in the period immediately ahead." 217

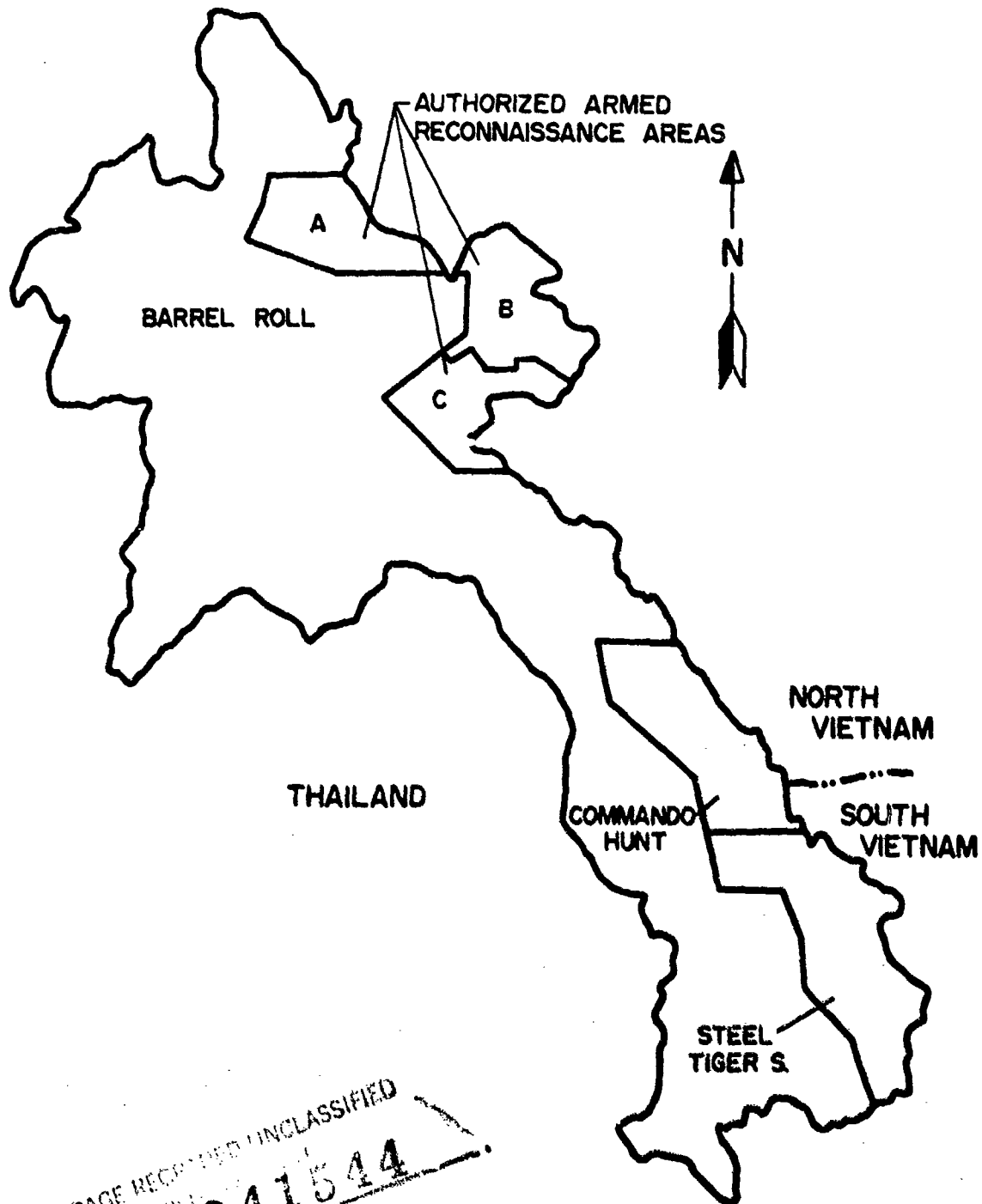
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INTERDICTION CAMPAIGN IN LAOS



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FIGURE V-16

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COMMANDO HUNT

(S) The logistical shift mentioned above, with its grave potential dangers, had been anticipated by COMUSMACV. In the summer of 1968, he had ordered planning for a sophisticated, concentrated, day-night interdiction effort covering some 1,700 square miles of Southern Laos. (See Figure V-17). The campaign itself, which became known as COMMANDO HUNT, was officially inaugurated on 15 Nov 1968. Thus, its introduction fell into the period of the 1968 MACV command history and it has been briefly described in that document. (See Vol 1, pp. 409-411.) It was in the first four months of 1969, however, that COMMANDO HUNT matured into the most sophisticated and ambitious interdiction effort yet attempted in SEASIA. As such it deserves considerable attention, not just for what it did or did not do, but also for its techniques and patterns which were representative of air interdiction efforts throughout Laos.

(S) As originally envisioned, COMMANDO HUNT had two primary objectives. They were:

To reduce the enemy's logistical flow by substantially increasing the time required for him to transmit his supplies into South Vietnam.

To destroy enemy trucks and caches of military supplies along routes leading into SVN. ²¹⁸

(S) There were several reasons why COMMANDO HUNT was destined to receive so much emphasis. The primary one, of course, was the importance COMUSMACV attached to blocking a logistical flow which could result in large scale offensives against RVN. Secondly, the terrain in Laos was such that the enemy enjoyed a variety of advantages and it would require both extensive and intensive efforts to achieve the stated objectives. The Annam mountain range, for example, allowed the Communists entry into Laos through three major passes -- Nape, Mu Gia, and Ban Karai. The Laotian roadways leading from these passes contained obvious "choke points" worthy of special attention; however, the road network generally snaked through the extensive karst (limestone) region, which was rich with natural caves for hiding and storing supplies and shielded by a dense jungle canopy. Moreover, the absence of ditches or fences along the more than 450 miles of primary roadway in the COMMANDO HUNT areas meant that trucks could exit the roadway wherever the jungle allowed it. Thus enemy traffic, even during daytime, could more or less vanish into the jungle at the first sign of approaching danger.

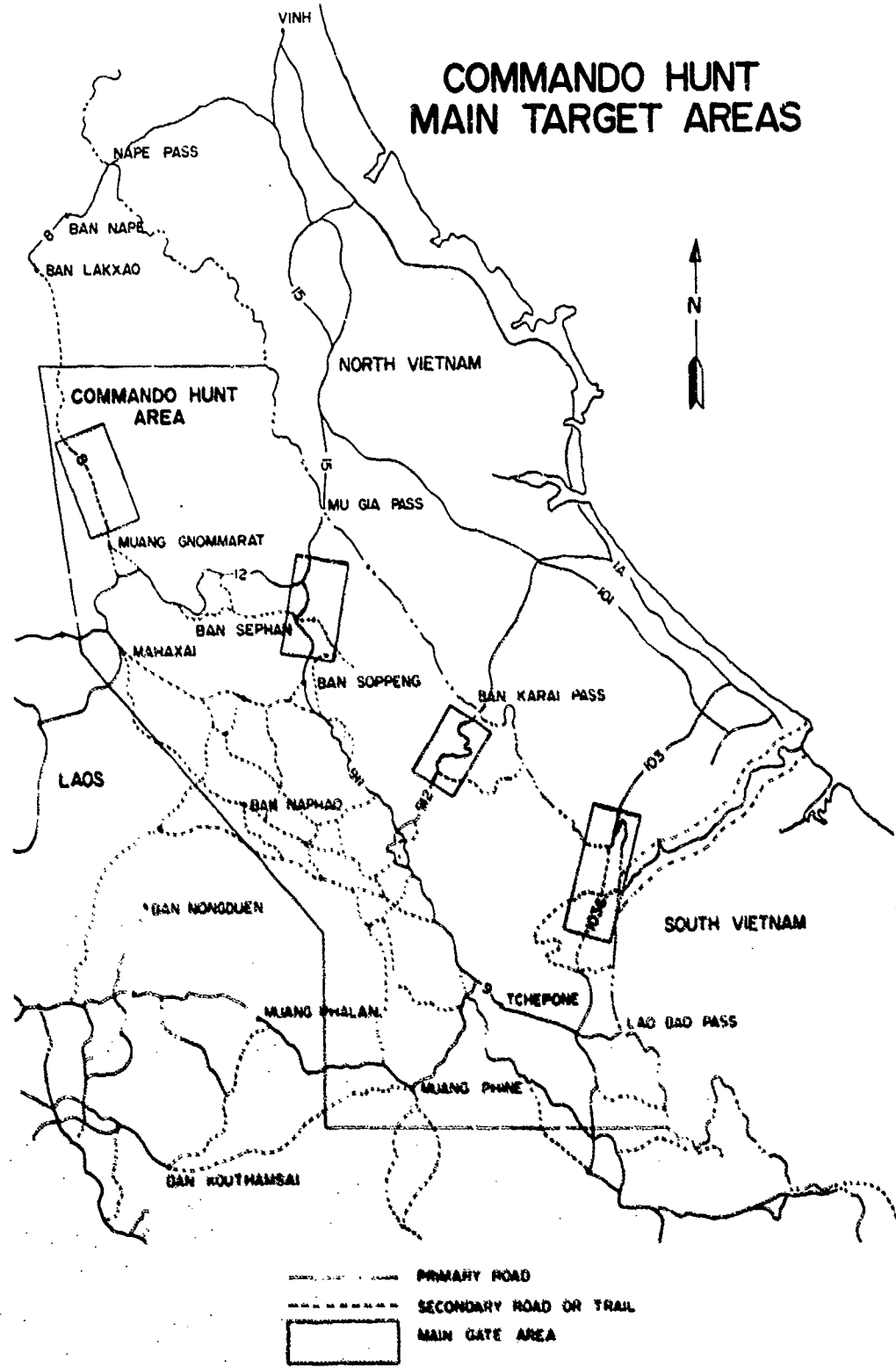
(S) By western standards, the winding dirt, gravel or corduroy roadways were primitive but past experience had taught US planners not to underestimate Communist determination and ingenuity. The Communists, for example, proved willing to tie the tops of trees together in order to completely cover a road passing beneath and the simple expedient of putting fresh cut branches on top of trucks proved singularly effective, at least for a time. Indeed, the entire interdiction effort of COMMANDO HUNT became a fascinating variation of the classical "challenge and response." When an obvious "choke point" was found and hit, the Communists responded with one or more bypasses, sometimes with one deliberately designed to draw all attention and fire away from the real LOCs. The US successes against truck parks led to increased AAA threats in the area, to increased dispersal of traffic, and to dummy parks, trails, roads, and fords. To both sides, therefore, the success or failure of the interdiction/anti-interdiction campaigns in Laos depended on winning the game of challenge and response.

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COMMANDO HUNT MAIN TARGET AREAS



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FIGURE V-17

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(S) For COMMANDO HUNT, COMUSMACV relied on an integrated interdiction force of control agencies, intelligence activities, strike aircraft, munitions, and the IGLOO WHITE system, the latter an all weather full time surveillance nexus of acoustic and seismic sensors together with relay aircraft and an Infiltration Surveillance Center (ISC). The IGLOO WHITE system was under the operational control of a wing level organization known as Task Force ALPHA with overall operational control of COMMANDO HUNT exercised by the Commander, 7AF.

(S) The basic strategy used throughout the first five and one half months of the COMMANDO HUNT campaign was a flexible allocation of forces against the enemy in such a way as effectively to erode his ability to meet the challenge with an appropriate response. In this regard, four special categories of targets were established, each with a relative priority for force allocation. Top priority went to some 10 interdiction points at key locations, which were known as choke points, traffic control points, or simply TCPs. Road cuts at these positions were to be augmented by mining and by armed reconnaissance flights to harass repair crews. Second priority went to established truck parks and storage areas. It was reasoned that the parks and areas would be established in generally predictable locations where various intelligence gathering methods and devices could pinpoint specific targets. Originally it was intended that B-52s, supplemented by F-4s and F-105s, would work over the truck parks and storage areas, with the B-52s and the qualified fighter-bomber pilots using radar bombing when necessary.

(S) Moving trucks and truck convoys, which came to be known as "movers" made up the third-priority target. It was known that the attacks against interdiction points, truck parks, and storage areas could not prevent truck movement, particularly at night. The plan, therefore, was to send an appropriate force against truck convoys as they formed and as they attempted to move under cover of darkness. This around-the-clock pressure method naturally relied heavily on sensor information and on highly trained FACs using night observation devices.

(S) The fourth target priority was made up of enemy AAA defenses. The enemy was certain to protect vital areas with appropriate defenses. Defenses which had to be neutralized if appropriate ordnance delivery against trucks and supplies were to be accomplished without incurring unacceptable losses.

(S) None of the target categories carried an absolute priority. The idea was to maintain pressure on all categories with emphasis varying according to circumstances. In general, however, primary effort could be expected against the choke points which the enemy would be forced to repair or circumvent. Either way, interdicted TCPs would help daytime armed reconnaissance by creating lucrative truck parks and storage area targets. ²¹⁹

Initial Operations

(S) As planned, a substantial portion of the initial effort went into hitting selected TCPs, particularly in the Ban Laboy and Ban Pha Nop areas. During its "first phase," which had continued through December 1968, an average of 124 sorties had been flown against TCPs during the day and 40 at night. This represented roughly 50 percent of the COMMANDO HUNT strike effort for the period.

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(S) As a result of the strikes against TCPs, truck parks and armed reconnaissance against LOCs, traffic flow had declined more or less steadily until mid-December. Then it had increased sharply again during the last two weeks of the year. Apparently the enemy had responded to the challenge of the previous month although it must be added that US planners during this period had continually refined and improved existing techniques and developed new ones. Using sensor data, for example, a western bypass at Ban Pha Nop had been suspected when the volume of traffic above and below the TCP proved significantly larger than that in the TCP area itself. Moreover, by dividing the 30 mile by 90 mile COMMANDO HUNT area into four zones, analytical interpretation of sensor data coming out of the various zones had revealed patterns of logistical flow and a surge moving through one of the passes could, with some success, be followed as it made its way south. With the sensors strategically placed, it had been possible to detect roughly when and where a convoy stopped to hide during the day. Over a period of time, this type information had tended to fall into a pattern, indicating the presence of established truck parks and storage areas and terminals for shuttle type logistical operations. When this knowledge had been matched with careful photo interpretation of likely spots and equally careful surveillance by Forward Air Controllers, the once secure parks and storage areas often had become lucrative targets. In fact, during the Phase I effort, this sort of identification had been refined to the point where attacks on "Zulu" truck parks (marked in Zulu time, hence the name) began yielding impressive results. Noting exactly when and where a convoy stopped during the early morning hours, the possible locations were cross checked with other information to determine their potential as immediate targets, that is, targets to be struck within the next few hours. As the COMMANDO HUNT report stated, "Often they made excellent alternative targets for diverted sorties, yielding impressive indications of target damage in the form of secondary explosions and fires."

(S) Enemy reaction during Phase I had been characterized by a multitude of simple but ingenious expedients designed to obviate the capabilities of US air power. Among other things, the Communists had devised an aircraft early warning system, using lookouts and subterranean "echo chambers" which acted as primitive amplifiers. Substantial AAA weapons were also brought in, the sites carefully disguised, and dummy ones created to draw attacking aircraft into expending their ordnance uselessly. At the same time, truck parks had been carefully hidden as much as 1000 meters off of the roadways, often with as many as 50 hillside evacuations to protect the vehicles. The size of convoys were reduced and a sort of shuttle system was introduced so that drivers had to be familiar with only a small segment of the LOCs.

(S) During this phase, the Communists had revealed themselves as masters of concealment. Underwater bridges had been built to aid in stream crossings and, in clear areas, artificial canopies had been created by building trellises or planting fast growing vines. During daylight hours, a roadway might be effectively hidden by the simple expedient of putting fresh branches into bamboo shoots implanted into the ground.²²⁰

(S) Deception also had played an important part in the enemy efforts. Besides the dummy gun sites, by-passes or ferds had been built for the purpose of drawing US attention away from carefully hidden ones nearby. Useless vehicles had been dressed up and placed along the roadways to draw fire; empty crates had been stacked to represent a valuable target; and in at least one instance stones had been arranged in such a fashion that pilots mistook them for a valid target. Because they had been obviously monitoring air-to-air voice transmissions, the Communists had attempted to confuse attacking pilots by simulating the rocket explosions of FAC aircraft. The enemy had also started fake fires in areas away from the truck park and storage areas in order to attract US pilots into useless attacks.

