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From COMUSMACV, DTG 060425Z Sept 67

Subject: Monthly Assessment (U)

1. This is the second in my series of assessments of the situation here in Vietnam. I have expanded this month's message to include specific information on naval activity, air activity and the pacification effort. 204

(I CTZ)

2. Our primary objectives in the I CTZ during the month of August were five-fold. They were:

- (1) To deny entry of NVA units into I CTZ,
- (2) To deny NVA/VC forces located in I CTZ the use of base areas 101 and 117,
- (3) To destroy enemy forces in I CTZ,
- (4) To minimize enemy disruptions of the forthcoming national elections, and,  
which vital installations could be subjected to
- (5) To prevent enemy's occupation of areas from/ rocket, artillery and mortar attacks.

3A. Last month, 13 battalion size or larger operations were conducted in I CTZ. These operations accounted for 1254 enemy killed with an additional 1269 probable kills and the loss of 354 weapons. Weapons captured included eighty-one 140mm rockets. A prime example of a successful operation is Benton, a task force OREGON S&D operation in Quang Tin which successfully neutralized enemy base area 117 and accounted for 397 killed, 158 enemy weapons lost.

B. The special landing forces conducted three amphibious landings during the month. These took place in the "Street Without Joy," the Hai Lang National Forest area of Quang Tri, and the area south of the Song Cau Dai River in Quang Nam. Two special landing forces had a combined total of 49 days of operations ashore during the month. Our project delta operation (SAMURAI) which terminated in mid-August was a month long reconnaissance in force operation in western Quang Nam to detect and interdict enemy infiltration routes (particularly from Laos). Prisoners taken during this operation identified the organization responsible for the 15 July rocket attack on Danang Air Base and provided information as to unit location and routes of infiltration.

C. 71 Arc Light targets were struck in support of I Corps. Of these, 31 were in or north of the DMZ. The stepped-up Arc Light campaign in the DMZ has helped to counter the enemy threat around Con Thien and Gio Linh. Construction of 175 mm gun firing positions at the Ashau Valley Fire Support Base, located about 20 kilometers southwest of the Hue along Route 547, was completed by the end of July. The Fire Support Base was prepared to permit delivery of artillery interdiction

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fires into the Ashau Valley. Commencing with the first fires on 2 August over 3800 rounds of 175 mm gun fire were delivered during the month.

4. A. ARVN morale remains high in combat units as is reflected by a decrease in desertions during the month and an increase in strength available for operations. In keeping with Phase 1 of the election plan, I Corps ARVN units increased the tempo of operations during August while continuing to support the RD programs. Forty-seven large ARVN operations were conducted, an increase of three over July, but the number of significant contacts decreased by approximately 50 percent. This decrease in enemy contacts is reflected in reduction in the total enemy killed during the month. Large and small scale operations were conducted in all provinces of the Corps area. These operations resulted in 653 VC/NVA KIA and yielded 325 captured enemy weapons.

5. A. The lines of communication and logistical posture in I CTZ remained responsive to support requirements during August. The airfield at Dong Ha required repairs from damage inflicted by enemy artillery and rocket fire. Heavy rains caused the deterioration and closure of the Khe Sanh Airfield on 24 August for an estimated six weeks while major repairs are made. Aerial resupply has become the primary means of resupply of forces in the Khe Sanh area until the airfield is reopened.

B. National Route 1, spanning I CTZ from north to south, remained open except for short periods. Increased enemy interdiction and harassment destroyed or damaged 17 bridges and 16 culverts on Route 1 and a total of 16 bridges and 22 culverts throughout I CTZ. Significant among the bridges sabotaged were two 165 ft spans of the Song Cau Do and two 63 ft spans of the Song Cau Lau Bridge on Route 1 south of Danang, with ten minor bridges through the Ai Van Pass north of Danang. 4,059 ft of bridging were repaired and 3,954 ft of new bridging were constructed. This latter included the new 2,000 foot "Liberty Bridge" crossing the Song Thu Bon leading to the An Hoa industrial complex. Included in the LOC efforts were the repair and upgrading of sections along 229 kilometers of primary highway, and secondary and access roads in preparation for the monsoon season.

