

~~SECRET~~

67
Thursday
July 27, 1967
9:45 a.m.

Mr. President:

Pres file

You will wish to read this sober
assessment of Viet Cong problems.

I reported to you the other
day a similar conclusion from an
independent reading of several
hundred individual reports from
the various provinces.

W. W. Rostow

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(b) (1)

WWRostow:sln

SANITIZED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NIJ 94-132
By ljp, NARA, Date 7-3-75

SANITIZED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 94-128

63G

By CL, NARA, Date 2-22-95 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

PRIORITY

Intelligence Information Cable

IN 18580

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THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE.

DIST 26 JULY 1967

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COUNTRY: SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI: JUNE-JULY 1967

SUBJECT: CURRENT VIET CONG PROBLEMS, POLICIES AND
SOLUTIONS

ACQ: VIETNAM, SAIGON

SOURCE: [REDACTED]

THIS IS A FIELD APPRAISAL OF

THE CURRENT SITUATION. IT IS NOT AN OFFICIAL JUDGMENT BY THIS AGENCY OR
ANY COMPONENT. IT REPRESENTS THE OBSERVATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] BASED ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE [REDACTED] AT THE TIME OF PREPARATION.

1. (SUMMARY: A REVIEW OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON VIET CONG (VC) ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT SOUTH VIETNAM DURING RECENT WEEKS WOULD INDICATE THAT VC PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND IN THE CITIES ARE SERIOUS AND INCREASING, THAT THEY HAVE HAD [REDACTED] TO ADJUST THEIR POLICIES AND PLANNING ACCORDINGLY, AND THAT THE VC WILL CONTINUE TO CARRY OUT THEIR TERRORIST AND OTHER ACTIVITIES TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE DESPITE A WEAKENING OF THEIR ORGANIZATION AND A LESSENING OF THEIR EFFECTIVENESS. IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT THERE WILL BE CONTINUED ENEMY SUCCESSES [REDACTED]

1.3(a)(4)

(classification) (dissem controls)

CESSES AGAINST THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND FREE WORLD FORCES, BUT THESE WILL PROBABLY BE TO AN INCREASING EXTENT THE RESULT OF DIRECT CONTRIBUTION OF CADRES, REGULAR TROOPS AND MATERIEL FROM NORTH VIETNAM AND TO A DECREASING EXTENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE VIET CONG THEMSELVES.)

2. VC PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE:

A. MANPOWER PROBLEMS INCREASINGLY PLAGUE THE VC IN NEARLY ALL PARTS OF SOUTH VIETNAM. EVEN IN THE HEAVILY POPULATED DELTA REGION, MOST PROVINCES REPORT SEVERE RECRUITING PROBLEMS AND SERIOUSLY UNDERSTRENGTH UNITS. MANPOWER IS LOST DIRECTLY THROUGH BATTLEFIELD CASUALTIES, DISEASE AND HARDSHIP, DESERTION, AND DEFECTION THROUGH THE CHIEU HOI PROGRAM. THE RESERVE SUPPLY IS REDUCED BY LARGE-SCALE EMIGRATION FROM VC-CONTROLLED AREAS, LEAVING SOME PLACES TOO UNDERPOPULATED TO TEND CROPS ADEQUATELY OR SUPPLY LABOR AND CONSCRIPTS FOR THE VC. REAL AVAILABILITY IS FURTHER REDUCED BY POPULAR RESISTANCE TO RECRUITMENT. AS A RESULT, THE VC ARE INCREASINGLY RESORTING TO THE USE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN, EVEN IN FIGHTING UNITS.

B. CLOSELY RELATED IS THE LOW STATE OF MORALE. MOST

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PROVINCES REPORT THAT GENERAL VC MORALE IS BAD AND STILL DECLINING IN THE LOWER RANKS. THERE IS ALSO REPORTING THAT CADRE MORALE REMAINS GOOD, BUT SINCE THE CADRES ARE SUFFERING REPEATED DEFEATS, THE FORCES THEY CONTROL ARE DECLINING, AND THEY ARE BEING PRESSURED FROM ABOVE FOR BETTER RESULTS, IT IS PROBABLY THAT IT IS THEIR DISCIPLINE RATHER THAN THEIR MORALE WHICH IS REFERRED TO. THE DEPRESSED MORALE AND DECLINING DISCIPLINE (AN XUYEN PROVINCE SPECIFICALLY REPORTS INSUBORDINATION) OF THE RANK AND FILE ARE REFLECTED IN THE RISING RATE OVER THE LAST YEAR OF DESERTION AND RALLYING UNDER THE CHIEU HOI PROGRAM.

