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October 14, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Pres file

Herewith General Westmoreland's assessment for September. I have had prepared summaries for each of the Corps areas.

W. W. Rostow

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

17a
Tuesday, October 10, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: General Westmoreland's Activities Report for September

S u m m a r y

With the exception of activities along the DMZ, enemy strategy and tactics remained relatively unchanged over most of the country during September. A single event was the successful conduct of the Republic of Vietnam national elections on September 3. Although terrorist, rocket and mortar attacks inflicted much higher casualties than during earlier elections, the record 83 percent turnout of voters attests to the fact that disruption attempts by the enemy failed. The comprehensive and thoroughly coordinated security blanket spread by Vietnam police/Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces/U. S. /Free World Marine Forces forestalled all major assaults and greatly restricted the activities of the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese.

The most serious development of September was the attack by fire campaign launched from the DMZ and adjacent areas at our Marine positions in the north. After reaching a high rate of 1,127 rocket-mortar-artillery rounds per day on September 25, the pace dropped off sharply and remained insignificant through the end of the month. Concurrently, there were indications of enemy withdrawal from his forward positions in the DMZ. The early heavy rains, our concentration of ordnance, and logistics implications are considered to have been chiefly responsible for the decrease in fire and withdrawal. Sizeable North Vietnamese forces continue to pose a threat to Quang Tri City. The deployment of one brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division to Southern First Corps, directed on September 2, will enable the Marines to move additional forces north to reduce this threat.

The other significant development during September was the upgrading of enemy activity in Phu Yen Province. The 173rd Airborne Brigade, deployed to Phu Yen for Operation Bolling, will be retained in the area until the Republic of Korea and Army of the Republic of Vietnam forces can stabilize the situation.

Elsewhere in Vietnam our task has been to seek out an enemy that continues to avoid direct confrontation with major friendly units. The attacks against the Nationalist Chinese Embassy and individual Nationalist Chinese personages, and an increase in activity directed at Navy rivercraft constitute the more notable shifts in the generally low level of enemy activity.

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DA Memo. Jan. 5, 1988

By 17a NARA, Date 10-21-91

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The recent spate of press comments notwithstanding, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces effectiveness and aggressiveness shows perceptible improvement. Close U. S. training efforts and expanding measures to resolve corruption and leadership problems should stimulate more apparent progress in this area during the next few months.

As expected, there was limited progress in pacification programs, in large part because any Government of Vietnam provincial officials were in a post-election "wait and see" mood and were not supplying the impetus necessary for success.

In the First Corps, poor security and the onset of the monsoon further hindered Revolutionary Development progress. Nevertheless, at the end of September, 24 New Life hamlets and 29 Consolidated hamlets had been completed.

In Second Corps, the Revolutionary Development effort suffered a setback on Phu Yen Province as a result of Viet Cong/North Vietnamese attacks on hamlets which were making good progress. The fact, however, that the people of these hamlets want to return and rebuild and to maintain their loyalty to the Government of Vietnam is heartening.

In Third Corps, the hamlet construction program undoubtedly will remain behind schedule for the rest of 1967. Nevertheless, many intangible factors, e.g., changes in public attitudes, improving morale, and increasing commercial traffic indicate that progress is being made against the Viet Cong.

In Fourth Corps, Revolutionary Development activity began to accelerate after the elections although, in general, Revolutionary Development and civic action programs are behind schedule.

The somewhat slow nationwide rate of progress, however, should not obscure the fact that the election success marks a uniquely important step towards the ultimate and successful end of pacification efforts and a meaningful dialogue between the Government of Vietnam and its people.

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FIRST CORPS

Primary objectives in First Corps in September were to deny entry of enemy units into the zone, destroy enemy forces in the zone, minimize disruption of national elections, deny enemy access to areas from which rocket, artillery, and mortar fire could be launched against vital installations and provide security for construction of the Strong Point/Obstacle System near the DMZ.

US/Free World Military Assistance Force operations accounted for 1,707 enemy killed and 264 weapons captured. Our forces suffered 391 killed.

Construction of the Strong Point/Obstacle System has been slowed by enemy activity in the DMZ area and by early arrival of the monsoon season. The enemy directed over 7,800 rounds of artillery, mortar, and rocket fire at our forces facing the DMZ during September, with the principal target being Con Thien. This is more than double the amount received during August. A combination of our heavy air, artillery, and naval gunfire along with an active defense and adverse weather conditions dissuaded the enemy from mounting a major attack.

ARVN forces were committed to security of polling places early in the month, and were generally successful in this mission although there were instances of enemy harassment and some ARVN positions overrun. ARVN units have demonstrated again that they can be successful against Viet Cong and accounted for 1,331 enemy killed and 317 weapons captured in 34 battalion-size or larger operations.

Pacification progress was slow during the month due in part to the elections but also the security problems in some areas. Assassinations declined from 198 in August to 122 in September but abductions rose for the fourth straight month.

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SECOND CORPS

Objectives in Second Corps during September were to destroy enemy forces in the zone, deny the enemy access into the zone, minimize disruption of the national elections, and protect the people.

Despite a vicious enemy anti-election campaign, 91 percent of those eligible to vote did so. The enemy thus was frustrated in his attempt to prove that the people were apathetic or hostile toward their government.