C. Work continues in the strong point obstacle system along the DMZ. Route 561 is complete except for asphaltting which is 30 percent complete. Site C-2 has been cleared with 29 bunkers constructed and protective wire 69 percent completed. Work on the minefield installation has begun at Strong Point A-4 (Con Thien). Some 2,509 short tons of bombs have been transhipped to Dong Ha during this reporting period. Construction has been hampered by extensive enemy action in area of construction and by slippage in the receipt of construction materials. The 1st ARVN Division completed an estimated three percent of the necessary construction effort at C-1 before all work was halted to make troops available for security duties in connection with the national elections.

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6. A. The pacification program remained behind schedule in relation to goals set for 1967. Progress that is being made slowed considerably as most GVN officials were preoccupied with pre-election activities. The effect of this slow-down is not considered critical and most senior province advisors predict the major portion of the program will be completed by the end of the year.

B. VC attacks and terrorist activities increased appreciably throughout I CTZ during August. The major purpose apparently was to disrupt election plans and frighten voters. Despite the increase in VC activities, all provinces reported a high level of political activity and no slackening of interest in the election. The new total of 911,861 registered voters represents 15.5 percent of the national electorate. Public attention focused on the visits of the Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates to I CTZ. Though the originally scheduled visits aborted because of poor planning in Quang Tri, the rallies finally held in Danang and Hue on 27-28 August drew the biggest crowds to date anywhere in Vietnam. The Vietnamese information service conducted a widespread and apparently successful campaign to publicize the election and to encourage voter participation.

C. An estimated 10,000 new refugees were brought in during August as a result of military operations in Quang Tri, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai. However, the shortages of roofing and food, VC terrorism against refugees, and GVN preoccupation with the elections, seriously hampered refugee relief. Estimate thousands of refugees in I CTZ still lack the minimum of essentials. Priority action is underway to correct this situation.

D. The number of Hoi Chanhs rose from 192 in July to 236 in August, bringing the total for 1967 to 1726 returnees in I CTZ. The number for 1967 now surpasses the 1966 yearly total of 1564.

7. A. Along the DMZ/Ben Hai River Front, the enemy maintained essentially the same posture as during the previous month. There was evidence of reinforcement of units operating in Base Area 101, and some indication of a rudimentary capability to coordinate attacks in southeastern Quang Tri with actions along the DMZ.

B. Activities during the period continued to be highlighted by the employment of artillery and rockets against friendly forces and installations. Although the level of artillery fire received was about 20 percent below that of July, a sharp upturn in artillery and rockets was experienced at the end of the month. Ground activity was generally limited to probes and reconnaissance, with the exception of an ambush attempt which developed into two sharp contacts with an estimated enemy battalion along Route 9 north of Ca Lu.

C. Throughout the balance of I CTZ south of Route 9, the tempo of enemy initiated actions was accelerated. The period was characterized by LOC interdiction, carefully planned and rehearsed attacks on ARVN installations, and a continued employment of rockets and mortars. Noteworthy was the increased use of mortars in this portion of I CTZ contrasted with last month.

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D. The enemy's objective of creating maximum difficulties for the GVN prior to national elections was reflected by successful sapper operations against Trieu Phong and Tu Vang, in Quang Tri and the equally successful attacks on Hoi An and Provincial Jail in Quang Ngai. Increased acts of terrorism and use of propaganda accompanied the exploitation of sapper attacks noted above. Although these attacks have been largely successful, the assault on Huong Dien was repulsed with severe losses to the enemy because of the determined resistance and aggressive response of the ARVN garrison. The enemy's combat effectiveness in I CTZ south of Route 9 continues to be degraded by continuing shortages of food and medical supplies, restricted availability of ammunition, and high incidence of malaria. Interrogated prisoners reported general fear of air strikes, and to a lesser degree, artillery, as major factors in lowered morale.

(II CTZ)

8. A. In II CTZ during the month of August we made continued progress <sup>toward</sup> the attainment of allied objectives for defeating the enemy, extending GVN control, and fostering the development of the viable economy. Of special significance was the promulgation of the statute particulier on 29 August by the newly appointed minister for highlander affairs, Paul Nur. This major step toward integration of the highland people into the national political framework is expected to eliminate many areas of friction. GVN, ROK and US forces applied continuous pressure upon the enemy by defeating his military forces, preventing major disruption of the national elections, and reducing his ability to subsist on the land or force requisitions upon the people. The enemy has been denied his primary military, political and economic objectives and the security to the continued growth of the RD program has been provided.

