

INFORMATION

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Friday, November 10, 1967
9:50 a.m.

Pres file

Mr. President:

This is a serious -- even
massive effort -- by Saigon to
mobilize all its arguments against
the stalemate doctrine.

I shall have a summary prepared
for your use.

W. W. Rostow

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By iss, NARS, Date 6-22-84

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62a
Tuesday, November 7, 1967

TEXTS OF CABLES FROM EMBASSY SAIGON (7867 and 10573)

SUBJECT: Measurement of Progress

We plan the following to demonstrate to the press and public that we are making solid progress and are not in a stalemate:

A. Preparation for our own use and as a basis for use with the press of a written comparison of our situation today with the situation at various other times beginning in early 1965.

B. Additional on-the-record press conference by the Ambassadors, General Westmoreland and other senior officers as appropriate.

C. A review of captured documents, POW and Hoi Chanh reports showing North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong assessment to the end of proving progress by statements made by the enemy himself. (In this connection, where excerpts used from a document, the entire document will be made available to the press. All captured documents will be declassified except where security definitely requires classification. Our present thinking is that we will hold on-the-record briefings whenever some point can be proved by captured documents, which could perhaps result in white paper pulling all elements together to present a complete picture. Of course, analysis of document -- which must precede the briefings -- will take some time.)

D. A concerted effort to select for detailed briefing of the press current stories of progress in a particular area or village -- similar to our current program with respect to a particular military action. (In order to maintain credibility, outstanding failures must also be briefed in the same detailed fashion.)

E. A selection of subjects which show progress of particular units or of particular pacification programs in particular areas, and encouragement of selected pressmen to visit areas for stories in depth. (We are making a list.)

F. Similarly, a selection of subjects about which the press has doubts, and the presentation of concise, hard-hitting briefings designed to allay credibility

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problems. (These briefings will complement and supplement those mentioned in paragraph C, but will not necessarily depend upon intelligence data.)

G. MACV is instituting this month a monthly J-2/J-3/COC Situation Briefing designed to update correspondents on progress and to place current actions in perspective. (These briefings will be either on-the-record or background, depending on the results of the current study to determine whether an on-the-record approach will permit meaningful briefings.)

H. We have a number of other actions in mind which are incorporated in a Mission-approved press relation plan now enroute to the Department.

In addition, we are considering the following to the same end:

A. How we can best expose the new Government and its plans to the press by backgrounders -- by Thieu and Ky, for example, as plans develop.

B. The possibility of a report to the nation briefing of the press -- perhaps in January -- over U.S. television.

The arguments given for a stalemate and our basic answers are:

A. That we have been here for many years and have been unable to show territorial gains or definite signs of winning. (Answer: There are definite signs of winning where it counts, that is, in the minds of the people. While we cannot measure the support of the people for our side, we see ample evidence that the enemy is fast losing control of the people for his side. His recruitment has dropped off sharply, he is having food shortages, and he is having serious problems collecting Viet Cong taxes. Furthermore, he admits losing control over the people (see captured documents). This is a much more significant measurement of who is winning than territory gained. In fact, 40 percent of Vietnam is uninhabited and 80 percent of the people live on less than 40 percent of the land.

In addition, we must remember that we have not been here for years. Indeed, our first combat troops arrived only a little over two years ago; our first year was spent primarily in logistical build-up, and we have been able to exert the full pressure of our forces on the enemy for only a year and no more. Similarly, the current pacification program only really began with the Honolulu

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Conference, and took over a year to build up any momentum. Its progress is also critically dependent upon allocation of sufficient Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Security Forces, which were only allocated in 1967).