A strong enemy threat developed in Phu Yen Province as North Vietnamese forces moved into hamlets near Tuy Hoa and dug in with the apparent intention to stand and fight. Simultaneously, more forces filtered down from the mountains to exert pressure on ARVN positions. The enemy appeared motivated by the approaching rice harvest and by his desire to disrupt our successful pacification efforts there. Korean and ARVN forces accepted the challenge and punished the enemy severely, while three US battalions moved into the rear of the enemy. Enemy losses in these engagements were 370 killed. Friendly forces lost 75 killed.

There is a noticeable, though gradual, increase in aggressiveness of the ARVN forces, especially when operating with US or Korean forces.

The pacification effort suffered a serious setback in Phu Yen Province as a result of the enemy attacks discussed above, but the people displaced by these attacks are being returned at their own request and the job of rebuilding is under way.

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THIRD CORPS

Objectives in Third Corps during September were to defeat enemy efforts to sabotage the national elections and to open large, previously inaccessible areas to friendly forces.

Approximately 80% of the eligible electorate participated in the elections, a dramatic defeat for the enemy. Large areas, previously inaccessible to friendly forces, are now being opened up by jungle clearing and mobile riverine force operations. These operations are expected to have an increasing impact on the attainment of our objectives as cover, concealment, security and resources are denied the enemy in key populated areas.

To date, a total of 75,000 acres of jungle have been cleared (including 31,000 along key highways and 33,000 in important enemy base areas).

On September 22, the Royal Thailand Army Volunteer Regiment completed its deployment to Third Corps and is now operating with the 9th US Infantry Division, thus broadening the base of free world support of operations in South Vietnam.

Success of the elections dominated pacification events in Third Corps, but otherwise pacification progress was spotty. Morale and welfare of the people have been improved by increased road security, and the New Life Development Program has recently provided equipment for four junior technical high schools. Over 60,000 textbooks were provided. On the other hand, the hamlet construction program is far behind schedule and undoubtedly will remain so for the rest of 1967.

The enemy failed to achieve a single significant victory in Third Corps during September, and his apparent policy of avoiding contact with large forces continues.

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FOURTH CORPS

Objectives in Fourth Corps during September were destruction of Viet Cong main and provincial units and their principal bases, furtherance of the pacification effort, upgrading security, and improving defenses of our major airfields.

The enemy situation in Fourth Corps continues to deteriorate slowly. Viet Cong efforts against the national elections were virtually unsuccessful as evidenced by a turnout of more than 85% of the registered voters.

Continued Government of Vietnam pressure has affected the Viet Cong's ability to significantly deter the pacification effort and interdict the major highways and waterways. The Viet Cong have not had a major victory this year in Fourth Corps and intelligence sources confirm they are experiencing morale problems. Agent reports indicate they have not been able to overcome their shortage of qualified cadre and their recruitment problems continue to increase.

With the present US/Government of Vietnam force level in this corps area, gains should continue at a slow to moderate pace. Morale, combat effectiveness and fighting spirit of ARVN forces continue to be good.

Pacification programs remain behind schedule; however, activity began to accelerate after the national elections.

No major Viet Cong attacks were initiated in Fourth Corps during the month, but harassment tactics continued although these dropped appreciably after the elections. Of the 728 Viet Cong-initiated incidents occurring during the months, 320 happened during the period 1 - 4 September.

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Tuesday, October 10, 1967

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TEXT OF CABLE FROM GENERAL WESTMORELAND

SUBJECT: Military Assessment for the Month of September

The first week of last month was marked by enemy terrorist rocket and mortar attacks designed to intimidate the people of South Vietnam in order to disrupt the national elections. A determined people answered that challenge unmistakably.

Again the enemy has been defeated in his efforts to gain a major victory. Our combined forces are holding the line in some of the bitterest fighting of this conflict along the DMZ, and are seeking to protect the people and destroy the enemy throughout the country.

In order to gain and hold the people we must be able to afford them stability and protection. It is in the area of pacification and in the development of South Vietnam's civil and military leaders that we must progress.

First Corps

During the month of September our primary objectives in the First Corps were to deny entry of North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong units into the zone, destroy enemy forces, minimize disruption of the national elections, deny enemy access to areas from which vital installation could be subjected to rocket, artillery, and mortar fire, and to provide security for the strong point obstacle system construction. The 3rd Marine Forces conducted twelve battalion size or larger operations during September. These operations accounted for 1,707 enemy killed, 29 detainees, and 264 weapons captured, while forces of the 3rd Marine Forces suffered 391 killed and had 2,813 wounded. Special landing forces conducted four operations in Quang Tri and Quang Tin Provinces. These operations successfully prevented the enemy from accomplishing three major objectives last month; the large-scale assault on Con Thien, disruption of national elections, and the extensive procurement of food by the 2nd North Vietnamese Army Division. Kingfisher Forces continued to develop the alternate plan for implementation of dye marker. Construction has proceeded with Bunker, minefield, and wire construction taking place. All construction has been slowed by rain and enemy activity. Progress on Route 561 is negligible due to high water.

During September, 85 arc light strikes were conducted in support of the First Corps; 78 were against targets in the DMZ area. This increase in arc light strikes was necessary to counter the build-up of enemy artillery in and north of the DMZ. The A Chau Valley road was rendered impassable by air strikes.