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(S) There was no way of knowing exactly how effective these efforts at passive resistance to air strikes really were but in the aggregate, they must have greatly helped the Communist effort. A 7AF Intelligence summary stated:

Although not liberally endowed with all the sophisticated equipment needed for a modern air defense structure, enemy forces in Laos have met this deficiency with ingenuity, improvisation, mobility, dedication, and deception. These ingredients, when resourcefully combined and applied, added to the additional advantage that it is we who must seek out the enemy, provide some protection for the Communist efforts to move material in Laos. ²²¹

(S) All US forces had attempted to counter these efforts with refinements of their own, the principal one being increased skill on the part of the aircrews. At the same time, however, great emphasis had been placed on scheduling and strike techniques which had kept around-the-clock pressure on the entire logistical system and which capitalized on the strengths of the various strike aircraft and equipment. Of particular importance, for example, had been the control and manipulation of the relatively slow moving propeller aircraft, with their higher loiter time, as truck killers and armed reconnaissance aircraft.

(S) Since US forces held the initiative in attacking the LOCs, it would seem that they were doing the challenging and the Communists were doing most of the responding. But it was not that simple. The US forces faced the recurring challenge of locating and hitting the appropriate targets, both complicated and difficult tasks, and of countering each major Communist ploy with an effective counterploy. Indeed, the magnitude of the problems facing US forces could be appreciated in the fact that despite our efforts, the Communists were generally successful in their logistical efforts throughout Phase I and well into Phase II. "On balance", the US Ambassador to Laos wrote in February 1969, "it would appear that the enemy has successfully maintained his logistical system through the height of the COMMANDO HUNT Interdiction Campaign by systematically opening new routes and repairing old routes." ²²²

(S) Phase II of COMMANDO HUNT ran from 1 Jan 69 through the following February. Characterized by a significant escalation in Communist attempts to get supplies through the Laos LOCs into RVN and by a corresponding response on the part of the American forces, this phase was dubbed by the COMMANDO HUNT report as the "Challenge and Response Phase." In essence, the Communists increased their attempts to use the LOCs by negating, as much as possible, the ability of US forces to find and destroy them. The US, on the other hand, used facilities available to them to obviate the enemy's use of camouflage, by-passes, etc. For the Communists, this meant maximum ingenuity; for the US it meant maximum flexibility in the application of available forces on the enemy's total logistical system in Laos. ²²³

(S) Part of the shift that characterized Phase II was brought about by relatively good success on the part of the enemy in building by-passes around certain TCPs. Besides being built with concealment in mind, these by-passes also tried to avoid the peculiarities (passing by a slide area, between a karst formation and a river, hairpin turns, fords, etc.) which made TCPs vulnerable to interdiction. This had the effect of lengthening the LOC and hence the time necessary to move supplies along it. One by-pass was forty miles in length, yet it moved supplies only 15 miles closer to the ultimate destination.

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(S) In keeping with the concept of flexible yet firm pressure on all aspects of the Communist LOCs in the COMMANDO HUNT areas, US forces continued to refine techniques and shift emphasis as necessary. The TCPs, for example, were struck with diminished force for a time while increased effort went into making repair work hazardous, i. e. just before nightfall planes would bomb the TCP using delayed action fuzes timed to go off at random intervals.

(S) Meanwhile, considerable emphasis was placed on seeking out and hitting the storage areas which inevitably resulted when a major LOC was temporarily interdicted or traffic slowed to the point where a backlog became unavoidable. These areas proved difficult to find and in some instances, suspected areas were turned into confirmed ones by dropping bombs singly in the region until secondary explosions or fires revealed where the remainder of the bombs should be placed.

(S) In the campaign against storage areas, B-52s as well as fighter-bombers were brought into play. In January, 65 percent of the daily average of approximately 42 sorties were against the storage areas. During January and up to 21 Feb, when B-52 strikes were diverted to support operations in RVN, the big bombers were credited with destroying 59 trucks, three bulldozers, and producing 1,650 secondary explosions and fires while striking storage areas.

(S) During Phase II, a new program to attack enemy trucks along the internal LOCs of the COMMANDO HUNT areas was initiated. Known as Operation ROAD RIP, this program attempted to close roads temporarily and funnel traffic into predictable areas by striking specific road segments. The objective was to make multiple road cuts for a distance of about 1 mile, to be followed by delay-fuzed bombs set to explode at random intervals over the next 24 hours. The attacks were made in the late afternoon in order to prevent the enemy from opening the road before nightfall. Then, during the night, continuous watch was maintained with flareships, gunships, and flack suppression strike aircraft.

(S) As predicted, Operation ROAD RIP and other interdiction efforts had the effect of moving the traffic away from the main LOCs. In choosing new routes, the enemy naturally selected those with cover both moving and storage, a move which US forces countered by bringing in C-123s which sprayed herbicides on the jungle canopy. The enemy then moved to direct heavy AAA fire on the low-flying vulnerable C-123s, forcing the US forces to provide some cover and eventually to fit some F-4s with 370-gallon herbicide dispensers.


(S) Armed reconnaissance also was used with varying degrees of success during this period primarily against moving vehicles and, when they could be spotted, truck parks and storage areas. The enemy capitalized on the cover of night and the obscurity of evening haze which dominated much of the COMMANDO HUNT area during the dry season. Several extraordinary techniques were developed to counter this. One was the "Pouncer" system developed by Navy fliers operating from carriers in the South China Sea. A Navy A-6, using an Airborne Moving Target Indicator (AMTI) and leading a string of A-7s and F-4s in a loose trail formation, would locate and mark the target with a flare. The "Pouncer" aircraft would then move in for the kill. A similar tactic, known as "hunter-killer", used pairs of F-4s in radar trail formation. Scheduled at dusk because visual target acquisition was required, these teams roamed along selected routes hoping to strike truck convoys as they formed.

(S) It was during this "challenge and response" phase that MACV introduced into the COMMANDO HUNT area two of the most lethal weapons in the United States inventory. There were

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the AC-123 and AC-130 versions of the SPOOKY gunships which had proven of such value in RVN. Successfully tested in 1968 (See the Research and Development section of the 1968 MACV Command History), these sophisticated gunships were ideally suited to the truck interdiction role. Besides the tremendous firepower associated with gunships, these craft had long loiter and all weather capability. Also, they carried advanced sensing equipment which allowed them both to search and destroy on the same sortie. A spectacular example of this activity came in January when a single AC-130 destroyed 27 trucks on a single sortie. In another instance, during the later part of the campaign, the enemy resorted to the use of a clandestine helicopter only to have an AC-130 detect it with its sensing equipment. The AC-130 located the parked aircraft under the jungle canopy and, without ever having visual contact with the target, caused a large secondary explosion and fire. ²²⁴

(S) It was obvious at the end of Phase II that interdiction efforts had been much more successful than in Phase I. Not only were more trucks destroyed (best evidence was that some 2,400 trucks were destroyed or damaged during the two months period, nearly twice the estimated number the Communists kept in the Laos LOC system at any one time) but the enemy was forced to expand his logistical network and disperse the flow of materiel and men. Such moves inherently added time and risk to the transit period. The trials and tribulations of getting supplies through Mu Gia and Ban Karai passes and southward, for example, forced the Communists to increase the flow through Nape Pass. This significant diversion caused a portion of Route 8 to be labeled a "main gate" which qualified it for special attention. The same was true of the Communist attempt to open up a new route just north of the DMZ. The discovery of this route promptly brought the "main gate" rating together with the appropriate response. (See Figure V-17)

(S) By the opening of Phase III in March, labelled "intensified interdiction" by the COMMANDO HUNT report, the Communists had clearly lost the initiative in the challenge and response struggle to bring supplies through Laos. The most desirable option, that of bringing supplies through the Ban Karai pass and sending them direct to the A Shau Valley during daylight and in good weather, had been lost early in the game. Their next best choice was to move in large convoys under a shield of darkness or bad weather but still by the most direct routes. This option was lost through regular interdiction of the primary routes. The enemy was thus forced to resort to such things as extensive by-passes, truck parks and storage areas, reduced size of convoys, increased AAA weapons, and extensive repair crews for damaged roadways. However, each option that carried him away from the most desirable one automatically increased the difficulty and cost of moving the materials, including an increase in the internal consumption necessary to keep the system going. The US strategy throughout was to force the enemy to accept less and less desirable options, thereby forcing a decisive attrition of those supplies required to build up an offensive capability in South Vietnam. ²²⁵

(S) Phase III thus witnessed increased pressure on the entire Communist LOC system in the COMMANDO HUNT area. The phase also witnessed further refinements of equipment and techniques. One such refinement, for example, resulted in improved traffic analysis, primarily through the use of sensors. Heretofore, the strings of four or five individual sensors were treated as one unit and an indication that a vehicle had passed one of them was considered evidence that the entire string had been passed. The more experienced Target Assessment Officers (TAOs), however, found that information gained from comparing individual sensor readings could provide strong evidence of such things as truck parks, size and speed of convoys, and particularly, traffic patterns. By the same token, once the traffic patterns were more or

less known, changes in the pattern or flow after a strike provided evidence as to the effectiveness of the strike and what the enemy's next option might be.

(S) Another major refinement allowed a more flexible and effective approach to interdiction at the traffic control points. In February some experimental strikes had been made using a "package" concept, that is, using different munitions which were all part of a package. The first such strike, for example, mixed one laser-guided Paveway (for pinpoint interdiction) with three AGM-12C, 168 Mk-36 mines, 22 Gravel and six CBU-42 (long life WAAPM). This variety of ordnance, put into proper sequence, had the effect of interdicting the roadway while making movement into and about the area extremely hazardous. Also, bombs could be delivered during the day and the antipersonnel mines and bombs (as area denial weapons) at dusk, making it necessary to harvest or neutralize them in the dark before effective repairs could begin on the roadbed. Under the circumstances, immediate road repair was not possible. Moreover, until the road had been reopened, only area denial weapons or "partial packages" were needed to keep the route closed. The result was increased flexibility and effectiveness with diminished effort, especially when the area concept was expanded beyond a TCP to include a particular segment of the LOC. For this reason, on 18 Mar, interdiction points targeted for packaged delivery were redesignated "traffic control areas" (TCAs).

(S) It is doubtful whether participants on either side could consider the interdiction effort in the COMMANDO HUNT area as anything other than a success. The degree of success is debatable, of course, and a final evaluation must be reserved for some time in the future. Even as the campaign was being waged, however, constant evaluation was going on and indications were that US forces were winning the battle of challenge and response. Best estimates were that between January and April 1969, 47 percent of the enemy's logistical input into Laos was destroyed in transit, 29 percent was consumed in the system, 6 percent went into storage, and only 18 percent reached South Vietnam. (See Figure V-18). This, apparently, was insufficient for major offensive stocking.

(S) While that unmeasurable portion of prevention was the big pay-off of the interdiction effort, there were other gains. From the Allied standpoint, enemy personnel and equipment losses were on the plus side, and they could note with satisfaction that the enemy more or less had to replace their entire truck inventory every month. Also the average transit time of supplies that did get through had grown from some three days in November-December to six to eight days in April. At the same time, a truck or driver on the road had a 45 percent chance of being hit. (Since these probabilities were calculated only on the basis of road movement, the already fifty-fifty chance a driver or truck had of being hit in a given week was actually somewhat higher since there was also considerable risk sitting it out in a truck park.) Moreover, just to defend his LOCs, the enemy had to bring in and set up more than six hundred automatic weapons and antiaircraft guns, serviced by some 9,000 personnel. "All told," the COMMANDO HUNT report noted, the enemy "expended 83 percent as many tons of AAA ammunition in Laos as were expended by the enemy in firings of all kinds in all of South Vietnam."²²⁶

(S) Basic conclusions reached by the COMMANDO HUNT team evaluating the operation were as follows:

The enemy was forced to draw down his stocks supplied through Laos because of inadequate resupply during the period January through March 1969.

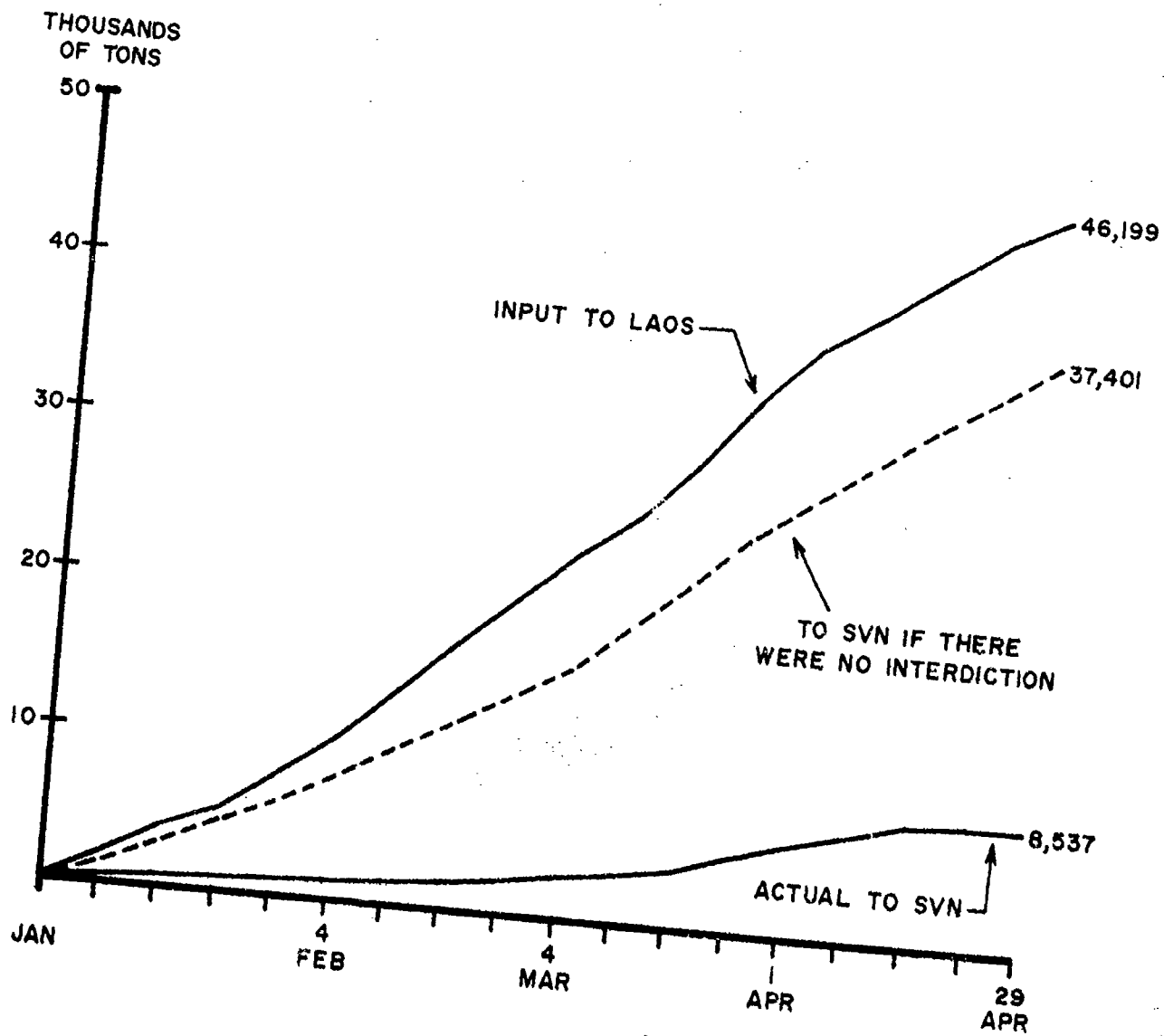
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FIGURE V-18

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The enemy was unable to accumulate supplies from Laos to increase stockpiles and raise the level of combat activity within South Vietnam.

The enemy was unable to accumulate supplies from Laos for the southwest monsoon season of 1969 sufficient to maintain the level of activity of the period January through April 1969.