9. A. Inflation is being controlled in the provinces and additional land has been brought under cultivation. Throughout II CTZ, the people have demonstrated an increased sense of confidence in the GVN. At district, province, and regional level, preparations for the national elections dominated the friendly and enemy activities. In Khanh Hoa Province, the people are beginning to return to their former homes as more area is recovered from VC domination. In Lam Dong Province, an optimistic attitude, due to increased security and an open highway 20, has resulted in a return of the population and a boom in the economy. Successful US and ARVN military operations in Kontum against a serious NVA/VC threat have brought an increase in optimism throughout the province. People are showing added confidence and renewed assurance. The flow of goods has greatly increased the availability of commodities in their local stores. The salt beds in the vicinity of Song Cas are being harvested for the first time in years.

B. The enemy had 1452 killed, 344 captured, and lost 4971 weapons to the ARVN, ROK, and US forces in August. He has been unable to regain the initiative or to initiate a significant victory. On 31 August, US forces were augmented by the arrival of the 2d Armd Cav Sqdn, 1st Cav Regt. The Squadron will be employed in the western highlands to aid the 4th Inf Div in its mission of conducting an active defense of the western border.

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10. A. As evidenced by operations in Kontum and Binh Dinh, ARVN forces are displaying an increased capability to meet the enemy and defeat him. Our advisors indicate that many ARVN unit commanders are displaying more initiative and imagination in the planning and conduct of operations. While not universal, these observations are being made with greater frequency.

B. Early in the month, in an effort to gain a victory in the western highlands, the enemy initiated a series of concerted attacks in northern Kontum province. The most serious threat was posed by the 174th NVA Regt, infiltrated from the north in May, with the evident mission of destroying the CIDG Camp at Dak Seang. During the period 4 through 7 August, the 5th and 8th ARVN Bns and the 1st Bn, 42 ARVN Regt, with the assistance of tactical air and B-52 strikes, dealt a crippling blow to the enemy. By maintaining steady pressure, night and day, the ARVN forces killed 185 of the enemy at a cost to friendly forces of 12 KIA and 69 wounded. A later sweep of the area revealed numerous mass graves; elaborate regimental base camp containing 100 huts, offices and briefing rooms, some of which were equipped with modern plumbing. The 174th NVA Regt has since withdrawn to the Laotian Border to refit, replace losses, and retrain. The success of ARVN forces against hard core NVA units is indicative of encouraging improvement in the ARVN offensive capability.

C. The most significant contact of the month occurred on the 15th when two bns of the 1st ARVN Regt engaged the recently augmented 8th Bn, 18th NVA Regt. With the support of two airlifted infantry companies and a tank platoon from the 1st Dav Div, 73 enemy were killed while friendly losses were limited to three killed. In another action, still underway, elements of the 1st Cav Div made light initial contact with several VC who disappeared into a cave complex in the vicinity. Later, several Hoi Chanh emerging from the cave reported the presence of a group of 40 to 50 replacements for the 18th NVA Regt within the complex. To date, this action has yielded 33 KIA and 41 PW's with only one Cav trooper wounded.

D. Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa and Phu Bon Provinces have been the scene of operations by ROK forces against the 95th and 188th NVA Regts. Operation Hong Kil Dong, the third phase of which terminated on 26 August, has netted 637 enemy killed and 88 PW's at a cost to friendly forces of 27 killed and 68 wounded. These operations have reduced a major threat posed by main force enemy units. However, local force and terrorist groups remain active on the coastal plains.

11. Although major confrontations were limited to the key areas of the western highlands and the coastal plains, added pressure was maintained throughout II CTZ by employment of ARVN, RF and PF Forces in numerous search and destroy, cordon and search and road opening operations. Six road opening operations were conducted in August to eliminate or reduce VC tax extortion and to provide free passage for military and civilian traffic. The economy of Tuyen Duc and Lam Dong Provinces

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continues to benefit from the military operations designed to maintain highway 20 in an open status. ARVN, RF and PF units, supported by the 20th Cav and elements of the 23rd ARVN Div, began construction of bridges and fire bases to assist in opening highway 1 from Phan Rang to the II/III CTZ boundary. The opening of this highway and establishment of an uninterrupted link with the Saigon markets will contribute significantly to the overall economy and the security of the coastal provinces.