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Last month began with most Army of the Republic of Vietnam units committed to close-in security for voting places. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam, in conjunction with Free World forces, were successful in accomplishing the security mission, although there were numerous incidents of the Viet Cong blockading secondary roads and trails to polling places and a few incidents of harrassing fire on slated polling locations. Troops in the First Corps conducted 34 large-scale operations during September as compared to 47 in August, but these operations and the successful defense of friendly installations resulted in a significant increase in enemy casualties (1,331 killed, 128 detainees, and 317 weapons captured).

The enemy has generally been able to avoid large unit contact with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam units except on terrain of their choosing.

Army of the Republic of Vietnam units have demonstrated again that they can be successful in combat against the Viet Cong. Army of the Republic of Vietnam and Regional Forces/Popular Forces inflicted heavy casualties on enemy forces conducting attacks on compounds and installations. There were, however, several instances where the enemy succeeded in overrunning Army of the Republic of Vietnam positions.

Leadership remains the most important area requiring improvement. Army of the Republic of Vietnam morale remains good; although the desertion rate for September increased, reversing the August trend.

Interdiction and harassment declined appreciably from August. Nine culverts and 15 bridges were damaged or destroyed. Repairs of the Song Cau Lau and Nam O bridges progressed with minimal difficulties. 1,026 feet of new bridging and 1,280 feet of bridge repairs were made. Moderate progress continued on upgrading Route 1. Efforts were intensified to upgrade Route 561 to all weather class from Route 9 to Con Thien. We had 26 inches of rain in this area in September.

Logistical support and sealift assets remained generally adequate during the month. However, a backlog of cargo for northern First Corps ports has developed a definite upward trend which is expected to continue throughout the monsoon season. Additional landing craft have been requested.

Dye marker materials have been stockpiled both at Dong Ha and Danang in sufficient quantities to meet the requirements of the construction forces. Frequent interruptions as a result of enemy activity and early seasonal rains created a loss in construction time that will be most difficult to compensate for in view of the impending monsoon.

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Progress in pacification during September was slow (particularly in the southern provinces) because of the elections, lagging Government of Vietnam interest, the onset of the monsoon, and security problems in some areas. Quang Ngai's efforts suffered a major setback when the Viet Cong occupied eastern Tu Nghai, the most important Revolutionary Development campaign area, for ten days following an attack upon the provincial capital. It probably will take several months to recover from this setback. Quang Tin showed a slight improvement in morale because of the successful defense against an enemy attack on Tam Ky on 6 September. In Quang Tri, the good election turnout and recent military successes have helped the Government of Vietnam's image. Revolutionary Development in Thua Thien is progressing on schedule. The aggressiveness and interest of Army of the Republic of Vietnam units supporting Revolutionary Development in the northern province is a major factor affecting this progress. Although still behind schedule, the Revolutionary Development program in the First Corps continued to show progress with a total of 24 New Life and 29 Consolidated Hamlets completed to date. Ninety New Life Hamlets and 35 Consolidated Hamlets are under construction. The number of Hoi Chanh declined steeply from 236 in August to 71 in September. Viet Cong assassinations declined from 198 in August to 122 in September, but the number of abductions rose for the fourth straight month to 335.

Last month Third Marine Forces Civic Action included distribution of food (338,000 pounds), medical and dental treatments (147,000), assistance in the construction of schools, wells, dispensaries and rice drying courts.

Enemy Actions in First Corps

The enemy maintained major elements of two divisions in the eastern portion of the DMZ with the primary concentration in the vicinity of Con Thien-Gio Linh.

The enemy made maximum use of his heavy weapons along the DMZ, directing over 7,800 rounds of mixed artillery, rocket and mortar fire at units and installations in that area. This is the largest number of rounds received during a monthly period since the enemy's introduction of artillery last March, and is more than double the volume received during August. The principal target and center for enemy ground activity during September was Con Thien. A combination of heavy air, artillery and naval gunfire with an active defense and adverse weather conditions dissuaded the enemy from mounting a major attack.

Elsewhere in First Corps during the first week of September, the enemy attacked the installation at Red Beach (Danang) and the Danang Airbase with rockets. Quang Tin Province was the scene of major engagements. Operation Swift exacted a heavy toll of casualties on elements of the 2nd North Vietnamese Army Division

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in Que Son valley, and Army of the Republic of Vietnam forces decisively repulsed a coordinated attack on installations in and near Tam Ky City. Following these engagements, the tempo of enemy activity dropped off sharply.

Intelligence indicates that the enemy is devoting a maximum effort toward the resupply and reorganization of his forces prior to the monsoon season. An indication of the enemy requirement for food is the continued presence of the 2nd North Vietnamese Army Division in eastern Quang Tin Province, ostensibly to gather rice from the harvest which started in late September. Interrogation of returnees and prisoners continues to point up enemy shortages of food, medical supplies, and ammunition. Almost all reports point up a high incidence of malaria and a general lowering of morale.

Second Corps

Our objectives in Second Corps tactical zone for the month of September were to destroy the enemy forces in the zone, deny the enemy access to South Vietnam through Second Corps, minimize disruption of the national elections, and protect the people.