(S) It must be noted that from the standpoint of air operations, there were many residual benefits from COMMANDO HUNT. The experience gained, the techniques developed and improved, and the many lessons learned could not help but have a direct influence on future operations. In fact, since COMMANDO HUNT was an intensified portion of the larger and continuing interdiction effort throughout Laos, the benefits were both immediate and consequential. One lesson that seemed particularly significant, for example, was the importance of integrated effort to interdiction. As the COMMANDO HUNT report stated:

These effects on the enemy resupply would not have been possible without an integrated interdiction effort. This is a significant lesson of the COMMANDO HUNT campaign. The versatility of the F-4; the sensitivity of the IGLOO WHITE system; the coordinated use of fast movers, slow movers, FACs, and gunships; consistent refinements in tactics, target acquisition, and destruction -- all of these factors had to be orchestrated to maintain pressure on the entire logical system and leave the enemy no attractive options.

(S) The overall magnitude of the damage rendered by the strikes reflected in Figure V-19 is portrayed in Table V-1.²²⁷

COMMANDO HUNT II

(S) The transition of COMMANDO HUNT I into COMMANDO HUNT II - conducted under the aegis of the 7AF's 1969 Southwest Monsoon Campaign continued to expand and improve the modus operandi devised during COMMANDO HUNT I. However, a direct statistical analysis or comparison of the two campaigns would be difficult as the operational area of COMMANDO HUNT II had been enlarged to include all of the STEEL TIGER area of Laos.

(S) With the beginning of the southwest monsoon in May, the air war in Laos took on a new perspective. The predominant flow of moisture laden air from the southwest backed up against the Annam Mountain range resulted in frequent heavy rains in southern Laos. Many of the bomb-cratered and unimproved trails and roads that comprised the NVA infiltration system in the area became quagmires, and posed serious obstacles to enemy truck traffic. Air operations likewise were hampered by poor flying weather. At times, COMBAT SKYSPOT radar bombing techniques were the primary means of maintaining the air presence so necessary in a successful interdiction effort.

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TARGET DAMAGE REPORTED AS OBSERVED

(Tactical Air)

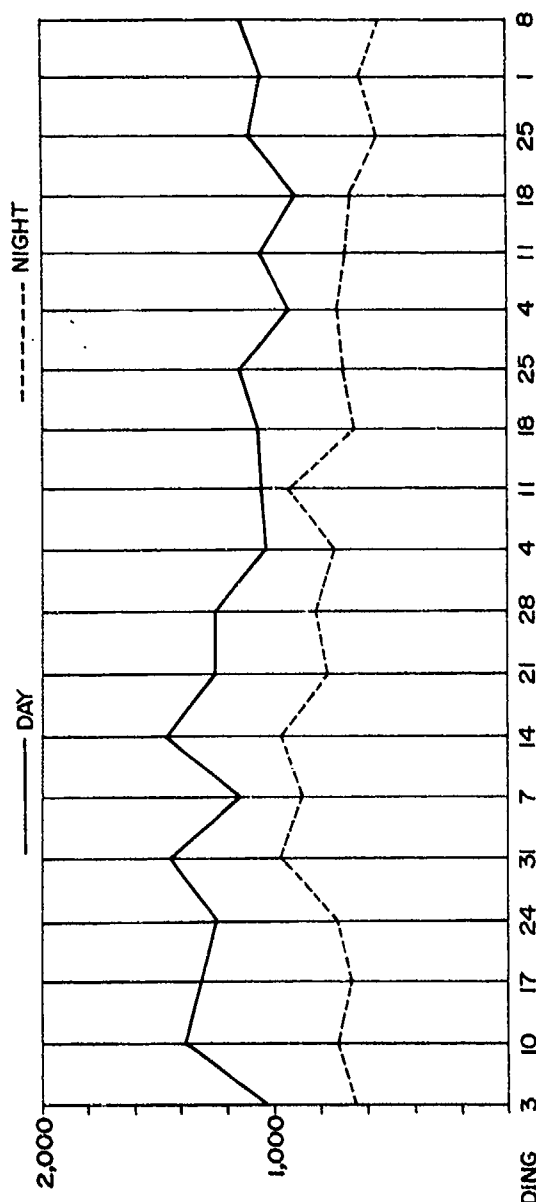
Type of Target	15-30 Nov 68	Dec	Jan 69	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total	Daily Avg
Trucks								
Destroyed	184	633	894	761	868	1016	4356	25
Damaged	78	211	436	330	304	294	1653	10
Secondary Explos.	96	816	313	1177	1294	2169	5865	35
Secondary fires	437	1028	437	1477	1626	1700	6705	41
AA Positions								
Destroyed	11	30	100	62	104	112	419	2.5
Damaged	2	29	13	16	22	22	104	0.6
Secondary Explos.	32	65	171	152	438	434	1292	7.6
Secondary fires	25	118	207	136	331	366	1183	7.1
LOCs (roads, bridges)								
Cuts, craters, slides	537	1712	1651	1249	1260	1291	7700	46
Bridges destroyed	0	6	9	9	20	16	60	0.4
Bridges damaged	1	5	1	17	12	6	42	0.3
Supply Secondaries								
Explosions	618	1134	1567	3138	6455	6871	19783	118
Fires	859	1794	2272	2934	2110	1947	11916	71
Structures								
Destroyed	80	157	113	74	47	124	595	3.6
Damaged	6	34	12	6	35	44	137	0.8
Personnel								
Killed	188	658	173	135	54	122	1330	8.0
Miscellaneous								
Bulldozers destr.	0	1	0	0	1	2	4	
Bulldozers damag.	2	0	0	7	3	2	14	0.1
Watercraft destr.	1	23	5	11	2	12	54	0.3
Watercraft damag.	1	4	3	4	4	11	27	0.2
Bunkers destroyed	34	30	99	66	52	70	351	2.1
Bunkers damaged	9	6	11	14	11	42	93	0.6

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TABLE V-1



**COMMANDO
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I
STRIKE SORTIES**

	DEC							JAN							FEB							MAR							APR									
	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	4	11	18	25	1	8	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	1
TACTICAL	DAY	746	925	857	938	988	768	929	903	820	809	810	764	800	753	923	790	896	925	836	925	836	925	836	925	836	925	836	925	836	925	836	925	836	925	836		
	NIGHT	475	479	505	454	610	569	478	489	545	545	525	489	614	640	602	546	458	467	336	467	336	467	336	467	336	467	336	467	336	467	336	467	336	467	336	467	336
B-52	DAY	91	105	51	12	60	60	60	85	88	44	54	21	6	0	0	3	0	12	69	12	69	12	69	12	69	12	69	12	69	12	69	12	69	12	69	12	69
	NIGHT	21	66	24	130	124	114	144	149	144	126	186	63	24	0	0	37	12	71	108	71	108	71	108	71	108	71	108	71	108	71	108	71	108	71	108	71	108
NAVY & MARINE	DAY	202	359	381	285	433	269	473	231	315	126	217	285	332	194	129	102	220	133	241	220	133	220	133	220	133	220	133	220	133	220	133	220	133	220	133	220	133
	NIGHT	152	164	113	92	219	159	212	118	137	24	239	117	98	92	93	97	67	76	101	67	101	67	101	67	101	67	101	67	101	67	101	67	101	67	101	67	101
TOTAL	DAY	1039	1389	1289	1235	1481	1097	1462	1219	1223	979	1081	1070	1138	947	1052	895	1116	1070	1146	1116	1070	1116	1070	1116	1070	1116	1070	1116	1070	1116	1070	1116	1070	1116	1070	1116	1070
	NIGHT	648	709	642	676	953	842	923	745	770	695	950	669	736	732	695	680	537	614	545	537	614	537	614	537	614	537	614	537	614	537	614	537	614	537	614	537	614

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FIGURE V-19

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(S) The most obvious difference between COMMANDO HUNT II and the previous 1968 southwest monsoon campaign was the total lack of an interdiction campaign in NVN. Previously, when weather hampered the air effort over Laos, it was possible to counter this handicap by shifting the weight of effort to southern NVN where good weather predominated. From this standpoint the strain that the NVN had been made to endure because of the heretofore complementary US interdiction campaign in NVN and Laos was now compensated for by greater air effectiveness in Laos alone.²²⁸

(S) The COMMANDO HUNT II plan was devised to take advantage of temporary breaks in the weather by maintaining a list of reconnaissance and target priorities. The major reconnaissance priorities included areas and specific locations where photo reconnaissance and visual reports from FACs had been seriously limited by cloud cover. At the same time, the priority strike targets were those requiring precision bombing.

(S) The flexibility allowed by this plan was further enhanced by expanding the number of alert aircraft loaded with precision delivery area denial munitions in Special Munitions Packages (SMP). Also, the proportion of aircraft having COMBAT SKYSPOT capability was increased.

(S) The combination of weather with the effects of COMMANDO HUNT II's pressures severely reduced the VC/NVA logistical activity in southern Laos. By the end of June, for example, traffic through Nape Pass had ceased altogether while the number of trucks entering Mu Gia and Ban Karai passes decreased drastically. As a 7AF Weekly Intelligence Summary stated:²²⁹

A review of all available intelligence indicated that despite the enemy's massive engineering efforts during the dry season, the road structure in Laos is in no better condition now than it was at this time last year. The cumulative effect of bombing and the record June rains have hobbled the enemy's supply operations. Hundreds of kilometers of bypass roads, which consumed such a large part of construction efforts during the dry season, have been largely abandoned. Main arteries such as 912 and 966 are closed despite a major effort to reopen them to traffic.

(S) Undoubtedly a large degree of the success of the air interdiction campaign during COMMANDO HUNT II was due to the refinement of a concept tested during the later portion of COMMANDO HUNT I for munitions employment -- the Special Munitions Package (SMP). The concept was developed to increase air interdiction effectiveness in Laos by:

1. Closing lines of communication (LOCs) to traffic.
2. Negating the enemy's skill in road repair and bypass construction.
3. Cause vulnerable concentrations of enemy vehicles and supplies by creating traffic backlogs and forcing the enemy to off-load supplies to road storage areas.

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(S) The basic strategy in the employment of SMP was to interdict the road, then overlay an area around the blocked road with area denial munitions to impede and harass repair efforts. Road interdiction was accomplished through the use of highly accurate guided munitions with conventional bombs as backup ordnance. Road repair efforts were impeded with area denial weapons consisting of time-delay bombs, anti-vehicle land mines, and anti-personnel munitions.

(S) Four packages -- consisting of the following munitions -- were designed for each of the four missions to be performed:

PAVEWAY Guided Bombs - using laser or electro-optical guidance systems.

BULLPUP air-to-ground guided missiles (AGM).

Conventional freefall bombs (Hard Ordnance) including time-delay bombs.

Anti-vehicle land mines.

GRAVEL and DRAGON TOOTH anti-personnel Mines (WAAPM).

(S) The Road Blocking Package was carefully selected to use the blocking features of the terrain at interdiction points. Attacks utilizing this package were made to interdict points where the terrain features made repair and reconstruction difficult and where roads were susceptible to slides, washout, and erosions. The composition of the package was:

ROAD BLOCKING PACKAGE

<u>Ordnance</u>	<u>Force</u>
Paveway, AGM, Hard Ord	6 Aircraft
Anti-vehicle Mines	12 Aircraft
Gravel/Dragon Tooth	2 Aircraft
Long or Short Life WAAPM	4 Aircraft
Total	<u>24 Aircraft</u>

(S) The Reseeding Package was used as necessary to replenish a Road Blocking Package and was composed as follows:

RESEEDING PACKAGE

<u>Ordnance</u>	<u>Force</u>
Paveway, AGM	2 Aircraft
Anti-vehicle Mines	8 Aircraft
Gravel/Dragon Tooth	2 Aircraft
Short Life WAAPM	4 Aircraft
Total	<u>16 Aircraft</u>

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(S) The Delaying Package was useful on any interdiction point as its purpose was to make the road impassable for one to two days. If necessary, other ordnance was delivered on top of this package and presence type ordnance (rockets, CBUs) were used at night to discourage road repair crews from clearing the roads. The composition of the package was:

DELAYING PACKAGE

<u>Ordnance</u>	<u>Force</u>
Paveway, AGM, Hard Ord	6 Aircraft
Time Delay Bombs	4 Aircraft
Gravel/Dragon Tooth	2 Aircraft
Short Life WAAPM	4 Aircraft
Total	16 Aircraft

(S) The Harassing Package was employed to stall the enemy by placing an obstacle at randomly selected key interdiction points. Normally, it was delivered late in the day and followed by presence ordnance over the point at night to discourage road repair and truck traffic. The composition of the package was:

HARASSING PACKAGE

<u>Ordnance</u>	<u>Force</u>
AGM, Hard Ord	6 Aircraft
Time Delay Bombs	4 Aircraft
Gravel/Dragon Tooth	2 Aircraft
Total	12 Aircraft

(S) Whereas the employment of SMP had proved to be a much more effective system than using large numbers of general purpose bombs to maintain road cuts, deficiencies existed. The munitions package concept, as it was developed for the Laos interdiction campaign, was possible largely as a result of the specialized munitions and fuzes which were hastily developed to satisfy the urgent requirements in SEASIA. The PAVEWAY guided bombs, land mines, and WAAPM used in SMP fell into this category. As with many "crash" programs, the end product did not always fully satisfy the requirement. The land mines used included both 500 and 750 pound general purpose bombs equipped with magnetic fuzes. Although the fuzes detected a target out to 48 feet, the lethal radius of the warhead against trucks was only 20 feet. In addition, the bomb's fins remained exposed above ground, revealing the mine's location. The major shortcoming of the WAAPM -- which were scattered on top of the ground -- was the relative ease that they could be located and cleared by the enemy.

(S) The development and employment of the SMP represented a significant achievement in the combining of a strategy with specialized munitions to more efficiently impede the enemy's movement of supplies. ²³⁰

(S) An indication of the combined effects of weather and interdiction to the enemy's logistic operations during COMMANDO HUNT II was reflected in 7AF's Quarterly Throughput Analysis report to CINCPAC. ²³¹ It stated that the period of 1 Jul to 30 Sep witnessed an input of 184

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trucks with 644.5 tons of supplies into the Laotian panhandle and a throughput of 146 trucks with 510.5 tons of supplies toward I and II CTZ's of the RVN. However, increased enroute consumption and BDA offset the gain and resulted in an estimated stockpile reduction of 4,706 tons, computed as follows:

INPUT		644.5 Tons
Less		
BDA	1783.0	
Consumption	3057.0	
Thruput	510.5	
Total		5,350.5 Tons
Estimated Stockpile Change		-4,706 Tons

COMMANDO HUNT III

(S) Whereas COMMANDO HUNT I had been primarily oriented toward the interdiction and destruction of material -- enroute or in temporary storage -- COMMANDO HUNT II had as its primary objective the interdiction and destruction of the LOCs themselves. One campaign therefore complemented the other -- COMMANDO HUNT I to destroy the material while it could be moved in the dry season and COMMANDO HUNT II to destroy the roadways and deny their repair during the wet season.

(TS) With the advent of the northeast monsoon -- and guided by the experiences, techniques and tactics perfected through interaction with the enemy during the COMMANDO HUNT I and II campaigns -- 7AF published OPLAN 512-70, or the "NORTHEAST MONSOON PLAN", on 15 Aug.²³² The mission of the Northeast Monsoon Plan -- to be conducted from 1 Nov 1969 to 30 Apr 1970 -- was stated as:

... conduct an air campaign against enemy forces selected targets, lines of communication (LOCs), and LOC-associated targets, and to support friendly forces located in authorized operating areas in Laos. The objects of this air campaign are to reduce the flow of men and material into the RVN and to increase the cost to North Vietnam of continuing aggression and support to insurgencies in the RVN and Laos.

(S) The 7AF placed a high premium on exceptionally detailed and accurate intelligence information required to keep targeting ahead of the enemy reaction. Therefore, the COMMANDO HUNT III plan provided for constant surveillance of the enemy by visual reconnaissance and the IGLOO WHITE sensor technology. Target development by these means -- augmented by all other intelligence data -- was considered to be the key ingredient of a successful interdiction operation.²³³

(S) To further exploit the sensor technology of the IGLOO WHITE system, the COMMANDO HUNT III Plan called for 504 sensors -- dedicated to road monitoring -- to be in place by 1 Nov.