12. A. The pacification program continues to grow. Security, economic gains and expanding RD programs are the most significant indices of progress. In Binh Dinh Province, the 12 civil/military teams found to supplement RD cadre have completed their program in the first 12 villages and were moved early in the month. The improved security provided by military operations in Binh Dinh has permitted the cultivation of large areas of previously unused land. This fact, coupled with the increased use of fertilizer, will be the basis for an appreciable increase in rice production. In support of RD, previously established RD training programs for regional and popular forces continue with marked success. To date, 67 percent of the RF companies and 4 percent of the PF platoons have received RD training.

B. 377 Hoi Chanh returned in August compared to 264 in July. The reason most often given by the Hoi Chanh for defection was the lack of food. This can be attributed directly to improved methods of resource control and herbicide operations. The use of herbicides denied the enemy 7,600 short tons of crops in VC controlled areas last month. Greater exploitation of Hoi Chanh talent is being accomplished through their use as members of RF/PF units, armed propaganda teams, RD cadre, and as scouts with ARVN and FWMAF. An armed propaganda team, recruited from among a group of M'Nonh Nontagnards who in Kne, is proving to be the most effective team to the highlands

Some momentum was gained in August by the increased use of the cordon and search technique. Operation Dragon, the 1st Cav Div's program to destroy infrastructure in Binh Dinh Province, has far exceeded the original estimates. Full implementation of the ICEX program throughout II Corps in the next several months is expected to accelerate this vital endeavor.

C. Throughout the past month the Vietnamese information service (VIS) was especially active in its effort to counter enemy propaganda and to educate the people on the importance and the mechanics of voting. Popular interest in II Corps focused on the Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates. The senatorial races have not drawn interest other than in Phu Bon (where a highlander is running unopposed with the backing of the Vietnamese Province Chief). The interest and preoccupation of officials with the election has tended to divert their attention from some RD programs.

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13. A. In Binh Dinh Province the enemy has intensified his efforts to disrupt the expanding pacification program and to reestablish his dominance throughout the province. Having enjoyed little or no success in recruiting the local populace, the enemy has assigned NVA infiltrators to the ranks of depleted VC local force units. The NVA Div received replacements infiltrated from the north to rebuild its battered forces.

B. Captured documents and PW reports point to declining morale and welfare in the ranks of the enemy on the east coast. A recently captured document from the 95th NVA Regt indicated that, prior to being returned to North Vietnam, the wounded are cautioned not to disclose current problems such as shortages of men, weapons, food and the difficult situation of the SVN revolution in Phu Yen Province, "Continued military operations against enemy base areas, destruction of his crops through friendly herbicide operations, and the continued lack of success are gradually deteriorating the enemy's zeal and effectiveness along the coast.

C. Enemy activities were concentrated on the forthcoming national elections. Enemy and local force units were given the primary task of conducting propaganda, harassment, and sabotage in order to intimidate the populace. The importance which the enemy attaches to this mission was evident in his willingness to fragment some of his main force units into small elements to support his armed propaganda teams and otherwise further his efforts to disrupt the election. To counter this effort, civil and military security forces increased offensive and defensive operations designed to insure unimpeded access to voting facilities.

(III CTZ)

14. Our major objectives in the III CTZ during the month of August were the strengthening of security in the countryside and the defeat of the enemy effort to sabotage the national elections. Operations in support of these objectives included extensive road and jungle clearing, penetrations into known or suspected base camps and staging areas, search and destroy operations aimed at preventing VC infiltration of populated areas, and intensive night operations to interdict VC movements. Particular emphasis was placed on road and bridge repair and jungle clearing operations along major routes and near population centers.

15. A. Last month friendly forces took 400 PW's, the largest number captured since Operation CEDAR FALLS last January. A total of 12,500 acres of jungle were cleared during August, an increase of 36 percent over July. Operations resulted in the destruction of base areas including all of the Ong Dong jungle sanctuary and a large part of the Fil Hoi Plantation. Improved security along Route 13 south of Lei Khe, greatly strengthened the defenses of RF/PF outposts along the route and provided for the development of RD activities.

B. The US Regional Force Company Training Teams (REFCOTT) and Mobile Advisory Teams (MAT) continued to show substantial progress by raising the RF/PF training and operational standards.

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C. Our overall security improved. Major lines of communication and population centers were secured to the degree that NVA/VC forces were unable to obtain any significant influence on the civilian population prior to the national elections.