C. THE MORALE AND MANPOWER PROBLEMS ARE IN TURN RELATED TO THE LOSS OF POPULAR SUPPORT, WHICH IS REPORTED IN ALL CORPS AREAS. DISILLUSIONMENT WITH VC PROMISES AND PROPAGANDA, RESENTMENT AGAINST EVER HIGHER "TAXES" AND THE CONSCRIPTION OF MANPOWER, AND DWINDLING CONFIDENCE IN ULTIMATE VC VICTORY HAVE WORKED TO TURN THE PEOPLE FROM THE VC. REFUGEE AND CHIEU HOI FIGURES SHOW THAT WHERE IT IS FEASIBLE, THE "WATER" IS TRICKLING AWAY AND LEAVING THE "FISH" HIGH AND DRY.

D. FOOD IS A CRITICAL PROBLEM IN MUCH OF THE FIRST

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AND SECOND CORPS AND THE UPLAND REGIONS OF THIRD CORPS. WHAT IS MORE REMARKABLE IS THAT EVEN IN SOME PROVINCES IN THE DELTA "RICE BOWL" (E.G., CHUONG THIEN AND AN XUYEN) THE VC FORCES ARE SUFFERING FROM FOOD SHORTAGES.

E. QUANG TRI, IN THE EXTREME NORTH, REPORTS FRICTION BETWEEN THE NVA AND LOCAL GUERRILLA TROOPS, WITH THE FORMER LOOKING DOWN UPON THE LATTER AND USING THEM FOR MENIAL TASKS. FROM THE OTHER END OF THE COUNTRY, AN XUYEN REPORTS SERIOUS DISSENSION BETWEEN THE STAY-BEHIND CADRES AND THE MORE RECENTLY ARRIVED "REGROUPEES." SIMILAR FRICTIONS PROBABLY EXIST IN OTHER PROVINCES.

F. REPORTS ON THE UNSETTLING EFFECT OF CONSTANT ALLIED MILITARY PRESSURE ARE WIDESPREAD. IN A NUMBER OF PROVINCES, VC ADMINISTRATIVE CENTERS HAVE HAD TO MOVE INTO THE HINTERLAND TO AVOID FRIENDLY SWEEPS. LONG AN PROVINCE REPORTS THAT THE VC THERE HAVE ALMOST COMPLETELY CEASED OFFENSIVE ACTIVITIES BECAUSE CONTROL AND AREA SECURITY HAVE BEEN DENIED THEM BY THE CONSTANTLY RECURRING SWEEPS OF U.S. UNITS. IN GIA DINH, THE VC INFRASTRUCTURE HAS BEEN BADLY SHAKEN BY UNRELENTING U.S. AND GVN PRESSURE.

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3. VC PROBLEMS ARE MUCH GREATER IN THE CITIES, WHERE ALLIED SECURITY AGAINST VC OPERATIONS AND TERRORISM IS GREATER AND WHERE THE RELATIVE PROSPERITY AND AVAILABILITY OF FOOD AND WORK MAKE THE POPULACE LESS VULNERABLE TO PROSELYTING AND PROPAGANDA.

A. THE PRESSURE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE VC BY ALLIED FORCES, THE NATIONAL POLICE AND CAPITAL MILITARY DISTRICT ELEMENTS HAS FORCED VC MILITARY AND INSURGENCY UNITS AND LARGE NUMBERS OF VC CADRES TO ABANDON GIA DINH PROVINCE AS A BASE OF POLITICAL AND TERRORIST OPERATIONS AGAINST THE SAIGON METROPOLITAN AREA. HAVING LOST THIS SAFE HAVEN, THE VC HAVE HAD TO TRANSFER THEIR ^{base of} OPERATIONS INTO SAIGON

CITY PROPER, WHERE A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF VC CADRES HAVE BEEN ARRESTED DURING RECENT MONTHS.