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However, the prolonged effects of the southwest monsoon season -- with its inherent rains and marginal flying weather -- limited the implantation of the desired number to 424 sensors in 61 strings by 30 Nov. Despite the lack of the desired number of implanted sensors, the number of sensor-detected trucks rose from an October level of 293 to a 6,359 November level. ²³⁴

(S) The onset of the dry northeast monsoon season again witnessed the frantic efforts of the enemy to repair his LOCs and his first surge of supplies through the Laotian panhandle. Input into the Laotian LOCs (measured by the comparison of visually-observed trucks, sensor-detected movers and visually-observed watercraft) was estimated by 7AF to be 3,026 truckloads for the months of October, November and December. This sharp increase over the preceding quarter's 184 truckloads was indicative of the enemy's urgency to resupply his forces in the south.

(S) Although the logistic input into the Laotian panhandle during October-December was approximately 16 times greater than the preceding July-September input, the throughput to the RVN was only approximately 3.5 times greater. Additionally, the estimated number of tons of supplies denied enemy combat troops within the RVN because of BDA, resupply of personnel stationed in the Laotian panhandle, and the reduction for throughput was an estimated 3,158 ton reduction in his southern Laotian stockpile. ²³⁵ His reduced stockpile was computed as:

Input		10,592 Tons
Less: BDA	7,489.0	
Consumption	4,431.5	
Throughput	1,829.5	
Total Reductions		13,750 Tons
Estimated Stockpile Change		-3,158 Tons

Laotian Rules of Engagement

(S) Major changes in the Laotian Rules of Engagement, effective on 27 Sep accomplished the following:

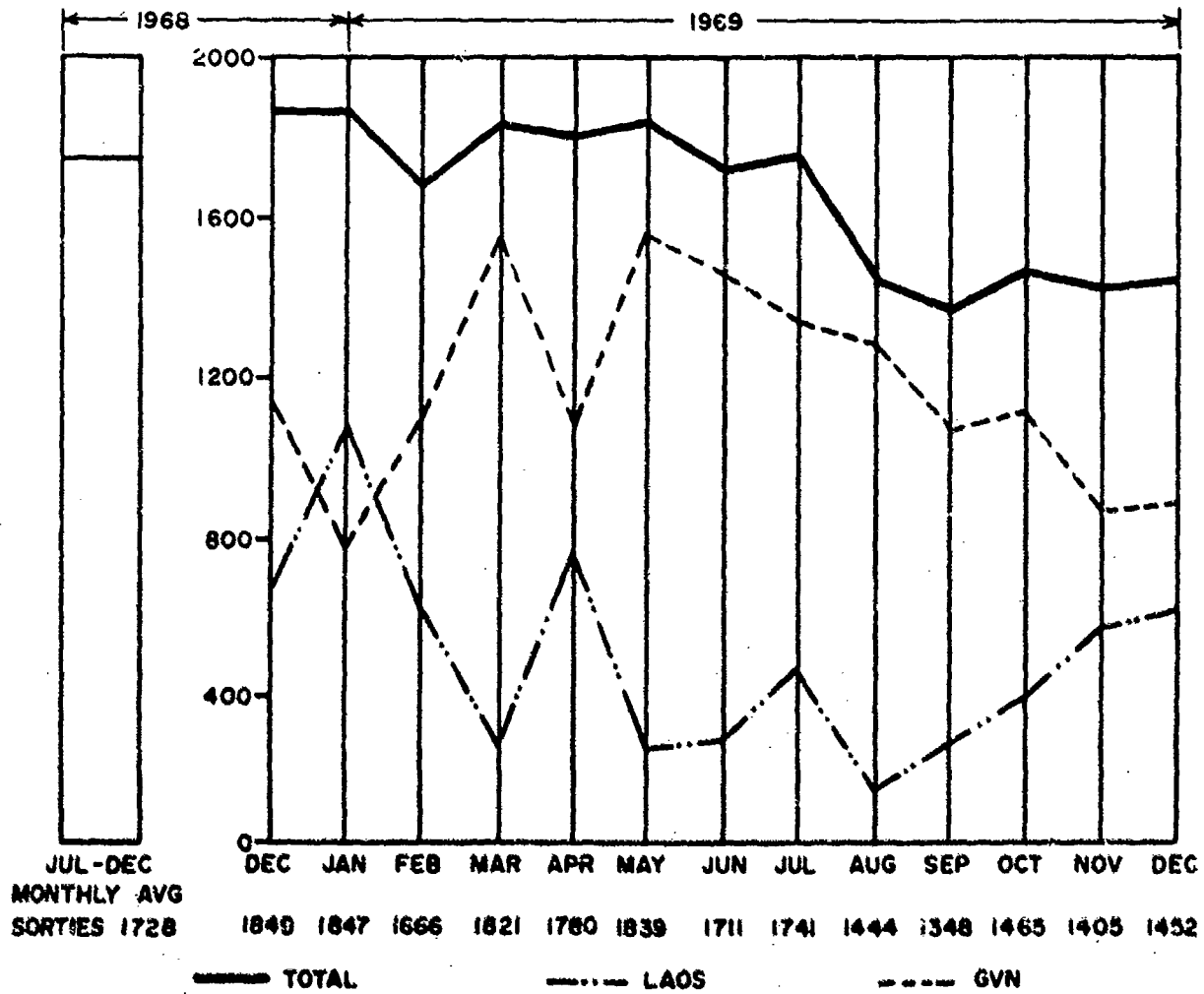
1. Realigned area boundaries where appropriate.
2. Simplified, wherever possible, the rules and restrictions under which aircrews operated.
3. Eased restrictions imposed on operations while at the same time providing adequate protection for non-combatants and friendly forces and insuring against inadvertent border violations.
4. Clarified and simplified target validation procedures for all of Laos.

(TS) As shown by Figure V-20, BARREL ROLL (BR) was divided into three areas, BR North, BR East and BR West. The BR North was restricted to only those operations requested by the American Embassy, Vientiane and approved by CINCPAC and JCS. The purpose of these

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ARC LIGHT SORTIES



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FIGURE V-20

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restrictions was to preclude Burma, China, and North Vietnam border violations and prevent strikes against the Chinese road building teams operating in the area. All operations in BR East were to be radar monitored by EC-121D (COLLEGE EYE) aircraft operating out of Thailand and FAC control. All targets in BR West must be validated by the AMEMB, Vientiane.

(TS) STEEL TIGER (SL) was divided into SL East and SL west areas with a division closely aligned with easily recognizable geographical features. The SL East rules were similar to those in BR East with the addition of a restriction against air strikes and armed reconnaissance within three miles of the Cambodian Border. The rules for SL West were identical to those for BR West with the exception of restrictions around Saravane, Attapeu, Thankhek, Savannakhet and Pakse.

(S) The net result of this change was that, excluding the totally restricted area of BR North, aircrews were now concerned with only two sets of basic rules pertaining to the East and West portions of Laos.²³⁶

In-Country Interdiction

(S) While most of the in-country air operations were related in one way or another with direct support of ground troops, there was a significant amount of air interdiction within RVN. This interdiction covered LOCs storage areas and base camps throughout the country but, understandably, most of it was centered in areas of heavy enemy transit or storage. War Zone C, for example, served as the gateway to Saigon and the build up for an assault on that city would almost certainly be centered there. The tri-border area of Laos, Cambodia, and RVN was the logical enemy route into the central highlands, and the A Shau Valley, long a scene of heavy fighting, was a continuation of the logistical supply system through Laos (see section on out-country interdiction) and the gateway to the northern provinces of I CTZ. It was therefore very important to US and ARVN planners that the bulk of the enemy supplies moving into RVN be interdicted on the way to or in the stockpile zones. Keeping these stockpiles too low to support a major offensive was the best guarantee that such an offensive would not take place. Moreover, keeping the major stockpiles remote from the likely target areas virtually ruled out the possibility of a significant surprise assault on those areas.

(S) Interdiction in-country was a continuing affair throughout 1969 although, as with the out-country effort, there were peak efforts. The temporary suspension of B-52 raids in the COMMANDO HUNT campaign in February, it will be recalled, was to counter a threat to Saigon. Understandably, War Zone C received a large portion of the ARC LIGHT strikes during that period.

(S) An even more impressive example of in-country interdiction, however, took place in the A Shau Valley in January. Close to Laos and serving as a terminus to the Ho Chi Minh trail system, the A Shau had long been an enemy stronghold, and US intrusions had been temporary. US air/ground assault teams had been sent into the valley in 1966 and 1967 and during April and May 1968, a large air/ground operation known as Operation DELAWARE had been undertaken.²³⁷

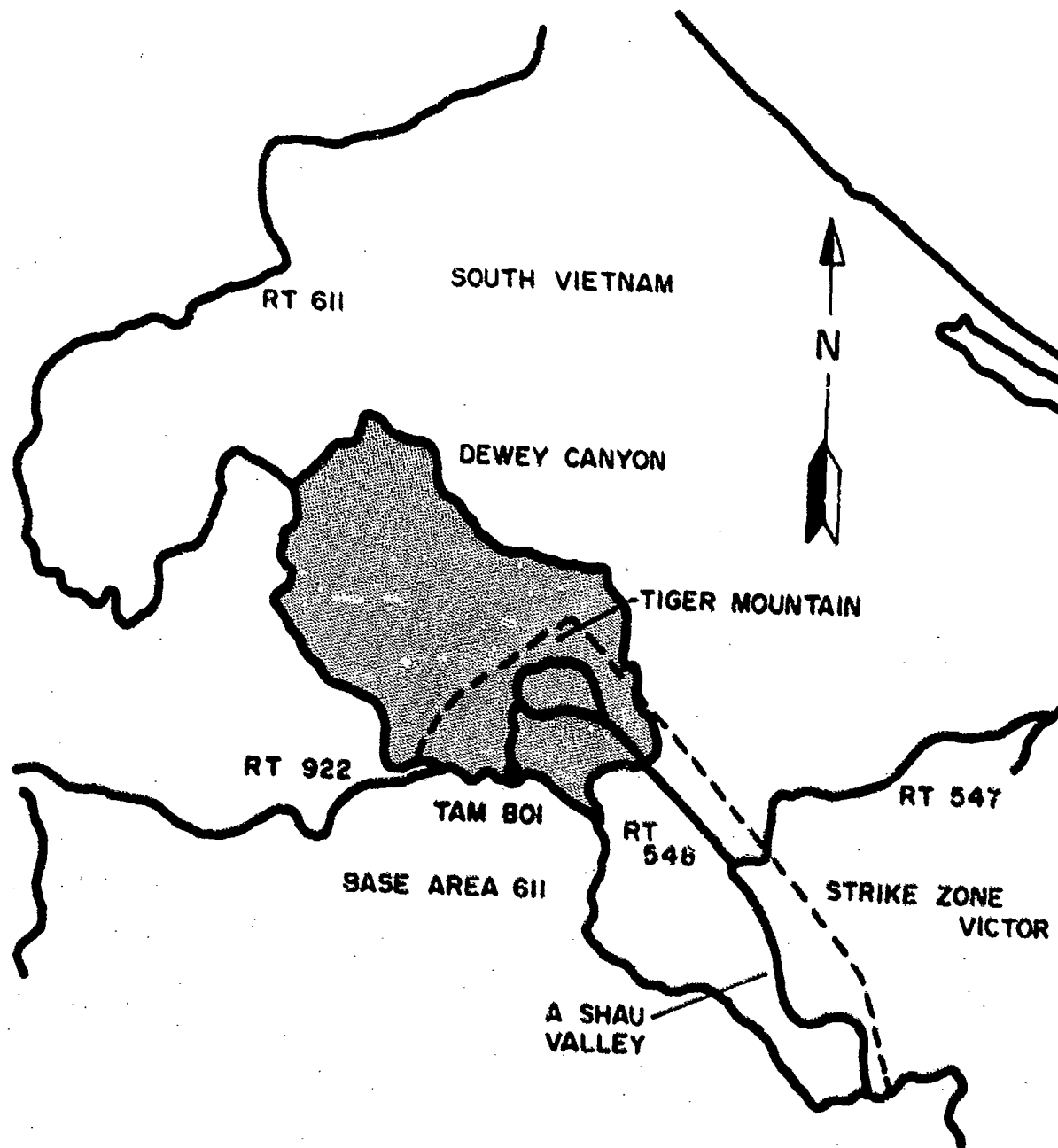
(S) Following Operation DELAWARE, a special strike zone, known as Strike Zone VICTOR (See Figure V-21) had been established. Beginning 9 Jun 68, air strikes had worked regularly over this area. Route 548 was kept closed part of the time but interdiction of this vital LOC was

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STRIKE ZONE VICTOR



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FIGURE V-21

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not complete until 28 Jul, when a combination of 750 pound bombs and persistent CS agents closed the road. It remained closed until 5 Aug 68 when friendly forces had again been helo-lifted into the areas for clearing operations (Operation SOMERSET PLAIN). As with DELAWARE, SOMERSET PLAIN had been supported by both B-52 and TACAIR sorties.

(S) The enemy continued his efforts to keep the LOCs open after SOMERSET PLAIN, provoking, in turn, heavy response in the form of interdiction air strikes. Between 9 Dec 68 and 6 Feb 69, for example, more than 2,300 TACAIR sorties were sent into the valley. And for the period ending 6 Feb, 7AF claimed to have destroyed or damaged 78 bunkers, 34 trucks, and six bulldozers. In addition, 87 secondary explosions and 32 secondary fires were noted. Finally, "numerous trenches, bridges and tunnels were destroyed."

(S) Because of continued use of the A Shau Valley (See Figure V-21) by the enemy, both as a storage area and infiltration route, yet another air/ground offensive was mounted. The large-scale operation, code-named DEWEY CANYON, got underway on 22 Jan and came to an end on 18 Mar. Air interdiction, consisting of B-52 and TACAIR strikes, continued throughout the campaign but as friendly troops entered the areas, the strike zone was necessarily compressed. Meanwhile, three battalions of US Marines and two battalions of ARVN troops began moving down the north end of the valley. Little opposition was encountered initially but fierce fighting developed in the southern end of the valley. During this period, the TACAIR role was primarily one of close ground support rather than interdiction.

(S) By the time DEWEY CANYON ended on 18 Mar, the importance of anti-enemy logistical efforts had been reinforced. Near the Route 922 entrance to the A Shau Valley, for example, searchers found 11 large caves, 150 to 200 feet deep. These facilities, which had obviously been used to store weapons for some years, were equipped with wooden floors and heavy iron doors.

(S) Further searching revealed caves carved out of solid rock, well-built bunkers for storing ammunition, open storage areas under heavy jungle canopy, and somewhat surprisingly, caches in old bomb craters. Intelligence experts speculated that the enemy, perhaps hurrying because of pressure from air strikes, had simply dumped supplies into the bomb craters near the roadways, covered them with a tarpaulin followed by a thick layer of soil. "This procedure," one report noted, "virtually frustrated aerial observation and photo detection, as the sites resembled nothing more than that which they actually were, bomb craters."²³⁸

(S) The sizes of the caches found in the A Shau Valley during DEWEY CANYON (See Ground Operations section of this chapter) and in subsequent campaigns there and in adjacent areas were strong evidence for several basic "realities" vis-a-vis interdiction. One was the magnitude of the enemy effort, a sure sign of grim determination to wage offensive operations against major targets in RVN. Another was the inability of airpower alone to achieve complete interdiction over a long period, suggesting the absurdity of expecting complete interdiction, claiming it, or measuring success by such expectations. The purpose of interdiction, as 7AF made clear in the COMMANDO HUNT campaign, was to delay or reduce the flow of supplies to such an extent that the stockpiling necessary for large-scale offensive operations was impossible. Measured by these criteria, air interdiction, both in and out-country was, to some unmeasurable degree, successful, but not so successful that air/ground operations, such as SOMERSET PLAIN and DEWEY CANYON, were unnecessary.

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ARC LIGHT

The 1969 Sortie Rate

(U) ARC LIGHT operations during 1969 continued to employ the targeting and operational procedures so successfully devised in 1968. (See Pages 418 and 419, Volume I, MACV Command History of 1968 for a discussion of targeting procedures, target boxes, Ground Divert Force, In-Flight Diverted Force and Bugle Note systems.)