Two events occupied center stage, the Presidential elections and the North Vietnamese Army pressure on Tuy Hoa. Despite a widespread and vicious anti-election campaign by the Viet Cong designed to destroy the free expression of the people, 91 percent of those eligible in Second Corps risked death or injury to vote on 3 September. The communists were thus completely frustrated in their attempt to use the election to prove that the people of South Vietnam were apathetic or hostile toward their government. Near Tuy Hoa, the North Vietnamese Army moved into outlying hamlets and dug in with the apparent intention to stand and fight. Simultaneously, more forces filtered down from the mountains to exert direct pressure from the west on Army of the Republic of Vietnam positions guarding the approaches to the Tuy Hoa complex. We believe that the enemy is motivated by his appetite for the approaching rice harvest and by his strong desire to disrupt the increasingly successful Revolutionary Development effort there. South Korean and Army of the Republic of Vietnam forces accepted the challenge and fought well, punishing the enemy severely. Meanwhile, three U. S. battalions pounced on the mountain redoubts from which the North Vietnamese Army had come and began a squeeze on the center.

Second Corps initiated a program to provide an eagle flight of two gunships and five troop ships to the Phu Bon Province chief for a 30-day trial period. These aircraft were placed on ground alert in Cheo Reo with the 752nd Regional Forces company to provide an immediate reaction capability. This program has been so successful that expansion to other highland provinces is anticipated.

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The 22nd and 23rd Army of the Republic of Vietnam divisions continued normal operations during September consisting of search and destroy and security operations and continued support of the revolutionary development program. In addition, operations were initiated in Phu Yen as mentioned earlier. Numerous contacts were made by elements of the 47th Army of the Republic of Vietnam Regiment with enemy forces in this area. On September 17, after conducting an air assault to a location 12 kilometers southwest of Tuy Hoa, the 3rd and 4th battalions of the 47th Regiment made contact with an estimated enemy battalion. In this contact one Army of the Republic of Vietnam battalion commander was killed and another battalion commander wounded while 11 men were killed and 59 wounded. The U. S. advisor estimated that 35 to 40 enemy were killed. (30 body count officially reported)

Since September 19 the two Army of the Republic of Vietnam battalions have participated in operations in coordination with Operation Bolling in the Tuy Hoa Basin.

During September, Army of the Republic of Vietnam units conducted nine battalion and 13 multi-battalion operations. Sixteen were search and destroy and six were road clearing or security missions. These operations resulted in 485 enemy killed, 143 detainees, and 164 weapons captured. Friendly losses were 241 killed, 584 wounded and 31 missing (Army of the Republic of Vietnam).

There is a noticeable, though gradual, increase in the aggressiveness of Army of the Republic of Vietnam forces, especially where operating directly with major Free World Marine Force units or where there is a major Free World Marine Force reinforcement capability such as in Binh Thuan. We are stressing combined operations of this type.

Free World forces continue to provide the arena in which the vital work of nation building may proceed. All of our forces initially were preoccupied with providing an outer shield for the elections. In a series of operations after the elections, beginning with several sharp Republic of Korea/North Vietnamese Army engagements and continuing with operations Bolling and Do Kay Bee 3, combined forces this month challenged the strong North Vietnamese Army threat to Phu Yen. By mid-month a three nation, multi-battalion attack was launched in the area west of Tuy Hoa. One battalion of the 173rd Airborne Brigade conducted search and destroy operations in the hills to the west while the other battalion from the 173rd and one battalion from the 1st Cavalry Division struck south and east, pounding the anvil provided by the 3rd and 4th battalions, 47th Army of the Republic of Vietnam regiment, anchored in the valley. Meanwhile, south of the Song Ba Dai Giang River, the 28th Republic of Korea regiment with three Regional Force companies assisting conducted successful search operations in the hamlets, flushing out numerous enemy who had been eying the rich rice harvests there. The results of the September operations west of Tuy Hoa were 370 enemy killed, 43 detainees, and 97 weapons captured. Friendly forces lost 75 killed and 192 wounded.

Elsewhere in Second Corps the enemy continued to elect to break into small groups whenever threatened and to melt away wherever possible. Operations such as Join Hands in the Cay Giep mountains during the period 6-15 September, another joint-combined operation consisting of Vietnamese, Marine, Army of the Republic of Vietnam, and U. S. Forces supported by the U. S. Air Force and U. S. Navy, found no major formations willing to stand and fight. Nevertheless, significant gains were registered throughout Second Corps from the relentless pursuit and destruction of small enemy groups and persistent, carefully planned local cordon and search operations. These and other operations in September resulted in a highly favorable balance representing modest, but measurable, progress.

Highway 11 from Phan Rang to Dalat and highway 20 from Dalat to the Second/Third Corps boundary have been green since the first of September, an increase of 226 kilometers of green road in Second Corps. Although there was no net change this month in usable railroad, three work parties initiated restoration work on two sections of railroad to be completed by May, 1968, which will open the railroad from Phan Rang to Bong Son. On 16 September, the 1st Cavalry assumed full responsibility for the security of 87 kilometers of highways 14 and 19 from Kontum City to the vicinity of Mang Yang Pass.

Our modest but steady military progress must be balanced against a general slump in the political sphere and pacification program. There appears to be a post-election "wait and see" attitude among the province officials. The threatened "clean-up" of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and corrupt officials will cause this general attitude to persist. Hopefully, after the installation of the newly elected government in Saigon, the province chiefs will again concentrate their efforts on the execution of Government of Vietnam programs.

The Revolutionary Development effort suffered a serious setback in Phu Yen Province as a result of Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army attacks on hamlets which were progressing well. No hamlets were heavily damaged and the security situation has deteriorated to the extent that numerous Revolutionary Development teams have been unable to complete their tasks effectively. As a result of combat operations in Phu Yen 3,704 homes were destroyed, leaving approximately 20,000 people homeless in Tuy An, Tuy Hoa and Hieu Xuong districts. At their own request, they are being returned to their homesites. Civil Operations for Revolutionary Development is providing food stuffs and building materials for needed repairs and new construction, and the job of rebuilding is underway. Twenty-one hamlets were brought under Government of Vietnam control in September for a new total of 1,221. An additional 366 hamlets are being secured.