16. A. RVNAF operational effectiveness in III CTZ is continuing its upward trend due to the training assistance now being provided by US units. Ineffective officer leadership was a target for corrective action. An example of immediate corrective action was the relief by the III Corps Commander of the Battalion Commander, 30 BN, 9th Inf, for failure to assist an RD Cadre Team in Phuoc Long Province on 27 August when it came under VC attack. Another positive factor is the new hard intelligence on VC civil and military infrastructure which comes from a dynamic and expanding system of District Operations and Intelligence Coordinating Centers (DOICCs). Twenty of these centers are now operational.

B. The LLDB Camp at Tong Le Chon beat off a VC regimental sized attack on 7 August. This successful defense resulted in over 150 VC KIA (BC) and the capture of 62 small arms and 12 crew served weapons. On 19 August, the 553d RF Company, by effective night patrolling, discovered and prevented an intended mortar attack against Tan Son Nhut Airbase. The company captured three VC, two suspects, and one 8mm mortar with ammunition.

17. In spite of repeated VC interdiction of roads, 160 kms that are vital to the civilian economy were improved, and over 2700 ft of vehicular bridging was installed during August.

18. Progress in the pacification program, though steady, remains far behind schedule in relation to the goals set for 1967. Moreover, preparations for the VN elections have caused a further delay in some areas. The increasing reaction, however, and apparent concern on the part of the VC to the program is an indication that it is making a significant impact. In fact, there is an apparent increase in confidence on the part of the Vietnamese public in the GVN's ability to win the war. The number of Chieu Hoi returnees continue to run ahead of last year (although this month they declined from 742 to approximately 500). In a related area coordination was completed with ARVN to provide an integrated effort in the division tactical areas. There is a general agreement that there should be a slow and steady expansion of existing secure areas with no new areas started until better results are obtained in areas now being worked. The fact that a total of 35 ARVN battalions have completed the RD training program in III CTZ should assist this integrated effort.

19. A. There is increasing evidence that NVA/VC main force units are avoiding significant contact in the III CTZ. Morale is on the decline in NVA/VC main force, local force, and guerilla units. Shortages of medicine, food, ammunition and a general disenchantment with jungle life are cited reasons. A letter sent by a VC in Duc Hoa District to the Long An Province Party Committee reported that morale

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in Duc Hoa District had been affected adversely because many cadre had been killed or captured during the allied sweeps in July and early August. A recent carrier from the 272d VC Regt reported that morale has suffered because most of the old, experienced soldiers had been killed or wounded, and the replacements were all mediocre NVA soldiers. Other factors commonly cited were increased air strikes, empty promises, and separation from their families. In addition, the attrition rate among infiltration groups while enroute from North Vietnam creates an in-country replacement problem for the NVA/VC, and has necessitated the recruitment of many women and children.

B. The enemy has, and is using, his formidable capability to deliver heavy rocket, mortar and recoilless rifle ordnance on friendly fixed installations. The attacks at Nha Be on 3 August and Lai Khe on 4 August are examples of his increasing reliance on artillery and mortars.

(IV CTZ)

20. Major emphasis in the IV CTZ during August was directed toward the disruption and defeat of enemy offensive actions during the pre-election period and the continued destruction of VC main and provisional units and their principal bases. We continued to improve the effectiveness of small unit operations in order to provide greater security for RD teams and for the development of RD. We continued to maintain and up-grade the security of our major lines of communication. Steady progress was made in each of these endeavors.

21. A. The results of the 7th ARVN Division's Operation CUU LONG 64, conducted in connection with the 9th US Division's Operation CORONADO II in Dinh Tuong Province from 27 July to 3 August, showed that the VC main and local force units in Dinh Tuong Province were seriously demoralized and had lost unit integrity. Units were reported to be short of ammunition and food supplies and had been forced to disperse to the extent that command and control had been lost. Individual soldiers had been ordered to hide their weapons and mingle with the local populace to avoid capture.

B. In August, 1005 VC were killed, 332 were captured and 302 weapons were confiscated. We took in 638 Chieu Hoi returnees (an 80 percent increase over August 1966, but in line with the past three months). Already this year our Chieu Hoi returnees are twice our 1966 total.

22. A. RVNAF conducted 169 battalion size or larger operations and 56,358 small unit operations in August in III CTZ. Twenty-five of the major operations were air mobile lifting more than 19,400 RVNAF troops. Ten VC base areas were penetrated resulting in over 130 VC killed and the destruction or capture of considerable equipment and supplies. Throughout the month, GVN units were able to maintain favorable kill and weapons captured versus weapons lost ratios. The overall morale,

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combat effectiveness, and fighting spirit of IV Corps units is good. We are carrying the conflict to the enemy.