(S) At the beginning of 1969, SAC B-52s were bombing RVN and Laos at the rate of approximately 1,800 sorties per month. While this rate was once regarded as a surge effort, it had, in 1968, come to be accepted as the norm. The reason, as COMUSMACV was careful to explain, lay in the fact that the ARC LIGHT force served as his flexible reserve with the punching power of several ground divisions. Indeed COMUSMACV had stated that approximately three times the authorized ARC LIGHT allocation could be "profitably utilized." In particular, the B-52s could be used for interdiction, primarily in Laos, in close support of ground troops, and to disrupt the enemy when massing for an attack. "The B-52s used in this manner under COMUSMACV's centralized control," one CINCPAC message stated, "have become a tool of such effectiveness that COMUSMACV considers that he has no substitute within the conventional arsenal. Without the B-52 sorties, more ground troops would be needed to achieve the results obtained since the initiation of this B-52 concept."²³⁹

(S) Despite the unusually high priority given ARC LIGHT by COMUSMACV, the ARC LIGHT sortie rate proved a matter for some concern, particularly during the early part of the year. In November 1968, a DEPSECDEF memo had requested JCS's views on variable B-52 sortie rates. It also had requested recommendations for optimum sortie rates for CY 69 and CY 70. When this request was passed to COMUSMACV, the latter had responded in December 1968 with a strong recommendation for continuation at a sustained rate of 1,800 sorties per month. Strategic Air Command, on the other hand, favored a decline to 1,400 sorties per month for the second and third quarters, followed by a return to 1,800 sorties during the fourth quarter. The DEPSECDEF, meanwhile, had tentatively approved a variable 1,400 - 1,800 sortie rate, effective 1 Jan 69. The matter was unresolved at the end of 1968, however, and comments on the variable rate had been solicited from COMUSMACV, CINCPAC, and JCS.²⁴⁰

(S) Continuing to press for the 1,800 sortie rate, COMUSMACV was supported by CINCPAC in a message to JCS, dated 3 Jan, CINCPAC gave the rationale for his view.²⁴¹

To strike the number of valid ARC LIGHT targets nominated daily by field commanders would require approximately three times the currently authorized ARC LIGHT sortie rate of 1,800 sorties per month. The requirement to strike infiltration routes, truck parks and base camp areas had increased since the cessation of bombing in NVN. The enemy has continued to move large quantities of supplies southward. The ARC LIGHT effort necessarily has been divided between attempting to interdict the movement of supplies through Laos and, in-country, to destroying and disrupting the enemy's ability to mount another offensive. Any reduction in the ARC LIGHT sortie rate at this time would be militarily inadvisable. CINCPAC

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strongly supports continuation of the 1,800 ARC LIGHT sortie rate until there is some major change in the strategic and tactical situation which warrants its reduction. Any programmed reduction in ARC LIGHT must be based upon a concurrent reduction in the field commander's military requirement, and when military experience and judgment indicate that it can be reduced.

CINCPAC concurs in COMUSMACV proposal that the ARC LIGHT sortie rate of 1,800 sorties per month be continued throughout the first quarter. Upon the termination of the COMMANDO HUNT plan on/about 31 March, a reevaluation of the sortie rate should be made in view of the military situation existing at that time.

(S) On 16 May, JCS sponsored continuation of the 1,800 sortie rate through FY 70. In a review of this recommendation, the SECDEF noted the "strong support" provided by JCS. With this in mind, he said "we should look for ways to maintain the present sortie level without raising the cost of our efforts in Southeast Asia." The SECDEF then added:

Maintaining the ARC LIGHT sortie at 1,800 sorties per month will require about \$100 million in added FY 69 and FY 70 funds. These should be offset by reductions in some other part of the total tactical air effort. Considering the large number of sorties that have been made available by the halt in bombing in North Vietnam, I would hope such an action could be taken without any significant impact on combat operations in South Vietnam or Laos.²⁴²

(S) The SECDEF then asked for JCS's views on two alternatives. One was to maintain the proposed ARC LIGHT sortie rate through FY 70 but with a \$100 million reduction from "some other part of the tactical air effort." The other was to establish a rate of 1,600 B-52 sorties per month while retaining the "currently planned level" of other tactical operations. If JCS favored the first alternative, it was to "provide specific recommendations as to how the cost reductions should be achieved."²⁴³

(S) The JCS forwarded the request to CINCPAC who, in turn, passed it on to CINCPACAF, CINCPACFLT, and COMUSMACV. The latter conducted a "brief appraisal" of the two alternatives and a "review of the tradeoffs involved." To reduce the tactical air effort by \$100 million, he concluded "would entail a severe degradation in capability." He calculated "it would equate to the loss of four F-100 squadrons and closure of the associated base. Alternatively it could be accomplished by closing a F-4 base and redeploying three squadrons of F-4's." Furthermore, retrieval of these aircraft would be "extremely difficult" and "could not be responsive to new enemy initiatives." Moreover, if ARVN units were to assume a greater share of the ground war, continued heavy and direct air support was essential.²⁴⁴

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(S) COMUSMACV regarded a reduction in the ARC LIGHT effort as "equally undesirable at this time." However, since it would "appear less difficult to reconstitute the 1,800 sortie capability. . . than it would be to re-establish the TACAIR capability," the "least undesirable of the alternatives presented is to accept the reduction in the ARC LIGHT sortie rate from 1,800 to 1,600."²⁴⁵

(S) Having determined the "least undesirable" choice, COMUSMACV pointed out that neither of the alternatives were consistent with the realities of the situation in RVN and Laos.

These propositions do not address themselves to the attrition of the enemy resources and capability to heighten, prolong, and intensify his combat efforts. I am convinced that ARC LIGHT and TACTICAL AIR, in South Vietnam and Laos, have reduced the intensity of the enemy effort, and have substantially reduced the casualties among the US and other Free World Forces. Too often these programs are judged by what got through instead of on a realistic assessment of that which was headed for South Vietnam but did not get there. My basic recommendation is that TACTICAL AIR remain at current strength and that the B-52 sortie rate continue at 1,800 per month.²⁴⁶

(S) On 22 Jun CINCPAC forwarded COMUSMACV's views and supporting rationale to JCS.²⁴⁷ He added his own belief that both the TACAIR and the ARC LIGHT capabilities should be retained at current levels, "If a reduction is directed" he added, "the reduction in ARC LIGHT sortie rate from 1,800 to 1,600 per month would be the least objectionable."

(S) The issue of the reduced sortie rate was resolved on 15 Jul. On that date, the SECDEF approved an ARC LIGHT sortie rate of 1,600 per month. The message to the field contained notification to that effect together with the directive to "take necessary action to implement this decision."²⁴⁸

(TS) The 15 Jul authorized sortie rate of 1,600 per month was short lived as additional reductions were proposed as a part of the Secretary of Defense Project 703. COMUSMACV's position -- provided to CINCPAC in response to JCS's 5 Sep query -- was:

The ARC LIGHT effort has been employed by MACV to reduce the intensity of enemy activities and impair his ability to mass forces for significant combat operations. Further reduction of the ARC LIGHT sortie rate at this time restricts MACV capability to respond effectively with intensive bombardment to break up enemy attacks such as at Pen Het and the multi-divisional attack in III CTZ on 11-12 Aug 69. . . . In addition, if reduction in aircraft from 90 to 75 aircraft is imposed on the Thailand based unit, the loss of weight of bombs delivered will be disproportionately higher than the reduction

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from 53 to 46 sorties would indicate. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that the present ARC LIGHT sortie rate be sustained as a minimum. 249

(TS) Prior to receipt of COMUSMACV's foregoing impact statement, CINCPAC provided JCS the following rationale:

Further reduction of ARC LIGHT sorties from 1,600/mo to 1,400/mo will significantly reduce fire-power which has been vitally successful in thwarting enemy initiatives in SVN. This has been the salutary effect of reducing FWF troop casualties. ARC LIGHT strikes have enabled COMUSMACV to influence the battle without major shifts of troop units. 250

(TS) Again, the issue was resolved on 1 Oct when JCS announced that the August/September ARC LIGHT sortie rate of approximately 1,400 per month would be maintained until further notice. 251

(U) The ebb and flow of the ARC LIGHT sortie rate, and its distributions of effort is depicted in Figure V-22 and the following Table V-2.

The Problem with "Flyers"

(S) During the year, two areas of activity associated with the ARC LIGHT effort merited special attention. One was the problem of a small number of bombs regularly falling short of the target box and the other was related to an in-depth evaluation of the ARC LIGHT program.

(S) The short-fall of one or more bombs on virtually every B-52 mission had naturally been noticed for some time. There seemed to be no obvious reason for the short-falls and while remarkably few incidents of damage or casualties had resulted from them, the potential for more serious consequences did exist. As a result, on 24 Feb, COMUSMACV requested SAC analyze ARC LIGHT strikes for the period 15 Dec 68 to 15 Feb 69, and "advise on planned actions to correct deficiencies that result in bombs impacting short of the target box." 252

(S) CINCSAC had long been aware of the problem and in response to COMUSMACV's request ran a series of studies. They first analyzed 561 sorties between 1 Dec 68 and 12 Feb 69 in order to determine the percentage of aircraft having "flyers," as these unpredictable bombs were called. The first study revealed that 94.3 percent had a minimum of one, 91.2 percent had a minimum of two, and 85.5 percent had a minimum of three. Overall average for the period was 2.12 "flyers" per aircraft.

(S) A second study, running between 26 Jan and 18 Feb 69, analyzed 174 sorties to determine the percentage having short-fall impacting 3,300 feet or more from the target box. This study revealed that 13 (7.47 percent) had impacts 3,300 feet or more, with two of the sorties having impacts between 3,500 and 9,200 feet. None, however, fell short of the three kilometer safety zone.

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INTERDICTION CAMPAIGN IN LAOS

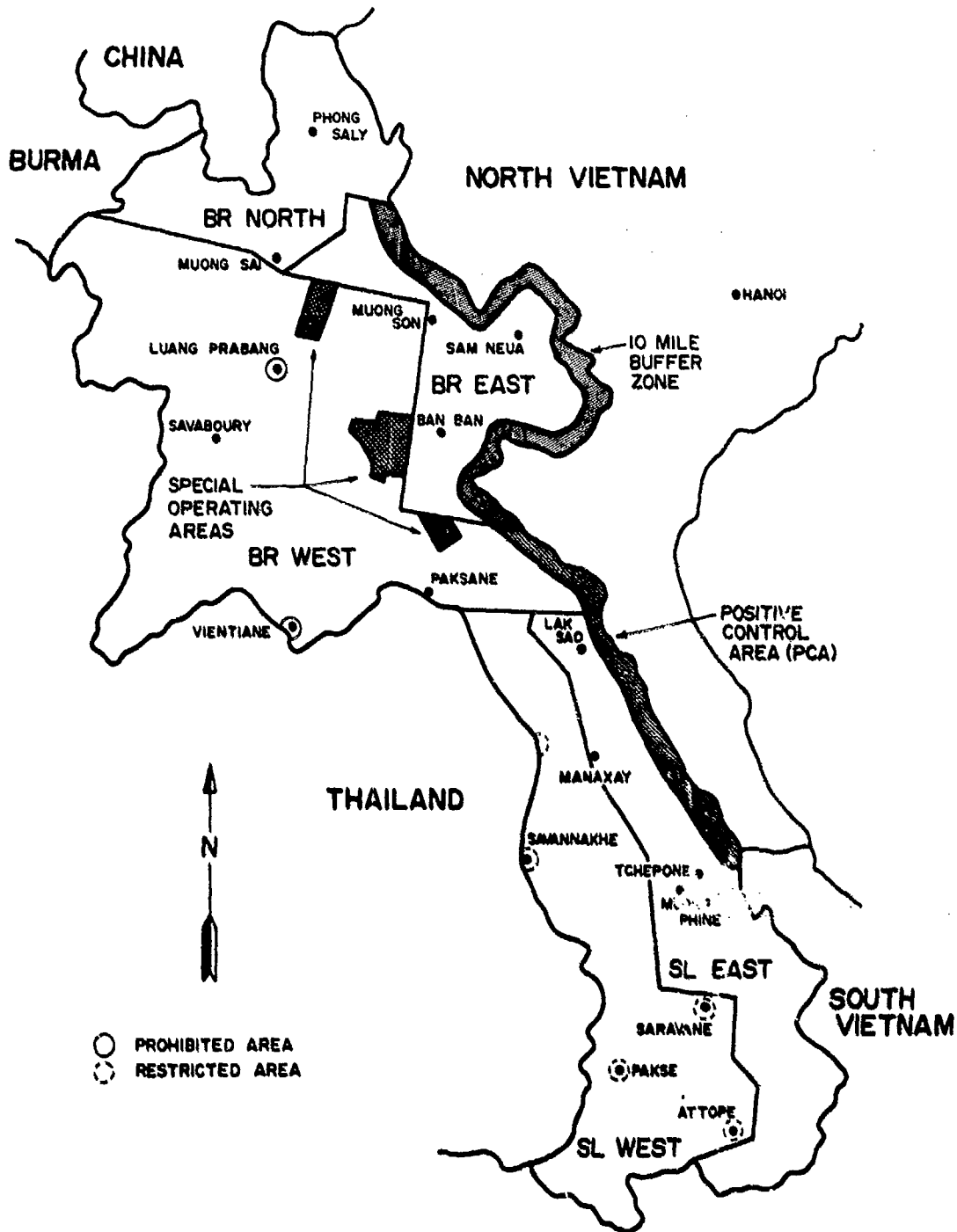


FIGURE V-22

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ARC LIGHT STRIKES⁺/SORTIES 1969

	Laos	I CTZ*	II CTZ	III CTZ	IV CTZ	Total
January	243/1074	24/121	29/111	68/403	24/138	388/1847
February	162/603	20/110	19/58	149/833	12/62	362/1666
March	43/238	16/80	44/205	206/1206	18/92	327/1821
April	130/735	15/81	30/112	145/844	2/8	322/1780
May	43/251	34/185	80/381	172/979	9/43	338/1839
June	49/261	26/129	97/485	146/801	8/35	326/1711
July	79/411	34/198	33/157	170/940	6/35	326/1741
August	36/146	39/182	42/167	198/911	11/38	326/1444
September	71/284	34/147	40/125	161/746	9/46	315/1318
October	65/350	43/163	45/171	144/766	5/15	302/1465
November	111/553	28/79	76/244	103/516	5/13	323/1405
December	124/611	28/84	43/155	117/581	7/21	319/1452

*Includes strikes/sorties in the DMZ

+Strikes include total number of targets struck

Source: ACoS, J-3, HQ MACV, Summary of ARC LIGHT Activity, Jan-Dec 69.

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TABLE V-2

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(S) Study three, dealing with 203 sorties between 19 Feb and 14 Mar 69, attempted to determine the percentage of sorties having bombs impact 3,300 or more feet from the normal bomb train. This study found that eight sorties or 3.95 percent of those studied, had bombs fall 3,300 feet or more short with the shortest impact being 6,000 feet.

(S) On the basis of these studies, SAC concluded that "we can continue to expect upwards of 90 percent of all sorties to have one or more bombs impacting short of the normal bomb train."

Also, we can expect at least 5 percent of all sorties to have an impact that is 3,300 feet or more short of the target box, but only in very isolated cases will an impact approach the three kilometer parameter. There is no evidence that the method of release (i.e., the off-set aiming of MSQ) is a factor, however, the studies do show that the number of flyers increase as TAS (true air speed) increase.

(S) Despite outside engineering assistance, SAC was unable to explain the reason for "flyers." One probability, suggested by the Air Force Armament Laboratory at Eglin AFB, Florida, was that the bomb instability was "related to yaw/roll resonance and could be induced any time during flight." The scientists at Eglin also believed that this instability was "unpredictable," and resulted from "small physical asymmetries and/or aerodynamic reasons." They thus concluded that "there is no known solution to eliminate the possibility of flyers from high altitude releases."

(S) On the basis of the above, the best that SAC could recommend was that in light of "realities," COMUSMACV "may wish to reconsider the safety buffer zone clearance for non-combatants short of the target box."²⁵³

ARC LIGHT Effectiveness

(S) Top US military and civil officials in RVN have rarely, if ever, seriously questioned the overall effectiveness of the ARC LIGHT program. There has been considerable concern -- both official and unofficial -- in CONUS, however, over the role of the heavy bomber in a limited, insurgent-counterinsurgent war. To some observers there has been something doctrinally wrong with using a strategic bomber in a more or less tactical role. (One news analyst compared it to killing gnats with sledgehammers.) Others wondered vocally how the big bombers could effectively hit mobile targets under heavy jungle cover and the cost effectiveness of using a carpet bombing technique in such terrain against insurgents. Moreover, there was considerable concern at all levels when interrogation of prisoners of war periodically revealed that in some instances at least, the VC and NVA had advanced warning of the strikes.