Combating the infrastructure continues to progress as intelligence collection procedures improve and the techniques of cordon and search utilizing police field forces are applied. We are encountering some problems, however, with incompetent provincial officials.

The strength of Regional Force/Popular Force units is now at 80 percent but their performance is spotty. To improve their effectiveness, a training assistance program has been implemented by U. S. units to improve Regional Force/Popular Force operational capabilities and to enhance their leadership capabilities at squad, platoon, and company levels. Complete implementation of the program will be accomplished in October. On September 1 an increase for Calendar Year 68 of 17 Regional Force companies and 30 Popular Force platoons was authorized, bringing the total authorization to 253 Regional Force companies and 1,100 Popular Force platoons. In order to expand and support the pacification effort in 1968, the Commander, Second Corps has expressed a need for the following additional forces: five Army of the Republic of Vietnam infantry battalions, one Army of the Republic of Vietnam Ranger battalion, two Army of the Republic of Vietnam Artillery battalions, 56 Regional Force companies, and 88 Popular Force platoons.

Civic action continues to play an important part in the pacification effort. It was a pleasure to note, for example, that in mid-September an Army of the Republic of Vietnam engineer battalion in Cam Ranh built a bridge for the people in Ding Lac Valley with supplies procured with the help of Civil Operations for Revolutionary Development and the U. S. advisor. A ski jump type spillway was opened on September 9 in Ninh Thuan Province at the Da Nhim Hydroelectric Plant. This spillway will permit irrigation of 10,000 additional hectares during the dry season. In Lam Dong the Highland Tea Cooperative continues to deliver to Saigon and Army of the Republic of Vietnam on their 410-ton contract. A new tea factory is under construction which, when completed, will be a boon to the economy of this area.

The enemy is considered to have low morale not from food shortages but from heavy losses sustained in recent months in engagements with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, Republic of Korea, and U. S. forces. In Phu Yen, enemy morale has been better due to limited offensive success. In Binh Dinh, however, both the 18th North Vietnam Regiment and the local infrastructure has suffered losses at the hands of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, Republic of Korea, and U. S. forces.

The enemy's most important economic objective for September was to seize a substantial portion of the rice harvest from the southern and coastal provinces in order to sustain himself during the remainder of 1967 and early 1968. Should he fail, increasing numbers of enemy can be expected to return to Government of Vietnam control through the Chieu Hoa program. In some areas the enemy is attempting to grow his own rice, working increasingly at night to avoid aerial observation. A trend to levy taxes has been noticed throughout the area due to the current food shortage. The enemy is making continuing efforts to cause inflation in Government of Vietnam population centers by interdicting lines of communication with taxation points and by sabotage of roadways and bridges. This effort has been generally unsuccessful.

The B-3 front continued active reconnaissance from the Chu Pong mountains to the middle of Plei Trap Valley. No major ground contact between enemy and friendly forces has occurred since early August. The 174th North Vietnamese Army Regiment has apparently withdrawn across the border into Laos and now presents less of a threat to the Civilian Irregular Defense Group camps in Kontum Province. In Pleiku Province, the enemy has continued to prepare the battlefield in the lower Plei Trap Valley. A continuing threat is presented to the Civilian Irregular Defense Group camps at Duc Co, Plei Djereng, and Plei Mrong. The B-3 front is estimated to have a strength of some eight maneuver battalions in the Kontum area and 12 battalions near Pleiku in various states of combat effectiveness. The overall enemy goal in the highlands is to cause wide deployments of Free World Marine Forces and Army of the Republic of Vietnam units and to inflict unacceptably heavy casualties upon them. In the southern provinces, enemy activity during early September was directed toward disruption of the Government of Vietnam elections by employing propaganda, terrorism, intimidation and small unit attacks on hamlets and villages. Having failed to disrupt the elections, the enemy has confined himself to small attacks on hamlets, friendly installations, and lines of communication. In the coastal regions there are indications that the enemy may be preparing for a concentrated campaign during the monsoon to regain control of Binh Dinh Province.

At the beginning of September, the enemy tried to create a climate for fear to deter the people from voting. To their embarrassment the campaign to disrupt the elections backfired; the enemy found that instead he had hardened voter resolve to exercise their democratic rights. Subsequent to the elections, the enemy has concentrated on regaining some of the credibility he lost from his failure to carry out pre-election threats. This period has been characterized by increased attacks on U. S. personnel and installations in areas such as Khanh Hoa Province, where a Viet Cong attack by a claymore mine on the Neptune NCO Club in Nha Trang killed one U. S. and one Vietnamese national and wounded 45 other U. S. and Vietnamese personnel.

Third Corps

Our objectives in the Third Corps tactical zone during the month of September were to defeat the enemy efforts to sabotage the national elections and open large, previously inaccessible areas to friendly forces. Approximately 80 percent of the eligible electorate participated in the elections, a dramatic defeat for the enemy. Large areas, previously inaccessible to friendly forces, are now being opened up by jungle clearing and Mobile Riverine Force operations. These operations are expected to have an increasing impact on the attainment of our objectives as cover, concealment, security and resources are denied the enemy in key populated areas.