B. Regional and Popular Forces are displaying modest and spotty improvement. There are, however, instances of their standing up better to VC attacks. They are engaging in more active patrolling and are conducting ambushes. Nine new RF companies are undergoing basic unit training. Three of these companies were organized from recent Hoa Hao returnees. The eighteen new RF companies and fifty PF platoons recently authorized IV CTZ will further enhance the RF/PF posture and our support of RD.

23. A. The VC were not capable of sustained disruption of our lines of communication. Highway 4, which runs the length of the delta and links the region with Saigon was interdicted 3 times in August. Two of these incidents were road destruction and the third was the partial destruction of a bridge. Quick reaction by ARVN engineers using US equipment restored the LOC's with little interruption.

B. The security status of the My Tho branch of the Mekong River and the Bassac River from the South China Sea to the An Giang Province border has improved from open to secure. The status of other major waterways of the delta remain unchanged. All airfields were operational except for Go Cong which is closed to all but light aircraft, but will be open for large aircraft the first week in September.

24. Pacification made progress but remained behind schedule in relation to 1967 goals. Eighty percent of the new life hamlets and eighty five percent of the consolidated hamlets, programmed for the first semester, were complete as of 31 August. The IV Corps Commander, with all Division Commanders and Province Chiefs in attendance, held a conference on 29 August during which he announced a goal of 100 percent completion of the new life and consolidated hamlets by 15 September 1967. Many RD teams began moving into second semester hamlets during August, and a gradual shift is expected to continue during the month of September. VC initiated three incidents against RD cadre. These incidents continue with the same frequency as in previous months but with less significance. The VC still consider the RD effort a thorn in their side, but their ability to deter its progress is gradually diminishing. Significant advances in the pacification program should be noted during the ensuing months.

25. A. During August the VC failed to gain significant military victories and failed to live up to their pre-election propaganda threats. There was an expected increase in enemy initiated incidents starting on the 26th of August. Most significant of these incidents was the shelling of Can Tho City, the US MACV Compound, the Province Chief's Headquarters, and the ARVN Military Hospital during the early morning hours of 27 August. There were 484 VC initiated incidents reported in August compared to 41 during July. The majority of the current VC incidents are not characteristically military in nature, but are harassments and terrorist activities.

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B. The enemy remains somewhat dispersed in company, platoon, and smaller size units throughout the IV CTZ, and usually avoids contact. He is experiencing a shortage of qualified cadre and difficulty in his recruiting and taxation efforts. There have been definite indications that the VC believe they are losing control of the opoulace. Captured documents indicate that the VC are criticizing their cadres for not being close to the people, for lack of leadership, and for tending to operate independently of COSVN.

(Naval Forces, Vietnam - NAVFORV)

26. A. The interdiction of enemy waterborne movement of supplies continues to be effective. Interrogations reveal no successful waterborne infiltration of supplies from external sources. Market time effectiveness was increased on 23 August with the commencement of operations at the radar site on Poulo Obi Island. Detection ranges of 40 miles are being attained, and the site has the capacity to vector friendly forces to intercept contacts.

B. The River Patrol Force (Game Warden continues to interdict enemy movement in the Rung Sat special zone (RSSZ) and Mekong River Delta, and provides limited support for ground operations and pacification projects. Game Warden is also responsible for security and inland mining countermeasures, of the Long Tau River Channel from the South China Sea to Saigon. The most important measure of the effectiveness of the security of the Long Tau Channel is that no attacks against civilian ships occurred during August. Although the enemy maintains some control over the adjacent land areas of the RSSZ, Ground operations by USN SEALs, US Army, Vietnamese Marine Corps and Vietnamese Regional and Popular Forces continue in the RSSZ. A significant measure of the success of Game Warden forces in the Mekong Delta area is the increasing number of inhabitants gravitating toward areas of government control.

C. The Mav Thit Nicolai Canal was declared open to traffic on 8 August in a ceremony presided over by Premier Ky. The opening of the waterway reduces the transit distance from Bac Lieu to Saigon by approximately 50 percent. This will facilitate the transport of produce and cement clinker to Saigon. The route is not secure, however, and continued action by the VNN and JVN is required to provide safe transits.