(S) One result of this broad concern was an in-depth study of ARC LIGHT effectiveness by a CINCPAC Scientific Advisory Group.²⁵⁴ Covering the period from 1965 to mid-1968, the study was based primarily on a review of some 2,800 PW interrogation reports. Not all reports were comprehensive and detailed enough for in-depth analysis but those that were covered included 18 percent of the 1965 strikes, 13 percent of the 1966 strikes, 5 percent of the 1967 strikes and 3 percent of the 1968 strikes. Even with this sampling the Scientific Advisory Group

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found the reports "relatively consistent." They "appeared to have sufficient validity to provide an assessment of the impact of ARC LIGHT on VC/NVA units in the field."

(S) The Advisory Group recognized that casualties alone were but one measure of overall ARC LIGHT effectiveness. It nonetheless discovered that "after the initial strikes of 1965, there was a significant general consistency in the order of magnitude of casualties caused by ARC LIGHT."

The average number of casualties per casualty-effective strike were highest in 1965 when the figure was 151. The average number dropped to 50 in 1966 and 45 in 1967 and 32 in 1968. Corresponding to these declining average casualties was a decline each year in the average number of aircraft per strike. The average sorties per strike were as follows: 11.7 during 1965, 7.6 during 1966, 6.6 during 1967, and 5.6 during 1968. This decline in average number of sorties correlates with the decline in average number of casualties per strike for the four year period.

(S) To the Advisory Group the above information was a "strong indicator" that despite improved VC/NVA defensive measures, "ARC LIGHT strikes retained their high initial effectiveness."

In addition (the study went on to say) there is evidence that in 1965 both the average number of casualties per unit and the average percent of a unit killed or wounded increased in direct proportion to increases in the size of the unit struck. In 1966, 1967 and 1968, the larger units including regiments gave increased number of casualties, but the average percent of casualties per unit tended to decrease as unit size increased. During latter years company-size units were often struck with sufficient severity to eliminate more than a third of the unit.

(S) The Group further found that a "consistently high percentage of reports indicated that ARC LIGHT missions disrupted VC/NVA operations and ground missions." In 1965, for example, 36 percent of the strikes, as reported by prisoners, gave a "clear indication" of disruption of unit mission. In 1966, this figure was almost 50 percent and in 27 percent of the strikes, battalion or regimental size units were forced to evacuate the stricken camp facility or area. In 1967, 44 percent of the strikes reportedly resulted in some degree of interference with the mission and 22 percent of the strikes resulted in forced evacuation of the area facilities. The percentages for 1968 were even higher with half of the reported strikes indicating interference with or disruption of VC/NVA activity.

(S) The effectiveness of the B-52s in causing VC/NVA personnel to desert their units was another factor considered by the study group. It found that the 1965 figures were "relatively low" with only 12 percent of the reported strikes causing desertions. In 1966, however, this figure had increased to 15 percent and in 1967 to 16 percent. The figure for the first half of 1968 stood at 13 percent.

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(S) In order to understand better the psychological impact of B-52 strikes, the Scientific Advisory Group separated the reports indicating troop reaction to ARC LIGHT into two categories. In one category, the intensity of reaction was "disruptive and intense but tended not to persist for more than a day or two." In the other category, the ARC LIGHT strike "induced shock and trauma that was widespread, very severe, and tended to persist by affecting troop behavior for as long as several months."

Fifty-two percent of the strikes in 1965 induced severe but transient psychological effects, while an additional 12 percent of other strikes resulted in extreme and persistent psychological effects. In 1966, 33 percent of the strikes were of the first category and 6 percent were of the second category. The psychological impact of ARC LIGHT continued high in 1968 with 23 percent of the strikes inducing effects categorized as intense but probably transient while 10 percent were described as extremely traumatic and persistent.

(S) Finally, the study touched on the matter of warning of B-52 strikes. The statistics revealed that in 1965, a "very high number" of strikes had hit VC/NVA troops without warning and that only 8 percent had been "clearly" pre-warned. In 1966, the VC/NVA warning system had improved to the extent that 35 percent of the strikes had been preceded by warnings. In 1967, the figure had been 32 percent but in the first half of 1968, with the data admittedly somewhat inconsistent and the conclusions therefore tentative, only 7 percent had been preceded by warnings. "This was the lowest warning rate of any period," the study concluded, "and was accompanied by a pattern of high casualties, disruption of unit mission and intense psychological effects." 255

(S) Another result accruing to an intensive interdiction campaign was reflected in DIA Intelligence Bulletin 278-69:

Enemy Logistic Activities in III Corps: Further analysis of documents captured on 22 September near the Tay Ninh-Binh Duong province border indicates that the 101st NVA Regiment is engaged in supply missions and that the regiment's 3d Battalion is the only element conducting combat operations. ... Although enemy combat elements sometimes engage in rear service activity, it is unusual for a maneuver regiment to commit the majority of its units to such operations -- especially when there is a rear service structure in the regiment's operational area to perform this function. The documents tend to confirm reports by prisoners captured during August in SR 1 that Allied operations have almost completely disrupted the SR 1 supply system. 256

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B-52 Support of Bu Prang - Duc Lap

(U) During the period 28 Oct through 15 Dec, the massive fire power of the B-52s was again employed as the RVNAF countered a major NVA threat in Quang Duc Province of south-west II CTZ. (See Ground Operations section for complete details.)

(U) The gradual buildup in the use of the B-52s began at a low level as five enemy targets in the Bu Prang area were struck on 31 Oct. As the intensity of the enemy attack increased, so did the requests for ARC LIGHT strikes. Fifty-seven targets felt the devastations of ARC LIGHT strikes in the month of November and 24 more in the first 15 days of December. Following 18 strikes, between 2 and 8 Dec, only light enemy and friendly-initiated ground contacts were reported as the enemy refused or was incapable of engagements with friendly forces.

(U) Massive firepower was a key point in the defeat of the NVA forces, as witnessed by the over 30 million pounds of bombs delivered by 86 SAC B-52 missions against enemy troop concentrations, staging areas, and fortifications in Quang Duc Province between 31 Oct and 8 Dec. Fifty eight of the missions were in the Dau Lap area of operations and 29 in the Bu Prang area. ²⁵⁷

SAMs Fired at B-52s

(S) For the first time since September 1968, the probability of a SAM battalion operating south of Vinh, NVN became a reality. On 19 Dec, the crews of three B-52s, engaged in a strike against an ARC LIGHT target box in the Ban La Hoy area of Laos, reported that multiple surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) were fired at their aircraft. ²⁵⁸ The missile sighting reports of the B-52 crewmen were also confirmed by 10 other US aircrews in the area.

(S) The B-52s, flying at an altitude of 18,500 feet, observed the missiles following their bomb release and roll out of the target area on a southwesterly egress heading. The reported miss distances, as the missiles passed through the aircraft altitudes, varied from 30 to 2,500 feet. Although all 13 aircrews observed the firings, the evasive action, maneuvering to keep the missiles in sight, and the lack of a horizon and other references for depth perception tended to cause variations in the sighting reports.

(S) An intensified effort to pinpoint the suspected launch site was immediately set in motion. Between 20 and 31 Dec, approximately 60 photo reconnaissance missions were flown on both sides of the border, covering the areas adjacent to Routes 137 and 912 (See Figure V-16), all with negative results. There were also 77 ELINT missions flown in the area which detected unusually heavy activity northeast of the Ban Karai Pass, but none in the Pass area itself.

(S) It was determined that the primary enemy objective in this firing was to deter further B-52 strikes against the vital Ban La Hoy area, which was hitherto defended only by Antiaircraft Artillery (AAA). Additionally, there was no evidence that the enemy intended to defend Ban Karai or any other areas along the Laotian border with SAMs on a permanent, fixed-site basis. However, the possibility that a transportable SAM package had been developed by the enemy, not only for the 19 Dec firing, but for future hit-and-run deployment to the Ban Karai or Mu Gia Pass areas could not be discounted. ²⁵⁹

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Aerial Reconnaissance

(S) In 1969, as in previous years aerial reconnaissance proved invaluable as a means and source of information and data on which to base strategic and tactical decisions. Indeed, in probably no other aspect of the war was the technical superiority of the US and its Allies so marked and so advantageous. A variety of more than 25 different type aircraft, ranging from the small O-1 to the super-swift RF-4 were used to penetrate airspace over North Vietnam, follow the logistical routes in Laos, or criss-cross RVN. The smaller, lowflying aircraft often carried only pilot and perhaps an observer. All aboard, however, were familiar with the area below and were capable of detecting even small signs of enemy activity. The more sophisticated aircraft, on the other hand, flew at higher altitudes and carried a variety of optical and/or electronic sensors.

(S) A broad view of the amount of aerial reconnaissance over RVN and North Vietnam is to be found in Table V-3.

The NVN Aerial Potential as Divulged thru Reconnaissance

(S) Following the November 1968 bombing halt, all aspects of NVN's aerial offensive/defensive posture were in a state of constant upgrade. Air reconnaissance throughout the year confirmed the continual build up of the enemy's Air Order of Battle, Surface to Air Missile, and Antiaircraft Artillery capability, plus his airfield construction and repair effort. The most dramatic increase was reflected in the enemy's AOB -- primarily in total numbers of fighter aircraft.

(S) The upward swing in the NVN AOB began gradually and a major increase was not noticed until July when, during a four week period, the MIG AOB jumped by approximately 61 percent. Nearly half (22) of the 48 additional aircraft were MIG-21s.

(S) Seventh AF intelligence analysts projected the NVNAF threat into 1970 as:

...with increased training rates and airfield construction, it is estimated that by June 1970 the NVNAF will have enough pilots and airfields to support an in-country MIG AOB of at least 175 aircraft. Based on the most recent information, the in-country MIG AOB for June 1970 probably will include 75 MIG-21s, 25 MIG-19s and 75 MIG-15/17 aircraft deployed at night airfields (assuming Vinh and Suoi are operational).

With the addition of the MIG-21 FISHBED F and the MIG-19 FARMER D and the large increase in the overall MIG AOB, the North Vietnamese have significantly increased their ability to defend their airspace. Further, if in the future the USAF were not present, the NVNAF would have a definite potential of becoming the strongest, most capable air force in SEA. 360

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AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE IN SEASIA

	Jan							
	Vis Rec	Photo	IR	SLAR	RDF/EL	FAC	OTHER	TOTAL
USAF	7454	774	264	0	829	4577	0	13898
VNAF	1421	62	0	0	56	519	0	2058
USMC	724	154	39	0	0	194	340	1451
USA	12230	429	911	1008	1201	577	0	16356
TOTAL	21829	1419	1214	1008	2086	5867	350	33763
	Feb							
USAF	8272	711	222	2	732	3914	0	13854
VNAF	1028	49	0	0	73	581	3	1734
USMC	831	117	40	0	0	298	321	1607
USA	11020	492	718	900	1069	680	0	14879
TOTAL	21151	1369	981	902	1874	5473	324	32074
	Mar							
USAF	9265	865	280	0	882	4256	0	15548
VNAF	1229	60	0	0	74	697	0	2060
USMC	860	83	28	0	0	316	121	1408
USA	12634	492	913	966	1180	913	0	17098
TOTAL	23988	1500	1221	966	2136	6182	121	36114
	Apr							
USAF	7912	875	312	0	882	3665	0	13646
VNAF	696	360	19	0	65	522	0	1662
USMC	853	139	94	0	36	449	0	1571
USA	12123	413	609	955	1392	687	0	16179
TOTAL	21584	1787	1034	955	2375	5323	0	33058
	May							
USAF	9943	885	319	0	895	4611	0	16653
VNAF	1511	64	42	0	88	828	0	2533
USMC	750	189	37	0	15	269	0	1260
USA	12018	484	813	953	1356	685	0	16309
TOTAL	24222	1622	1211	953	2354	6393	0	36755
	Jun							
USAF	9017	805	272	8	842	4380	0	15324
VNAF	1429	54	12	0	67	788	0	2350
USMC	777	166	13	0	11	109	0	1076
USA	10873	441	860	858	1391	388	0	14811
TOTAL	22096	1466	1157	866	2311	5665	0	33561

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TABLE V-3

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	Vis Rec	Photo	IR	SLAR	RDF/EL	FAC	OTHER	TOTAL
USAF	8429	706	213	0	943	3926	0	14217
VNAF	1560	48	0	0	54	781	0	2443
USMC	600	121	43	0	0	316	0	1080
USA	10263	412	792	837	1371	244	0	13919
TOTAL	20852	1287	1048	837	2368	5267	0	31659

Aug

USAF	8597	762	271	0	1052	4496	0	15178
VNAF	1804	50	10	0	56	1027	0	2947
USMC	622	121	54	0	0	341	0	1138
USA	10506	651	821	888	1430	450	0	14754
TOTAL	21529	1584	1156	888	2538	6322	0	34017

Sep

USAF	8875	672	207	0	1016	3607	0	14377
VNAF	1871	4	14	0	60	881	0	2875
USMC	488	10	49	0	0	314	0	952
USA	6307	954	673	773	934	488	0	10129
TOTAL	17541	1776	943	773	2010	5290	0	28333

Oct

USAF	9255	630	186	0	982	3003	0	14056
VNAF	1635	48	23	0	75	855	0	2638
USMC	363	109	33	0	0	146	0	651
USA	9073	464	729	545	906	482	0	12199
TOTAL	20328	1251	971	545	1963	4486	0	29544

Nov

USAF	8553	640	219	0	964	2970	0	13346
VNAF	1838	69	2	2	77	915	0	2903
USMC	289	90	29	11	0	95	0	514
USA	8785	525	752	669	1246	891	0	12868
TOTAL	19465	1324	1002	682	2287	4871	0	29631

Dec

USAF	8908	627	278	0	994	3158	0	13965
VNAF	1804	76	0	0	98	1039	0	3017
USMC	351	76	31	0	0	99	0	557
USA	8838	586	784	657	1068	612	0	12545
TOTAL	19901	1365	1093	657	2160	4908	0	30084

Source: Rpt (TS), Hq PACAF, Summary Air Operations, Southeast Asia, Jan - Dec 69.

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TABLE V-3

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(S) A comparison between the December 68 and December 69 force levels follows: 261

NVN JET ORDER OF BATTLE

<u>AIRFIELDS</u>	<u>MIG-15/17</u>	<u>MIG-19</u>	<u>MIG-21</u>	<u>IL-28</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>NVN</u>					
Bai Thuong	3	0	7(3)	0	10(3)
Hoa Lac	16	0	0	0	16
Kep	10(4)	1	1(4)	0	12(8)
Kien An	16(18)	0	2	0	18(18)
Phuc Yen	5	0	49(24)	2(3)	56(27)
Yen Bai	8	9	0	0	17
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>58(22)</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>59(31)</u>	<u>2(3)</u>	<u>129(56)</u>
<u>S. CHINA</u>					
Peitun/ Yunani	<u>82(89)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>30(7)</u>		116(99)
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>140(111)</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>89(38)</u>		<u>245(155)</u>

Note: Figures in parenthesis reflect 1968 force levels.

(S) In 1960, 15 airfields had been serviceable for operations by the NVNAF, but only three -- Cat Bi, Kien An and Gia Lam -- had been capable of limited jet operations. With the exception of Cat Bi, none had been capable of handling light and/or medium jet bomber operations. Phuc Yen, where construction had commenced in 1962, and Vinh, which had been expanded in 1963, were the only airfields to be added prior to the initiation of US airstrikes on 2 Aug 64. By mid-1965, an extensive airfield improvement program had been well underway. Between 1965 and 1968, the North Vietnamese had begun construction on two more airfields, and continually maintained reconstruction and repair activities necessitated by US airstrikes. By 1 Apr 68, the beginning of the partial bombing halt, four jet-capable airfields had been serviceable -- Phuc Yen, Kep, Kien An and Gia Lam -- and construction had continued at Yen Bai.