COMMENT: Although presenting the bare evidence which reveals steady progress in security, pacification, and population control should be sufficient, it is probably necessary to draw and express our conclusions as to the meaning and importance of the evidence. In addition there are specific examples of behavior on the part of the people which reflect attitudes far better than cold statistics. We note that population gains by the Government of Vietnam and the improvement in voter participation since the elections of September 1966 are two excellent examples of statistical evidence of increased control of the population. There is a MACCORDS paper, subject: Pacification Control, dated September 30, 1967, which shows gradual increase in Government of Vietnam control of the population. END COMMENT

B. That there are as many of the enemy in South Vietnam now as there were one year or two years ago in spite of our fill ratios. (Answer: We believe that enemy strength in South Vietnam has declined over the past year or so. For example, largely from captured documents and POW's, we now estimate that Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army organized unit strength has declined from a peak of 126,000 in August, 1966, to about 118,000 now. In other categories, such as guerrillas, we now believe that earlier estimates were too low because of incomplete intelligence. But we believe that Viet Cong guerrilla strength has declined significantly. We estimated that 7,000 Viet Cong a month were being recruited in early 1966, but that this has declined to 3-4,000 now. The number of troops infiltrated and recruited by the enemy over the last six months has not been as great as his deaths, desertions, and other losses.)

COMMENT: With regard to whether the recruitment estimate will stand hard scrutiny, we have previously submitted our methodology for consideration and can only reiterate our conclusions.

Viet Cong recruitment for 1966 was estimated to be 82,840. This was based on a study of captured documents covering six of the 36 Viet Cong provinces and extrapolated for the remainder. The study was presented by MACV J-2 at the Honolulu Intelligence Conference in February 1967 and subsequently accepted by the intelligence community.

During July 1967, a study of Viet Cong recruitment for the period January 1 to April 30, 1967, was completed. Copies have been forwarded to DIA. Results

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of the study indicate a most probable recruiting rate of 3,500 personnel per month. Spread values with different confidence values were determined. Within MACV, a 60 percent confidence level was accepted giving a range of 3,000 to 4,500 personnel.

While this indicates a sharp decrease from 1966 rates, it is not considered a precipitous decline, instead it represents a continued lowering of Viet Cong recruitment rates over a long period. Captured enemy documents substantiate a decline and frequently discuss the enemy's increasing difficulties in recruiting in South Vietnam. Copies of this documentation are currently being prepared for release.

We do not believe that stating that enemy losses have exceeded enemy input is risky in any way. Known enemy losses have exceeded his average input for any month. We know the enemy suffers losses not acceptable under the criteria for known losses. We believe that recruitment is continuing to decline and our estimate for infiltration for the past six months (6,000) is higher than recorded values for any month since July 1966, except March 1967 (8,600).

END COMMENT

C. That the enemy is able to match our escalation of the war in spite of everything we do as evidence by his recent DMZ shellings and by his ability to mount rocket attacks on U.S. bases such as Danang. (Answer: The enemy has been blocked in his attempts to infiltrate by sea, has suffered tremendous losses in his infiltration via the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and has probably been forced to concentrate on the DMZ as the only course logistically feasible if he wished to make another major effort. While he has tried to achieve major victories by concentration of forces in the DMZ, he has been foiled in every attempt. Had it not been for our bombing in the North, he could probably have concentrated much more power in the DMZ and in the South. Obviously, there is some limitation on his ability to fight where his losses are so great and his recruitment in the South is probably cut in half. This is becoming evident now in all parts of the country except for First Corps. Because of the nature of this war, he cannot be prevented from continuing mortar and rocket attacks on U.S. bases, but these costly incidents do not have much significant military impact.

Basically, the enemy is not accelerating the war. On the contrary, he is changing his tactics in most areas. He is replacing ground assaults with attacks by fire to cut his previously unacceptable losses. These shellings can harass and inflict some casualties, but cannot result in victory.)

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COMMENT: With regard to what we can do now that we couldn't do in 1965, the fact that friendly forces have seized the military initiative from the enemy is in itself indicative of improved capabilities. The major factors which contributed to this improved situation during the last two years are listed below:

Force ratios:

A. 1965: At the beginning of 1965, the Viet Cong were winning the war. Throughout the country, the military initiative was with the enemy. It appeared he intended to isolate principal Government of Vietnam populated centers and Viet Cong forces were nearly sufficient for the task. Against this force, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces deployed 250,000 troops including 124 maneuver battalions insufficient force for both offensive operations and support of the Revolutionary Development program. In thesis, ARVN units were forced into a defensive role. The number of ARVN-initiated actions fell off drastically and soon units were only reacting to Viet Cong attacks. As of April 30, 1965, there were only about 36,000 U.S. Army troops in the Republic of Vietnam. Of these, two-thirds were providing combat and combat service support to the ARVN.