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Friendly progress was highlighted by the adoption of two new operational concepts. Concept of massing available Army aviation assets (five-seven assault helicopter companies) in support of a single division for a one-half day period was initiated. This permits the simultaneous tactical deployment of much larger forces in order to fix the enemy, achieve surprise, and increase the probability of containing and destroying his forces. The rapid fire concept, also initiated this month, involves the tactical deployment of combined reconnaissance teams (three U. S. and three Civilian Irregular Defense Group personnel per team) to locate Viet Cong forces, followed by platoon-sized teams to capture and fix the enemy forces, and finally the commitment of a larger Mobile Reaction Force to disrupt or destroy the enemy forces. The first of these operations terminated on September 21 and resulted in 38 Viet Cong killed in action, six prisoners of war, and quantities of captured weapons and material.

To date, a total of 75,400 acres of jungle have been cleared (including 31,752 acres along key highways and 33,026 acres in important Viet Cong base areas). This program neutralizes Viet Cong base camps and contributes significantly to the local security of populated areas and the ability of the people to travel in safety between these areas.

There are now 2 operating District Operations Intelligence Coordinating Centers (DOICC). These centers assimilate and evaluate hard intelligence and coordinate reaction forces that are directed against the Viet Cong infrastructure. In Binh Duong Province on September 17, the Phu Hoa DOICC, acting on intelligence, apprehended 11 infrastructure members and one Army of the Republic of Vietnam deserter.

On September 22, the main body of the Royal Thai Army Volunteer Regiment completed its deployment to Bear Cat where it is controlled by the 9th Infantry Division. The arrival of this unit will contribute materially to broadening the base of Free World support.

The Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces 533rd Regional Forces Company, the same company which only last month prevented a mortar attack against the Tan Son Nhut Air Base complex, captured three Viet Cong officers. These prisoners revealed information that subsequently led to the discovery and capture of two weapons caches seven kilometers south southwest of Tan Son Nhut.

On September 30 two Army of the Republic of Vietnam battalions conducted airmobile operations into the iron triangle. Contact was established three times during the day. This operation is indicative of an increase in the aggressiveness and desire of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam to get on with the job.

Two Army of the Republic of Vietnam battalions recently completed the U. S. /Army of the Republic of Vietnam battalion refresher training being conducted by eight U. S. brigades and the Australian Task Force. Nine additional battalions are presently in the program.

The coordinated and combined efforts of engineer troops in Third Corps have succeeded in maintaining all major highways open for both military and civilian traffic.

Recent troop and jungle clearing operations have improved the security along highway 20 in Long Khanh Province so that it now supports a significant amount of produce-bearing traffic bound for major population centers. The ability to move these goods freely contributes significantly to the general morale and welfare of the people. On September 25 the Cau Noi Ferry service across the Vam Co River on Route 5A was restored. This project was a combined U. S. /Government of Vietnam effort that will provide an important boost to the economy.

The success of the national elections dominated events in Third Corps. Otherwise, pacification presented a spotty picture for the month. On the one hand, there has been a continued improvement in the overall morale and welfare of the South Vietnamese people through increased road security, expanding educational facilities, health programs and the planned resettlement of refugees. On the other, the hamlet construction program for Third Corps remains far behind schedule and undoubtedly will remain behind schedule for the rest of 1967.

In other areas of pacification, however, progress is more encouraging. For example, the new life development program has recently provided equipment for four junior technical high schools. Over 60,000 textbooks were distributed in the Third Corps during September. In Binh Tuy Province, a 240-gallon per minute water treatment plant was established. This plant provides potable water to the towns of Ham Tan and La Gi. The jungle clearing operation conducted in an area adjacent to Route 2 provided a housing and farming area for the resettlement of refugees while concurrently denying the Viet Cong a source of tax revenue and personnel replacements.

In operations during September the enemy failed to achieve a single significant victory. His apparent policy of avoiding contact with large forces continues. Although to a lesser extent than in August, he continued to demonstrate his capability to deliver mortar fires on fixed installations. On the 16th and 17th of September, respectively, the Dong Tam Base Camp and the 1st Brigade Command Post, 25th Infantry Division, were attacked with mortar fires that inflicted light casualties (all wounded in action) and light material damage.

In September there was a sharp increase in the number of ralliers in Phuoc Tuy and Binh Tuy Provinces and Vung Tau (36 in August versus 102 in September). Rallier reports from these provinces indicate serious Viet Cong food shortages

and declining morale. The total number of ralliers, however, decreased to 380. This is a continuation of a trend that was noted last month. This decrease may be attributed to the onset of the rice-growing season and a "wait and see" attitude following the recent national elections.

A particularly illuminating report that reflects on the general welfare and morale of infiltrating personnel resulted from the capture of a 17-year old North Vietnamese soldier on September 26. The soldier had spent six months infiltrating to South Vietnam. His group arrived with only 20 percent of its departure strength (100 of an original 500) and many of these, including the prisoner, were sick with malaria and malnutrition. The soldier spent the next five months recuperating in a Viet Cong/North Vietnamese hospital in South Vietnam. During the six days that immediately preceded his capture his rations consisted of six potatoes.

A recent report, later confirmed by a prisoner of war statement, reports serious morale problems in the Phu Loa battalion. Intelligence indicates war weariness, lack of food, supplies and replacements, and a fear of death.

