

19
Friday, October 20, 1967
11:15 a.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith an interesting report
on basic Viet Cong problems in a
Delta province.

Pres file

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rln

COPY LBJ LIBRARY

Friday, October 20, 1967

14a

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSTOW

SUBJECT: Viet Cong Difficulties

The September report for Chuong Thien Province, in the Delta region, gives a very interesting account of the attitudes of the people toward the Viet Cong as related by a recent rallier. The following is a summary of this report:

According to Le Hong Huan, a recent rallier and former Secretary of the Labor Youth Group in a district of Chuong Thien Province, many Viet Cong cadres and troops are becoming disenchanted with the protracted war and with the hardships and suffering levied on themselves and their families because of their association with the Viet Cong. This problem was clearly indicated at a meeting of the Viet Cong Long My District Committee, Chuong Thien Province, held shortly after the September 3 Government of Vietnam elections. The Committee complained of the poor and unenthusiastic support given by the cadres toward achieving its goal in the anti-election campaign and concluded that, because of this, it was only able to carry out one-half of its projected anti-election goal.

Huan stated that there are many defections from Viet Cong ranks of which the Government of Vietnam has no knowledge because these people do not rally but merely quit and return to their previous occupations.

The problem of keeping people from moving to Government of Vietnam controlled areas still plagues Viet Cong planners. According to Le Hong Huan, the people living in Viet Cong-controlled areas are becoming increasingly disenchanted with the length and severity of the war and with Viet Cong policies in general. These people originally had a better life under the Viet Cong than they did under the old French landlords and, even with the hardships now inflicted upon them by the war, many still hesitate to move away and leave their land. Some people have become so angry and frustrated that they have killed themselves, while others show their resentment by only cultivating enough of their land to meet subsistence needs for their families.

Many of these people are suspicious of the Government of Vietnam because of the destruction caused by military operations and air and artillery strikes. However, the people have recently learned about some of the Government of Vietnam's refugee programs and of the humane treatment given to people wounded or injured in Government of Vietnam military operations. As a result, their attitude is becoming more friendly toward the Government of Vietnam.

Art
Arthur McCafferty