B. 1967: During the last two years the situation has drastically changed. There are now 1,258,788 Government of Vietnam/U.S./Free World personnel in Vietnam including 267 maneuver battalions. Concurrently, with the buildup of ARVN and U.S./Free World forces, improved coordination between these forces has been achieved.

C. Results: Improvements in force ratio was a prerequisite for seizing the initiative from the enemy. This has been done and has allowed departure from earlier tactics of enclave holding actions and random responses to enemy-initiated incidents. As a result, we now possess and are utilizing the capability of coordinated offensive planning to clear the enemy forces from vital populated areas and return these areas to Government of Vietnam control. Improved mobility and firepower allows friendly forces to maintain constant pressure on the enemy; consequently, he can no longer feel safe in any part of South Vietnam, and in most areas in avoiding large engagements with friendly forces.

Improved logistics and transportation base:

Capabilities in these areas have been upgraded to permit timely and responsive support of friendly forces in all areas of the country. The following data shows the extent of this improvement:

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	<u>31 Dec 65</u>	<u>30 Sept 67</u>
Number of airfields		
C-130 capable	22	68
Jet capable	3	8
Number of deep draft ports	4	6
Total port throughout capability (ston) per mo.	332, 000	1, 118, 000
Number of ships in hold and waiting - end of mo.	75	23
Cargo hauled by aircraft (ston) per mo.	16, 261	83, 179
Rail	4, 648	15, 523
Road	227, 400	1, 065, 406

Other:

A. The communications network is now nationwide.

B. Our intelligence is greatly expanded and improved since 1965.

C. The provincial advisory efforts have been greatly expanded, not only in numbers involved, but more importantly, by forming broad military/civil teams to provide assistance in all aspects of nation-building.

D. We now have much greater firepower (175mm guns, AC-47 "spooky" aircraft, armed helicopters, better small arms) and coordinated fire plans cover large portions of the land area.

E. We have developed new tactics to combat the enemy including "tunnel technology," ambushing techniques, and long-range patrol skills. Coupled with this have been technological advances to assist in detecting the enemy, such as the recently introduced "people sniffer."

F. A Riverine Warfare capability has been developed and is operating effectively in the Delta.

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On the other hand, the change in enemy tactics is, in itself, reflective of the change for the worse in the enemy's capabilities. It is difficult to imagine the enemy deliberately choosing his present course of action and confining his major operations almost entirely to the general DMZ border area if it were not for friendly military pressure. His current tactic of conducting attacks by fire in contrast to ground assaults is further evidence of a decline in capability to wage an aggressive war.

A. The fact that we can demonstrate steady military progress is evidence that the course of the war is not of the enemy's choosing or to his liking.

B. In the first few months of 1965, the enemy roamed the country at will and only his own lack of decision prevented him from mounting an assault on Saigon itself. It was at this critical juncture that U.S. troops began arriving in the country to stem the rising flood of enemy control.

C. The contrast in relative positions between friendly and enemy forces, both military and political, since that time is obviously the enemy controls fewer miles of roads, fewer thousands of the population, less geographical area, and he is unable to prosecute the war in the manner and to the extent he enjoyed in 1965. This change in his conduct has been forced upon him by friendly military pressure. END COMMENT

D. There is no showing of any weakening of the enemy's willingness and capability of continuing the fight, and his more sophisticated weapons are one evidence of this. (Answer: There is solid evidence of the weakening, at least at the lower level, of the enemy's will, especially the southern Viet Cong. His capability is obviously affected by the losses he is taking of men and equipment, the losses he is taking of population in South Vietnam to support him, and his declining ability to recruit in South Vietnam. The enemy's failure to mount a major offensive this year, except a rocket and artillery offensive in the DMZ area, is evidence of his loss of capability. That an enemy can be suffering more than we know is illustrated by the fact that when the Japanese surrendered in World War II, we had no idea that their capability had become as low as it had.)