Casualties were down 20 percent from August, generally in line with a lower Viet Cong activity level.

Fourth Corps

The objectives in the Fourth Corps tactical zone for the month of September continued with emphasis on the destruction of Viet Cong main and provincial units and their principal bases; furtherance of the Revolutionary Development effort; upgrading the security and preventing interdiction of the major lines of communication; and improving the defenses of our major airfields.

Progress continues in improving the defenses of the airfields at Can Tho, Binh Thuy, Soc Trang and Vinh Long. Day and night aerial observation of the areas and approaches to the airfields, the conduct of firefly missions nightly over these areas, and the construction of permanent and temporary revetments for aircraft protection continues. Each airfield has established a joint command post where all internal defense, ambushes, patrols, harassment and interdiction fires and reaction operations are coordinated and controlled.

The enemy situation in Fourth Corps continues to deteriorate slowly. The Viet Cong propaganda and operational efforts against the national elections were virtually unsuccessful as evidenced by a turnout of more than 85 percent of the registered voters. Continued Government of Vietnam pressure, particularly against Viet Cong main force units and base areas, has affected their ability to significantly deter the pacification effort and interdict lines of communication. The Viet Cong have not had a major victory this year and intelligence

sources confirm that they are experiencing morale problems. With the present U. S. /Government of Vietnam force level in Fourth Corps, gains should continue at a slow to moderate pace. The overall morale, combat effectiveness, and fighting spirit of Fourth Corps units continue to be good.

Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces units conducted a total of 146 major unit operations of battalion size or larger, a 15 percent decrease from last month. These operations were, however, of a longer average duration. Small unit operations numbered 56,864, the highest number reported to date. Twenty-nine airmobile operations were conducted with a total of 33,970 Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces troops being airlifted. Cuu Long 63, a bilateral U. S. /Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces airmobile operation conducted in Base Area 470 as part of Coronado V, resulted in 70 Viet Cong killed in action, 52 Viet Cong captured and 33 weapons captured. There were 23 additional operations penetrating seven other Viet Cong base areas resulting in 118 Viet Cong killed in action, 129 captured and 55 weapons captured. A 4.1 to 1 friendly killed versus Viet Cong killed ratio and 2.5 to 1 weapons captured versus weapons lost ratio compare favorably with previous months.

Progress was made toward improving and maintaining the security of major highways and waterways in the Delta. During the month, National Highway 4 remained open to two-way commercial traffic with only brief interruptions caused by the destruction of the An Cu bridge in Dinh Tuong Province and four cratering incidents on Route 4. The following changes in line of communication security have occurred in the past 40 days: Highway 4 from Fourth/Third Corps boundary to My Tho was changed from amber to green, inter-provincial Route 40 from Vi Thanh to Highway 4 was changed from red to amber, inter-provincial Route 23 from Sa Dec to Cho Mai was changed from red to amber, the Mang Thit-Nicholai Waterway was changed from red to amber, the My Tho River was changed from amber to green, and inter-provincial Route 30 from Kien Von to Hong Ngu (Kien Phong Province) changed from amber to green. The Cho Gao Canal in Dinh Tuong Province and the Dong Kien Canal in Kien Phong Province were reported for the first time and are carried as green lines of communications. All airfields within Fourth Corps are operational. No airfields or major lines of communication were closed by the annual flood in September.

Pacification programs remain behind schedule; however, Revolutionary Development activity in each of the provinces began to accelerate after the national election period. Red teams continued to be shifted from first semester to second semester hamlets and by September 30 approximately 60 percent of the shift was completed. There have been no reported Viet Cong attacks on first semester hamlets. The Viet Cong initiated five incidents against Revolutionary Development cadre resulting in five Revolutionary Development cadre, five Regional Force soldiers and three civilians killed and 21 Revolutionary Development cadre and two Regional Force soldiers wounded.

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A joint US/Government of Vietnam team, headed by Government of Vietnam Brigadier General Hon, completed an inspection of Revolutionary Development activities in all Fourth Corps Provinces. This team reviewed each Province's potential for completing the current 1967 program and previewed the 1968 plans to insure continuity of effort and purpose. The efforts of this team are expected to give added impetus to the pacification effort in Fourth Corps.

The overall effectiveness of Regional Forces and Popular Forces units remains satisfactory. The number of Regional Forces and Popular Forces desertions average approximately 990 per month, 50 percent less than last year's rate. The Popular Forces desertion rate is about double that of the Regional Forces. A study has been initiated to identify the reasons for this. In an effort to increase the effectiveness of Regional Forces and Popular Forces units, a program of instruction for in-place training of these units is being developed.

The general enemy situation deteriorated slightly as compared with July and August. Although the Viet Cong increased their activities markedly during the election period, they were unable to fulfill their plans for disruption of the elections. The rate of incidents reached a high point on September 3 and dropped appreciably following the elections. Of the 728 Viet Cong-initiated incidents occurring during the month, 320 of these happened through September 4.

Coordinated Army of the Republic of Vietnam 7th Division and U.S. 9th Division operations conducted in Western Dinh Tuong Province relieved enemy pressure directed against Highway 4. Documents captured during the period revealed a four-phase Viet Cong plan of operation in Dinh Tuong Province. One phase of this plan, interdiction of lines of communication, was accomplished only to a limited degree; phases Two, Three, and Four (attacks on rear areas, armored cavalry units and infantry units) were not accomplished.