(S) Since that time, NVN has made a concerted effort to accelerate airfield construction and repair in order to expand the number of serviceable airfields available for their operational jet and transport aircraft inventory. The eleven existing jet-serviceable airfields were more than sufficient to disperse and base these fighters; however, it was estimated that the NVNAF would have to improve the facilities, logistics and maintenance capabilities at many of these airfields before any permanent extensive deployment could be accomplished. (See Figure V-23)

(S) Much of NVN's airfield construction activity had been designed to extend its tactical transport capability toward the North Vietnam/Laos border, as evidenced by the new airfield at Quan Lang in the southern panhandle, and the improvement and reactivation activity at Na San and Dien Phu in northwestern NVN.

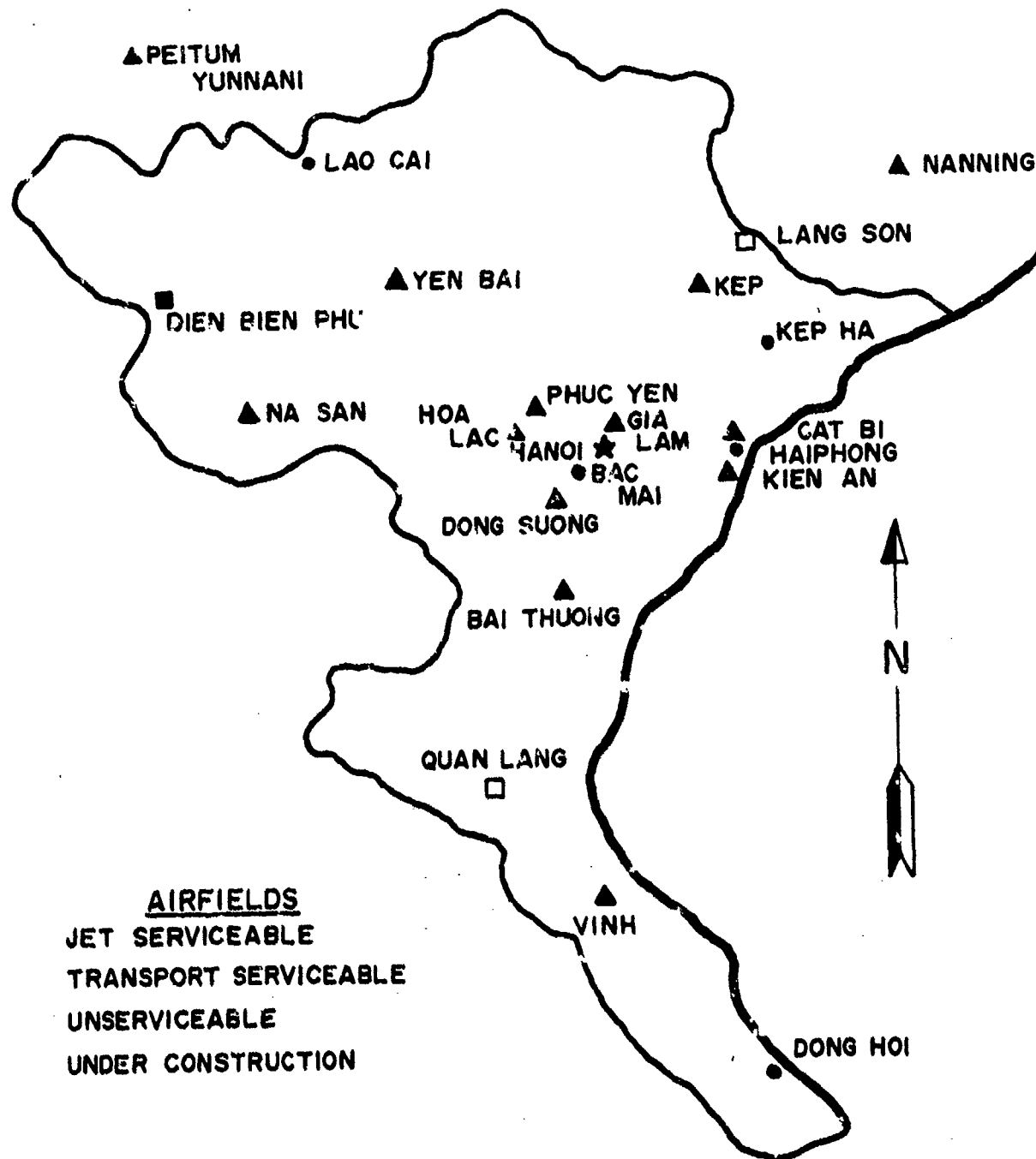
(S) The NVN airfield situation was forecasted to be:

When all the construction is completed, the North Vietnamese airfield system will be equal

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NORTH VIETNAM AIRFIELDS



AIRFIELDS
▲ JET SERVICEABLE
□ TRANSPORT SERVICEABLE
● UNSERVICEABLE
○ UNDER CONSTRUCTION

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FIGURE V-23

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to, if not better than, all other Southeast Asian countries. The over-all result of NVN's concerted reconstruction and construction efforts to date is a greatly expanded jet fighter air defense capability. The NVNAF has increased its operating range in all directions and also its aircraft dispersal and recovery capability. This has enabled them to make significant progress in their goal of air supremacy over their own territory, making an already dangerous air defense capability an even more formidable challenge.²⁶²

Air Rescue and Recovery

(U) Throughout 1969, organized air rescue and recovery was the responsibility of the 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group (ARRG), a unit of 7AF with headquarters at Tan Son Nhut and detachments at Danang, Nakhon Phanom, and Udorn. The primary mission of the 3d ARRG was the recovery and rescue of downed aircrews although as the statistics in Table V-4 indicate, a substantial number of "saves" were in the non-combat category. By the same token, however, US forces everywhere served as rescue units on an "as needed" basis. Army helicopters, for example, rescued a number of individuals, including downed airmen, when time was critical and the more sophisticated rescue equipment was not immediately available.

(S) A typical 3d ARRG rescue team was made up of an HC-130 aircraft and crew, which served as "rescue control" and refueled the helicopters, and one or more HH-53 helicopters, affectionately known as "Jolly Green Giants." Also, if the rescue attempt were in hostile territory, the team consisted of strike aircraft such as the A-1, which suppressed enemy ground fire. As a rule, only after the downed aircrew was visually sighted and the local ground fire suppressed did a helicopter move in to make the recovery.²⁶³

(S) Air Rescue and recovery in SEASIA was conducted in accordance with the motto of the 3d ARRG, "That Others May Live." Every effort was made to get downed airmen out safely. Suppressive fire was used as needed and, during the year a number of "saves" were possible because CS riot control agents were used. This had to be used sparingly, however, since CS could also be a hazard to rescue personnel and survivors. Nevertheless, great risks were the rule rather than the exception.²⁶⁴ Aircrews often took ground fire at close range and in all cases, a pararescue specialist was ready to come down the hoist to assist a wounded or injured survivor who was unable to get himself into the rescue sling.

(S) The one severe limitation placed on the rescue teams was the inability to work effectively in darkness. Difficulty in locating a downed airman, the inability of the helicopter pilot to hover without a visual point of reference, and the virtual impossibility of suppressing ground fire at night led ARRG to brief incoming aircrews that night rescue would not be attempted unless radio contact could be maintained with the survivor and, in his opinion, he could not live through the night. The customary pattern therefore, was to expend every effort to get the survivor out before dark or, if that was impossible, to begin rescue operations at first light the next morning. Unfortunately, by that time, it was often too late. (See Figure V-24 for a comparison between time lapse and rescue probability.)

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AIR RESCUE AND RECOVERY 1969

	Sorties	Combat Saves	Non-combat Saves	Total Saves since 1 Dec 64	
				Combat	Non-combat
Jan	230	67	40	1575	734
Feb	172	34	20	1609	754
Mar	175	41	19	1650	773
Apr	129	28	22	1678	795
May	164	22	27	1700	822
Jun	106	128	21	1828	843
Jul	58	22	11	1850	854
Aug	48	6	3	1856	859
Sep	49	9	11	1865	868
Oct	63	69	8	1934	876
Nov	70	22	4	1956	880
Dec	121	18	6	1974	886

Source: Rpt (TS), Hq PACAF, Summary Air Operations, Southeast Asia, Jan - Dec 69

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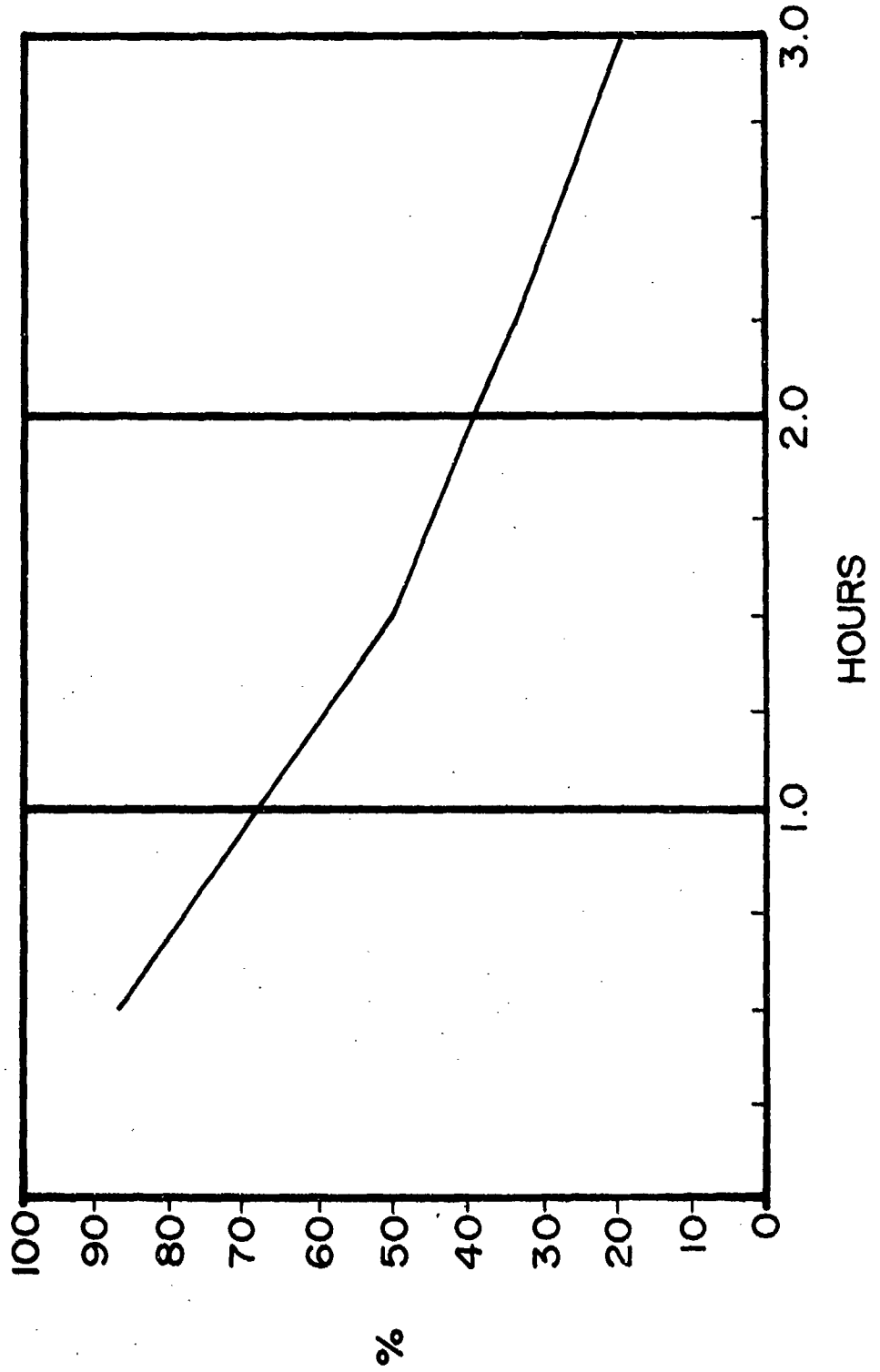
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TABLE V-4

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RESCUE PROBABILITY VS DISPATCH
TO PICKUP TIME



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FIGURE V-24

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(S) The obvious need for some sort of night recovery capability led, early in the year, to initiation of two programs aimed at development and employment of night recovery systems. One system, known as LNRS (Limited Night Recovery System) was an interim measure designed to allow rescue attempts initiated before dark to continue on into the night. This meant equipping one or more of the HH-53s with such special devices as; the Low Light Level Television (LLTV) which would enable the helicopter crew visually to acquire the survivor and assist the pilot in descending to hoist altitude; or the night Observation Device (NOD), an improved starlight scope with a greater range and wider field of view than LLTV. The latter would be used by the hoist operator to direct maneuvering to the precise recovery area. Also, because moonlight and starlight would not always be available, the LNRS had to include its own covert light source in the form of infrared light. Finally, to allow precision hovering at night without visual reference to the ground, the helicopter had to be equipped with an automatic hover and approach coupler. This also meant, however, that provision had to be made for the hoist operator, who ordinarily positioned the craft over the survivor through voice instructions to the pilot, to himself move the helicopter into a favorable position through manipulation of the coupler.²⁶⁵

(S) Mid-year plans called for in-theater modification for the LNRS to begin on 1 Aug, with a year-end goal of six HH-53s modified and based in Thailand. However, actual modification did not start until November -- delayed by technical problems with the hover coupler -- and by the end of the year only one HH-53 was partially completed. It was anticipated that the technical problems would be resolved by April 70 and the modification program continued.²⁶⁶

(S) Throughout the year the use of Riot Control Agent (CS) was employed with ever increasing success by SAR in SEASIA. Normally delivered by the slower flying A-1 aircraft -- utilizing the CBU-19 CS Dispenser -- CS served to neutralize or suppress the intense enemy ground fire directed at the rescue aircraft. A typical CS operation was reported by COMUSMACV to CINCPAC in a routine message.

During the successful recovery of two F4D crew members -- downed at 111437Z Nov over Laos -- CS was used. At 2230Z a SAR force of A1-s, Jolly Greens and HC-130P aircraft were on the scene and in voice contact with the survivors. During the four hour recovery operation large quantities of ordnance and CS were expended to suppress the ground fire. Although ground fire continued throughout the recovery operation -- the helicopters were driven off three times prior to the pickup -- its frequency/quantity decreased considerably with each additional CS strike. Because both crew members (one injured required the deployment of a pararescueman) were recovered under extremely hostile conditions it was apparent that the employment of CS made a significant contribution to the success of this aircrew recovery operation.²⁶⁷

Aircraft Losses

(S) Between 1 Jan 1965 and 1 Jan 1969, the AF had lost 1,104 aircraft under combat conditions, including 74 which were destroyed on the ground. Of the total, 531, mostly F-4s and

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F-105s, had gone down over North Vietnam; 173 (including one destroyed on the ground) had been lost in or over Laos; and the remaining 400 (71 destroyed on the ground) were lost in or over RVN. These figures represented a variety of 30 different type aircraft, with the heaviest losses being in the strike category (A-1E, 94; F-100, 128; F-4C/D, 192; and F-105, 303). Over 100 of the small O-1E/F Birdog aircraft had been lost, however. 268

(S) Navy combat losses for the same period had totaled 429, none of which qualified as destroyed on the ground. Of this total, 386 had gone down over North Vietnam, 27 had fallen over Laos, and the remaining 16 had been lost over RVN. Heaviest losses had been in the A-1H category, 45; the A-4C/E/F, 178; F-4B, 56; and the F-8D/E, 56.

(S) Marine combat losses had been 303 of which 46 had been lost to enemy action on the ground. Forty six of the losses had been A-4s, 42 were of the F-4 category, but the majority had been rotary wing primarily H-34s and UH-1s. Marine losses had broken down into 28 for North Vietnam, 8 in Laos, and 267 in RVN.

(S) The VNAF losses for the period had totaled 130, of which 26 had been lost to ground action. Ten A-1G/Hs had been lost over North Vietnam, and the remaining 120 in RVN. Predictably, the vast majority of the losses had been in the A-1G/H category (78) and the H/CH-34 helicopter (27).