B. BETWEEN 15 SEPTEMBER 1966 AND THE END OF MAY 1967, 265 VC CADRES WERE CAPTURED IN SAIGON. OF THE 160 OF THESE CAPTURED SINCE THE FIRST OF THE YEAR, 120 FELL IN THE SAPPER-TERRORIST CATEGORY. LARGE-SCALE TERRORIST ACTS IN SAIGON CITY HAVE BEEN INHIBITED TO THE POINT WHERE THE VC ARE RESORTING TO INDISCRIMINATE ASSASSINATION AS A MEANS OF HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION.

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C. AMONG THE VC CADRES CAPTURED HAVE BEEN THE CHIEF OF THE VC MR IV WORKERS PROSELYTING COMMITTEE, CONCURRENTLY A MEMBER OF THE VC MR IV CURRENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (WHICH CAPTURE LED TO THE CAPTURE OF IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE LABOR COMMITTEE), A LEADING MEMBER OF THE INTELLECTUAL PROSELYTING COMMITTEE, A LEADER OF THE WOMEN'S PROSELYTING COMMITTEE, SEVERAL FINANCE AND ECONOMY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, INFLUENTIAL FUNCTIONARIES OF THE PROPAGANDA COMMITTEE, AND SEVERAL COMM-LIAISON AGENTS.

D. SINCE 1 JUNE 1967 THE NUMBER OF VC ACTIVE AGENTS ARRESTED HAS RISEN DRAMATICALLY. DURING THE FIRST THREE WEEKS IN JULY, 15 SAPPER AGENTS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED, INCLUDING AN F-100 BATTALION OFFICER. ONE OF THE SAPPERS ARRESTED LED TO THE CAPTURE OF SEVEN OTHERS.

E. VC POLICIES AND SOLUTIONS.

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A. THE VC HAVE REACTED TO THESE PROBLEMS WITH A NUMBER OF NEW POLICIES, GENERALLY RATIONAL. IN SOME CASES THE COURSE OF RESPONSE WAS OBVIOUS; IN OTHERS THEY APPEAR TO BE EXPERIMENTING, SEEKING AN EFFECTIVE POLICY.

B. EVERY PROVINCE REPORTS THAT PRIORITY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO COMBATTING THE REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT (RD), CHIEU HOI, AND OTHER PACIFICATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROGRAMS. IN REACTION TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE PROGRAMS THE VC ARE FOCUSING MILITARY, TERRORIST, AND PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THEM. A RECENTLY REPORTED SLOGAN IS, "KILLING AN RD WORKER IS AS GOOD AS KILLING AN AMERICAN." THE MOST EFFECTIVE TEAMS ARE PRIME TARGETS FOR ASSASSINATION, AND CENSUS GRIEVANCE WORKERS ARE SPECIFICALLY SOUGHT OUT. RAIDS AND ATTACKS BY FIRE ON CHIEU HOI AND REFUGEE CENTERS ARE INCREASINGLY EMPLOYED TO "PUNISH" THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT THE VC SIDE AND TO FRIGHTEN OTHERS FROM DOING SO.

C. ANOTHER OMINOUS DEVELOPMENT IS AN INCREASE IN INDISCRIMINATE TERROR. INSTEAD OF USING COMMAND CONTROLLED MINES ON THE HIGHWAYS TO DESTROY MILITARY VEHICLES, CONTACT MINES ARE USED, WHICH MOST OFTEN DESTROY BUSES AND LAMBRETTAS

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FULL OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN, DISTRICT TOWNS ARE SHELLED OR MORTARED MORE OR LESS AT ^{PA} RANDOM, KILLING FAR MORE CIVILIANS THAN MILITARY PERSONNEL OR OFFICIALS. IN ADDITION TO KILLING CADRES AND SOLDIERS, THE VC IN SOME AREAS ARE NOW MAKING A POINT OF KILLING THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN. IN KONTUM PROVINCE THEY HAVE PROCLAIMED A POLICY OF LAUNCHING MORTAR ATTACKS FROM WITHIN VILLAGES SO THAT FRIENDLY FORCES WILL EITHER WITHHOLD COUNTERFIRE OR BE GUILTY OF SLAUGHTERING THE VILLAGERS.