No major Viet Cong ground attacks were initiated but harassment tactics, such as shelling of the district towns of Phong Phu, Thuan Nhon and Ke Sach in Phong Dinh Province and Song Ong Doc in An Xuyen Province, continued. Agent reports indicate that the Viet Cong have not been able to overcome their shortage of qualified cadre and that recruitment problems continue to increase. Losses sustained by the Viet Cong totaled 944 killed, 300 captured, and 377 weapons lost compared to August losses of 1005 killed, 332 captured, and 302 weapons lost. Returnees under the Chieu Hoi program totaled 778. In addition to the Chieu Hoi, there were 152 Hoa Hao soldiers who returned to Government of Vietnam control.

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Naval Activity

MARKET TIME continued to provide effective interdiction of enemy waterborne logistics along the coast of South Vietnam. Blocking forces prevented exfiltration of enemy combatants during ground operations in First Corps. On September 3, a MARKET TIME patrol spotted for USS Boston and USS DuPont and obtained 16 secondary explosions from enemy artillery positions in Quang Tri Province.

The USS Hunterdon County was temporarily deployed to the First Corps on September 18 for a period of three weeks in order to evaluate the effectiveness of River Patron Boat Operations in the environment of the northern portion of South Vietnam. Game warden, seal teams and helicopters combined with Vietnamese Navy units in numerous effective operations. On the lower Bassac River on Tan Dinh Island which is used by the enemy as a base area, a seal team destroyed approximately 75 bunkers, 170 houses and 120 sampans and captured many documents, boat motors and weapons. Seal teams, with assistance from helicopters, small craft and seventh fleet destroyers, conducted shallow draft operations in Kien Hoa and Vinh Binh Provinces. Shallow draft operations are sustained abduction/intelligence gathering missions in enemy base areas and secret zones. A seventh, and last, helicopter fire team was activated at Can Tho on September 26.

The Riverine Assault Force conducted Operation Coronado V in Long An, Dinh Tuong and Kien Hoa Provinces. Coronado V combined Navy assault units with the 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, to carry the fight to the enemy in areas inaccessible by land. A four-day operation in Dinh Tuong Province resulted in 210 enemy killed, 23 detainees and 559 bunkers destroyed. U. S. losses were 15 killed and 128 wounded.

Seventh Air Force

In-country, the preponderance of the air effort was allocated to direct support of U. S. /Free World Forces ground operations. The remaining capability was used to provide logistical support to these forces, to locate the enemy and his resources, to limit his freedom of movements and to encourage him to rally to the Government of Vietnam.

A total of 10,447 tactical air sorties were flown in-country during the month of September, of which 7,340 were close air support missions for U. S. /Free World Forces ground operations. Over 14,000 tons of ordnance were expended against enemy troop concentrations, base areas, fortifications and installations resulting in 265 secondary explosions. 4,127 military structures destroyed, another 2,737 damaged and 525 sampans destroyed.

Included in the overall effort were 734 combat Skyspot sorties flown to deny the enemy the use of night time as a sanctuary. In addition, 297 immediate

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Flaeship Support requests were honored by US Air Force/Vietnam Air Force Flaeships. These illuminated battlefields and provided flaring for tactical air strikes in all Corps of the Republic of Vietnam.

Constant pressure was placed on the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army in the movement of its forces by the more than 7,350 visual reconnaissance sorties flown alone. This extensive surveillance program produced 1,938 significant sightings. Additionally, 1,669 reconnaissance missions were flown during the month. The resultant vital data was used to locate the enemy and his operating areas for the subsequent development of targets.

Inclement weather hampered herbicide operations for the greater part of the month; nevertheless, 406,000 gallons of defoliant were dispensed.

Airlift figures were equally impressive with over 295,182 passengers and 65,896 tons of cargo being airlifted throughout South Vietnam. Both figures were over the average for the first nine months of the year.

More than 3,000 Vietnamese Air Force strike sorties were flown. Results were 1,451 military structures destroyed, 915 damaged, 140 sampans destroyed and 41 secondary explosions. Vietnamese Air Force further accounted for 868 visual reconnaissance sorties and the airleift evacuation of 801 friendly casualties.

Objectives of the 7th Air Force out-country air campaign in September continued to be the destruction or disruption of selected war supporting and militarily significant targets in North Vietnam, and the impediment of enemy infiltration and insurgency activities moving through North Vietnam and Laos. As was expected in this monsoonal transition period, adverse weather conditions throughout the areas of tactical operations hampered effective operations.

On September 12, Operation Neutralize was initiated to locate and destroy enemy field artillery and anti-aircraft sites and their associated storage areas. The search function of Neutralize is being conducted within weapon range of Dong Ha, Con Thien, and GioLinh, and is carried out by photo reconnaissance missions, photography, and visual reconnaissance. As of September 30, 1,153 Air Force and 607 Marine and Navy strike sorties had been flown in support of the operation. Results of the operation included 47 field artillery positions destroyed or damaged, 15 37/57 mm anti aircraft positions destroyed, 274 secondary explosions and fires, and an estimated 124 killed by air.

The weight of the B-52 effort for the entire month of September was predominantly against targets of enemy troop concentration and gun

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emplacements in the southern portion of North Vietnam, in the Demilitarized Zone, and in the northern portion of South Vietnam. Four strikes (15 sorties) were executed to interdict transportation routes in the A Shau Valley. There were 22 strikes (204 sorties) executed against 7th Air Force operation Neutralize targets.