D. NAVFORV psychological operations (PSYOP) continue to support RD. Newspapers, magazines, and printed propaganda material are disseminated to water craft inspected or boarded during Market Time and Game Warden operations. This program reaches approximately 10,000 people per day. The volunteer information inducement program, which provides for payment in money or goods for intelligence information, has been instituted with PSYOP serving as a carrier for the advertising campaign.

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E. During August the VNN logistics lift ships turned in their best operational performance to date. The average operational employment reached 48 percent for the month, with an employment of 50 percent realized during the last week of the month. Sanitation standards in the Vietnamese Navy Fleet ships have been unsatisfactory. Major emphasis on correction of this deficiency was instituted in late July and August.

F. The enemy has demonstrated the ability to mortar (NHA Be on 3 and 5 August) and overrun weaker bases (coastal group 16 on 7 August). Numerous reports of swimmer/sapper preparations have been received, but few incidents were initiated and there were none of a serious nature. With the exception of the ambush of a VNN unit in the Mang Thi Niolai Canal on 17 August, enemy activity against friendly craft on patrol can be described as harassing actions rather than serious attacks.

(Seventh Air Force)

27. A. This past month the US Seventh Air Force continued to support MACV objectives in-country by providing direct support of US/FWMAF ground operations. Seventh Air Force efforts included providing logistical support, locating and destroying the enemy and his resources, permitting his freedom of movement and encouraging him to rally to the GVN. Enemy returnees and prisoners indicate air strikes as a major factor in deteriorating morale. Successful utilization of combat skyspot and illumination resources are denying the enemy the sanctuary of darkness. Constant reconnaissance in-country requires the enemy to exercise every precaution in pursuit of his objectives and in most cases denies him success. During the month of August, VNAF resources and efforts provided more than 3,000 strike sorties accounting for 3,144 structures destroyed, 2,325 structures damaged, sampans destroyed and 33 secondary explosions.

B. The enemy continued to increase his efforts to resupply his forces in route package 1, the DMZ, and I CTZ. In defense of his efforts, substantial AAA resources are maintained in the area and an SA-2 threat north of the DMZ continues to influence B-52 operations. His willingness to press resupply under extremely hazardous conditions imposed by the air campaign shows his desire for a higher offensive level in the south. The primary media for resupply is trucks and the effectiveness of tactical air strikes against truck targets during daylight hours has caused the enemy to move almost exclusively at night. To counter this action, more than 50 percent of the sorties in route package I were flown at night. The result of night and other strikes were 585 trucks destroyed and 132 damaged out of a total of 4,180 sighted. 1,257 secondary explosions and 2,536 fires occurred from strikes on truck targets. In addition, pilots reported 551 secondary explosions and 1,562 fires resulting from strikes against truck parks and storage areas. The cumulative results indicate that significant quantities of materials were denied to enemy personnel awaiting resupply. The air campaign is imposing a positive control over the enemy offensive level. The enemy is accepting the hazards of supply because he

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is denied a favorable offensive posture in South Vietnam.

(Summary)

28. A. The enemy strategy during the period remained as outlined in my last assessment; however, his major tactical orientation shifted to terrorist/guerrilla/propaganda activities in an effort to disrupt and discredit the national elections. The enemy continued to maintain his threats in the DMZ, and western highlands and attempted to regain the initiative in these areas. His early August effort in the western highlands were met and defeated by JGS reserves and ARVN Regular Forces. On the other hand, the anticipated enemy attack in the DMZ has not yet materialized, primarily because of our successful application of intensive artillery, tactical air, and B-52 strikes. Intelligence indications particularly attest to the effectiveness of the B-52 raids in disrupting the enemy attack preparations. As in the last period, evidence continues to indicate enemy supply and manpower difficulties in the coastal areas of I and II CTZ and in IV CTZ. Continued friendly offensive pressure in these areas has prevented any respite. The enemy attacks by fire against friendly installations have increased as he attempts to avoid contact and to achieve psychological victories. The enemy are beginning to show more success as evidenced by the marine capture of rockets in firing positions. Continued emphasis is being placed on more effective countermeasures.

B. Significant progress continues in some area of pacification, but in general, the program is behind schedule in relation to the overall goals set for 1967. The preoccupation of GVN provincial officials with the elections has delayed progress even further, although this new delay probably will not be critical. The tempo of progress should increase now that the elections are over.

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