D. ANOTHER TREND IS THE TRANSFORMATION OF COMBAT BATTALIONS TO SAPPER UNITS. THIS HAS OCCURRED MAINLY NEAR THE BIG CITIES: THE SAIGON AREA AND NORTHERN I CORPS. THESE SAPPER UNITS ARE USED FOR TERRORIST ATTACKS AND TO SABOTAGE LINES OF COMMUNICATION. THE LATTER IS DONE FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC AS WELL AS FOR MILITARY PURPOSES.

E. VC EFFORTS TO MEET THEIR SUPPLY AND FINANCING PROBLEMS HAVE LED TO A VARIETY OF NEW TACTICS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. TAX RATES ARE RISING EVERYWHERE. IN BINH DINH PROVINCE THE VC ARE REPORTEDLY LEVYING IMPOSSIBLY HIGH TAXES IN THE EXPECTATION OF GETTING A MAJOR PORTION OF

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THE AMOUNT ASSESSED. THUA THIEN REPORTS OUTRIGHT CONFISCATION OF THE PROPERTY OF FAMILIES WHO WORK FOR THE GVN OR HAVE MEMBERS IN ARVN. LOSS OF THE CONTROL OF SOME ROADS HAS BEEN PARTLY MET BY TAKING GOODS AT THE SOURCE. IN SOME AREAS THE TAX ON CROPS IS KEPT LOW IN PERCENTAGE BUT THE VC ASSESSORS COMPENSATE BY OVERESTIMATING THE SIZE OF THE CROP. CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE REPORTS VC INVESTMENT IN SOME LOCAL INDUSTRIES AS A MEANS OF GETTING REVENUE.

F. ASIDE FROM INTENSIFYING THEIR PROPAGANDA, THE VC'S CHIEF PROGRAM TO REPAIR MORALE AT THE LOWER LEVELS HAS BEEN TO SEND DOWN HARD-CORE CADRES FROM PROVINCE TO DISTRICT AND DISTRICT TO VILLAGE AND HAMLET. THESE CADRES ARE SUPPOSED TO TIGHTEN UP THE ORGANIZATION AND IMPROVE THE "EDUCATION" OF THE PEOPLE. IN AN GIANG THIS POLICY HAS PROVED COSTLY; SINCE MARCH, 22 CADRES HAVE BEEN KILLED OR CAPTURED IN THE VILLAGES AND HAMLETS, AND ABOUT A THIRD OF THESE WERE HARD-CORE LEADERS FROM HIGHER ECHELONS.

G. HANOI'S ANSWER TO THE LOSS OF MANPOWER AND THE CONTINUING EROSION OF THE VC STRUCTURE HAS BEEN A GREATLY INCREASED NORTH VIETNAMESE PRESENCE IN THE SOUTH. ALTHOUGH MORE

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THAN HALF OF THE ENEMY MAIN-FORCE MILITARY UNITS CURRENTLY IN SOUTH VIETNAM ARE LISTED AS VC BECAUSE OF THEIR HISTORIC ORIGIN, THE MAJORITY OF THE TROOPS ARE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY TROOPS. ALONG WITH THIS, THE DIRECTNESS OF HANOI'S CONTROL HAS INCREASED.

5. THE SOMEWHAT-DIMINISHED EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE VC ORGANIZATION AND ITS AUGMENTATION BY THE INFUSION OF REGROUPEES AND NORTH VIETNAMESE REGULAR TROOPS DO NOT MEAN THAT THERE WILL BE ANY DECLINE IN THE FEROCITY OF THE WAR. WHAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS DO MEAN, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE CHARACTER OF THE WAR IS GRADUALLY CHANGING. WHILE THE ENEMY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO REGISTER SUCCESSES AGAINST THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND FREE WORLD FORCES, THESE WILL BE TO AN INCREASING EXTENT THE RESULT OF THE DIRECT CONTRIBUTION OF CADRES, REGULAR TROOPS AND MATERIEL FROM NORTH VIETNAM AND TO A DECREASING EXTENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE VIET CONG THEMSELVES.

6. FIELD DISSEM: GENERAL TAYLOR MR. CLIFFORD STATE USMACV
(J-2) CORDS DIR/JUSPAO (MR. ZORTHIAN ONLY) CINCPAC ARPAC PACAF PACFLT

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