(S) In all, the Army had lost 837 helicopters during the period, most of them UH-1s and OH-6s; ninety two of the 837, however, had been destroyed by enemy ground action. In addition, the Army had lost 87 fixed wing aircraft of which 19 had been destroyed on the ground. All of the Army losses had been in RVN.

(S) Combat losses for US and VNAF forces for 1969 were as shown in Table V-5.

Aircraft Losses in Laos

(S) With the 1 Nov 68 bombing halt and subsequent concentration of the US air effort into Laos, NVN predictably strengthened their LOCs and their Laotian anti-aircraft defenses. To provide greater security for their major LOCs and their trucks and supplies transitting those routes, the NVN more than tripled the Laotian AAA order of battle. At the time of the bombing halt there were about 200 guns located in Laos; however, by the end of the dry season in 1969, the gun count had peaked at almost 600. During the subsequent rainy season, the count showed a slight decrease, down to a level of about 450 to 500 guns. With the advent of the dry season the gun count rose steadily, and by the end of 1969 had surpassed the 650 mark.

(S) As a result of the increased defensive posture and the increased number of sorties flown in Laos, 120 USAF, USN and USMC fixed wing aircraft were lost to hostile fire from 1 Jan to 31 Dec. Statistics revealed that the greatest number of aircraft combat losses occurred in the 4,000 to 5,000 foot altitude range. From those losses where the altitude when hit was known, aircraft flying at an altitude of 4,000 to 5,000 feet accounted for more than twice the number of aircraft lost at any other given altitude. At this altitude, the pilot was within the effective range of the entire gamut of AAA guns the enemy had at his disposal.

(S) Light anti-aircraft (LAA) guns -- 23mm, 37mm and 57mm posed the most serious threat to US aircraft. Because of their large number (over 300 guns), versatility, and the operating

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AIRCRAFT COMBAT LOSSES 1969

	Jan			Feb			Mar			
	Laos	NVN	SVN	Laos	NVN	SVN	Laos	NVN	SVN	
USAF	17(1)*	0	16(3)	12(1)	0	6(3)	16	0	11	
Army	0	0	32	0	0	49(16)	0	0	45(5)	
Navy	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	
Marines	2	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	12(6)	
VNAF	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	
Total	20	0	55	15	0	59	17	0	69	
		Apr			May			Jun		
USAF	12	0	9(1)	5	0	6	6	1	13(3)	
Army	0	0	42	0	0	71(15)	0	0	49(8)	
Navy	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	
Marines	1	0	7	1	0	5	0	0	10	
VNAF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	14	0	58	7	0	82	7	1	72	
		Jul			Aug			Sep		
USAF	6	0	9	4	0	9	2	0	5	
Army	0	0	26	0	0	38	0	0	39	
Navy	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Marines	0	0	5	1	0	4	1	0	4	
VNAF	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	
Total	7	0	42	5	0	51	3	0	54	
		Oct			Nov			Dec		
USAF	9	0	4	15	0	6	11	0	8	
Army	0	0	24	0	0	66	0	0	27	
Navy	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	
Marines	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	2	
VNAF	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Total	10	0	30	18	0	76	13	0	37	

Source: Rpt (TS), PACAF, Summary Air Operations Southeast Asia, Jan-Dec 69 (U), Gp-1

* Figure in parenthesis () denotes loss due to ground action

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TABLE V-6

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altitudes of US aircraft, these guns accounted for 40 percent of the aircraft losses. The next greatest threat was posed by small arms (SA) and automatic weapons (AW) -- 7.62mm and 14.5mm -- which accounted for slightly more than 20 percent of the total losses. (These guns were particularly effective against low flying aircraft due to their high rate of fire, mobility and wide deployment.)

(S) The enemy had indeed developed a formidable AAA defensive posture in Laos with his AW and LAA. Together, these weapons accounted for 60 percent of the aircraft shot down in Laos, with the F-4s incurring 25 percent of the losses, while the A-1s and the F-105s, 16 percent and 15 percent respectively.²⁶⁹

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MILITARY OPERATIONS - V

1. Msgs (S), COMUSMACV to Subordinate Commanders, 120724Z Feb, 171005Z May 69, Subj: Rules of Engagement-Laos (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Subordinate Commanders, 100134Z Feb 69, Subj: Rules of Engagement-Cambodia (U), Gp-4.
2. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, 040258Z Dec 68, Subj: Continuation of Special Reconnaissance Authority (U), Gp-3; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Subordinate Commanders, 200115Z Feb 69, Subj: Rules of Engagement-(ROE) DMZ (U), Gp-1.
3. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Subordinate Commanders, 100134Z Feb 69, Subj: Rules of Engagement-Cambodia (U), Gp-4.
4. Msg (S), SECSTATE to AMEMB Saigon, 231613Z Nov 69, Subj: Dak Dam/Bu Prang (U), Gp-4; Msg (U), SECSTATE to AMEMB Saigon, 252143Z Nov 69, Subj: Not Stated; Msg (C), SECSTATE to AMEMB Saigon, 020108Z Dec 69, Subj: Alleged Incidents by US/ARVN Troops Against Cambodia (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), AMEMB Saigon, Action SECSTATE, Saigon 24056 of 3 Dec 69, Subj: Dak Dam/Bu Prang Eorder Incident (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), SECSTATE to AMEMB Saigon, 242227Z Nov 69, Subj: Dak Dam/Bu Prang (U), Gp-4.
5. Msgs (S), COMUSMACV to Subordinate Commanders, 120724Z Feb 69, 171005Z May 59, Subj: Rules of Engagement-Laos (U), Gp-4.
6. Embtel (S), AMEMB Saigon to SECSTATE, 301230Z Nov 68, Subj: Truces at Christmas and Tet (U), Gp-None; Embtel (S), AMEMB Saigon to SECSTATE, 281205Z Jan 69, Subj: Tet Truce (U), Gp-None.
7. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 071428Z Feb 69, Subj: Indiscriminate Firing of Weapons (U), Gp-4; Msg (U), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 111105Z Feb 69, Subj: Use of Fireworks During Tet; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 121024Z Feb 69, Subj: Increased Alertness During Tet (U), Gp-4.
8. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to COMROKRV, 120823Z Feb 69, Subj: Security Measures During Ky Dau Lunar New Year's Days (U), Gp-4, Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to Cdr 7th AF et al., 150005Z Feb 69, Subj: Special Operational Instructions for Temporary Cessation of Offensive Operations (U), Gp-3; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 152017Z Feb 69, Subj: Temporary Cessation of Offensive Operations (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Cdr 7th AF et al., 152019Z Feb 69, Subj: Temporary Cessation of Offensive Operations (U), Gp-4; Embtel (U), AMEMB Saigon to SECSTATE, 160055Z Feb 69, Subj: Tet Stand Down.
9. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 091010Z May 69, Subj: Instructions for Temporary Cessation of Offensive Operations (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 170840Z May 69, Subj: Buddha's Birthday Cease Fire (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Cdr 7th AF et al., 290256Z May 69, Subj: Temporary Cessation of Offensive Operations (U), Gp-4.
10. Msg (S), CG, DMAC to Temporary AIC 8733, 080340Z Sep 69, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4; Embtel (U), AMEMB Saigon to SECSTATE, Saigon 18141, 7 Sep 69, Subj: GVN Rejects Ho Chi Minh Funeral Truce; Msg (S), AdminO COMNAVFORV to NAVFORV, 090219Z Sep 69, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

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11. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC and CINCPAC, 101830Z Sep 69, Subj: Reporting of Cease Fire Activities (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC and CINCPAC, 102149Z Sep 69, Subj: Reporting of Cease Fire Activities (U), Gp-4.
12. Pacific Stars and Stripes, 7 Dec 69, p. 6.
13. Pacific Stars and Stripes, 8 Dec 69, p. 6.
14. Msg (S), DIA to AIG 7011, 072335Z Dec 69, Subj: Developments in the RVN (U), Gp-1.
15. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 111230Z Dec 69, Subj: Instructions for Christmas and New Year Cease Fire Period (U), Gp-4.
16. Msg (S), COMNAVFORV to CTF 115, 150934Z Dec 69, Subj: Implementing Instructions for Christmas/New Year Cease Fire Period (U), Gp-4.
17. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to Cdr, 7th AF, et al., 200255Z Dec 69, Subj: Special Operational Instructions for Christmas and New Year Cease Fire Period (U), Gp-3.
18. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC and CINCPAC, 251622Z Dec 69, Subj: Special Telecon- En Violations, Christmas Truce 1969 (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC and CINCPAC, 260815Z Dec 69, Subj: Special Telecon- Christmas Cease Fire Incidents (U), Gp-4.
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21. Unarmed utility helicopters (UH-1 series).
22. Ltr (U), HQ, 19th Mil Hist Det to HQ MACV, 9 Jul 69, Subj: Report of 9th Infantry Division Tactics.
23. Ibid.
24. Rpt (S), HQ MACV, 7 Jan 70, Subj: Mission Council Meeting (U), Gp-4.
25. Except where otherwise indicated, the material in the Ground Operations portion of this history is extracted from the COMUSMACV talking paper for the Mission Council Meeting for the appropriate period.
26. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 69, MACV Command History (U), Gp-1.
27. Msg (C), MACV COMB CTR to NMCC, 011000Z Mar 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.

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30. Ibid.
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32. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 152200Z Dec 68, 011000Z Mar 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
33. Op. cit. #27.
34. Op. cit. #27.
35. Msg (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 132200Z Jan 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), FMFPAC Operations of US Marine Forces, Vietnam - Jan 69 (U), Gp-2; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 280647Z Jul 69, Subj: Weekly Report of Ground Operations (U), Gp-4.
36. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR, 232200Z Feb, 192200Z Mar 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), FMFPAC Operations of US Marines in Vietnam, Mar 69 (U), Gp-4; Memo (U), MACOI-P, 23 Jun 69, Subj: Memo for the Press.
37. Rpt (TS), MACJ3, Undated, Subj: Historical Summary - February 1969 (U), Gp-4.
38. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS, 031120Z Mar 69, Subj: Weekly Assessment of Military Position (U), Gp-4.
39. Msg (TS), DIA to AIG 925, 202222Z Feb 69, Subj: Watch Report (U), Gp-1.
40. Msgs (C), MACV to NMCC, 251000Z, 261000Z Feb 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
41. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 240900Z, 252200Z Feb 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
42. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS, 031120Z Mar 69, Subj: Weekly Assessment of Military Position (U), Gp-4.
43. Msg (TS), DIA to AIG 925, 272109Z Mar 69, Subj: Watch Report of 27 Mar 69 (U), Gp-1.
44. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 301000Z Mar 69, 042200Z Apr 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
45. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 031000Z Mar 69, 091000Z May 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), CG III MAF to COMUSMACV, 021122Z Mar 69, Subj: Op PURPLE MARTIN (U), Gp-4.
46. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 092200Z May 69, 182200Z Jul 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
47. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 182200Z Jul 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
48. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 022200Z May 69, 182200Z Jul 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 290328Z Sep 69, Subj: SEASIA Grid Ops Weekly Sum (U), Gp-4.

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50. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 112200Z Apr 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), SECSTATE to AMEMB Saigon, 260008Z Apr 69, Subj: News Coverage of Hue Murders (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), AMEMB Saigon to SECSTATE, 211150Z Apr 69, Subj: ID of Bodies Found In Hue (U), Gp-3; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 291129Z Mar 69, Subj: PINNACLE 142 - Enemy Atrocity (U), Gp-4; Pacific Stars and Stripes, 10 Nov 69.
51. Msg (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 191000Z Mar 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
52. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 022200Z Mar 69, 091000Z May 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
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55. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 290019Z Jul 69, Subj: Grd Opns Weekly Sum (U), Gp-4.
56. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 072200Z Apr 69, 212200Z Apr 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), FMFPAC, Undated, Subj: Summary of Operations of US Marine Corps Forces in Vietnam - April 1969 (U), Gp-2; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7051, 230455Z Apr 69, Subj: SPHINX (U), Gp-4.
57. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 080600Z Sep 69, Subj: SEASIA Grd Opns Weekly Sum (U), Gp-4.
58. Rpt (C), MACOI, 12 May 69, Subj: Press Release 132-69; Rpt (C), MACOI, 13 May 69, Subj: Press Release 133-69.
59. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 140930Z Jul 69, Subj: Grd Ops Weekly Sum (U), Gp-4.
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61. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 102200Z May 69, 082200Z Jun 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 202200Z May 69, Subj: NMCC Query (U), Gp-4.
62. Rpt (U), MACOI, 17 Aug 69, Subj: Press Release 229-69; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 171000Z May 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
63. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 262200Z May 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), FMFPAC, Undated, Subj: Operations of US Marine Forces, Vietnam, June 1969 (U), Gp-4.
64. Bklt (S), Operations of US Marine Forces, Vietnam, Nov 69, Gp-2.
65. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 241000Z Jun 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

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70. Msg (C), COMSEVENTHFLT to CTG 76.4, et al., 290052Z Aug 69, Subj: Operation DEFIANT STAND Initiating Directive (U), Gp-4; Pacific Stars and Stripes, 15 Sep 69.
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77. Msg (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 012200Z Feb 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
78. Msg (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 012200Z Feb 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
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81. Op. cit. #78.
82. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 200645Z Jan 69, 270723Z Jan 69, 030828Z Feb 69, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.
83. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 181000Z Jan 69, 102200Z Feb 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
84. Msgs (S), CG I FFORCEV to CG 4th Inf Div, 150630Z Jan 69, 190241Z Jan 69, Subj: Kontum Province (U), Gp-4.
85. Msg (S), CG I FFORCEV to CG 4th Inf Div, 291545Z Jan 69, Subj: Termination of Operations/Naming Areas and Operations (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CG I FFORCEV to COMUSMACV, 141345Z Jan 69, Subj: Termination of Operations/Operation Nicknames (U), Gp-4.

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88. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 241000Z Feb 69, 041000Z Mar 69, 042200Z Mar 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
89. Msg (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 151000Z Apr 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
90. Talking Papers (C), COMUSMACV, 2-8 Mar 69, Subj: Summary of Operations for Mission Council Meeting, Gp-4.
91. Msg (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 162200Z Apr 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
92. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 232200Z Mar 69, 242200Z Mar 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
93. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 012200Z Apr 69, 021000Z Apr 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Rpt (U), IFFORCEV, Apr 69, Subj: Press Release No. A-61.
94. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 271000Z Mar 69, 272200Z Mar 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
95. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7870, 212200Z May 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
96. Minutes (C), Mission Council Meeting, 13 May 69, Subj: Summary of Operations 4-12 May 69; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 090810Z Jun 69, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.
97. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 230723Z Jun 69, Subj: Gnd Opns Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.
98. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 140930Z Jul 69, Subj: Gnd Opns Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 091123Z Jun 69, Subj: Daily Sitrep (U), Gp-4.
99. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 300945Z Jun 69, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.
100. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 290326Z Sep 69, Subj: SEA Gnd Opns Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.
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105. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 010555Z Sep 69, Subj: SEA Gnd Opns Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

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109. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 192200Z Jan 69, 091000Z Feb 69, 112200Z Feb 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
110. Rpt (C), DA, 18 Apr 69, Subj: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Hq, II FFORCEV, Period Ending 31 Jan 69 (U), Gp-4.
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114. Ibid.
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116. Rpt (C), Hq, II FFORCEV, Undated, Subj: Operational Report - Lessons Learned for the period 1 May-31 Jul 69 (U), Gp-4.
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122. Op. cit. #113.
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132. Rpt (S), Hq MACV, 7 Jan 70, Subj: Mission Council Meeting (U), Gp-4.
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134. Rpt (S), 16th MHD, USARV, 14 Jun 69, Subj: Combat After Action Report of Operation SPEEDY EXPRESS (U), Gp-4.
135. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 062200Z Mar 69, 031000Z Jan 69, 132200Z Jan 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
136. Msg (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 131000Z Jan 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
137. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 131000Z Jan 69, 142200Z Jan 69, 151000Z Jan 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
138. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 112200Z Jan 69, 122200Z Jan 69, 142200Z Jan 69, 152200Z Jan 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
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141. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 142200Z, 192200Z Jan 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
142. Msgs (C), MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 222200Z Jan 69, 231000Z Jan 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
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144. Msgs (C) MACV COMD CTR to NMCC, 021000Z Feb 69, 032200Z Feb 69, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.
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