COMMENT: The inference of the possibility of a sudden collapse of the Hanoi Government similar to that of Japan at the end of World War II could raise questions as to evidence. There is no better way of answering these questions than to point out that one never knows how close a Communist country is to collapse. This is because there is no freedom to expression from which

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any assessment can be made; we do know that the morale of the lower echelons of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army is weakened as evidenced by captured documents and statements of captives and defectors (for example, Joseph Alsop's "Fear of Protracted War" in the October 27 Saigon Daily News).
END COMMENT

E. That there has been no improvement in the Vietnamese Government or Armed Forces yet our objectives here can be obtained only by the South Vietnamese. (Answer: During the past two years we have had a reasonably stable South Vietnamese Government, and a political evolution which is impressive in a very young country in the midst of war. We now have a Revolutionary Development program which has been well led and which for all its imperfections is better than anything we have had in the past. Although there are many imperfections in the Vietnamese Army, it must be remembered that this Army has been increased by more than 50 percent in the last three years, and leadership was not automatically available for the expanding forces. It has been only during the last year that the main focus has been on qualitative as opposed to quantitative improvement. During this period the Vietnamese Armed Forces have improved. All the usual indicators of combat effectiveness -- killed, missing, weapons captured ratios, desertion rates, operational contact rates -- show a favorable trend. Perhaps most important of all, the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces leadership now display increasing confidence in their own units' capabilities versus those of the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army.)

COMMENT: There are several reasons to believe the comments suggested in a previous Department telegram are invalid. Many intelligence reports and POW interrogations cite shortages of weapons in Viet Cong units. The enemy continues to collect weapons and equipment from battle areas when and where he can. Whenever the enemy overruns a Popular Force post or a Revolutionary Development team, he takes weapons -- thus indicating he needs them. We also know that many of the guerrilla and Viet Cong hamlet militia are unarmed and obviously the Viet Cong would like them to have weapons. Regardless of need, it is universal military doctrine to capture military hardware: U.S. units do so even though need is no object. Thus, indications are that the enemy will capture as many weapons as he can.

The statements concerning enemy weapons lost involved only losses to Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces. They do include caches captured/discovered by Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces as well as Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army battlefield losses. The fact that caches are included should not denigrate

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the favorable weapons captured to lost ratio. Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces weapons losses include all weapons lost whether carried by a soldier in combat or removed from the armory of an overrun outpost. The enemy caches his weapons as an integral part of his supply/resupply system. Weapons found in caches are a positive loss to the enemy. There has been no change in the criteria for computing weapons captured to lost ratios, therefore, the progression from an unfavorable ratio to a favorable ratio is considered a valid measure of progress.

With regard to ARVN body counts, as a result of a previous query, a MACV project has been underway to verify and, if necessary, improve the credibility of enemy killed body count. Field teams are organized and operate in each Corps to make spot inspections and to investigate the probability of error. Thus far, the indication is that ARVN body counts are accurate. Normal procedures call for U.S. advisors assigned to ARVN units to personally verify the enemy killed and report through advisory channels. As an example, as part of the project described above, ARVN in a recent engagement in First Corps reported 195 enemy killed; this was confirmed.

There is no basis on which to say that much of the improvement indicators can be attributed to the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces' change from maneuver battalion offensive role to a pacification security role. The Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces is suited to the pacification security role (their cultural mores and attitudes/needs of the people; conversely, U.S./FreeWorld forces have much more fire support/mobility available and are a better match for the North Vietnamese Army units). Tremendous effort has gone into training ARVN units for the pacification task and, though assignment to direct support of Revolutionary Development tends to limit a battalion's capability to conduct large unit operations, it does not limit its capability for combat. A recent study (January - July 1967) by III MAF which compared ARVN battalions in support of Revolutionary Development to those not in support of Revolutionary Development reveals the following:

	<u>KIA Enemy</u>	<u>KIA Friendly</u>	<u>Kill Ratio</u>	<u>Weapons Cap/ Lost Ratio</u>	<u>Enemy KIA per 1,000 Friendly present for Duty Strength</u>
RD Bns	1,259	479	2.6:1	2.5:1	168
Non-RD Bns	965	356	2.7:1	2.9:1	131

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Battalions in support of Revolutionary Development compare very favorably with those not in support of Revolutionary Development to this study. Intelligence indicates that one of the enemy's main objectives is to defeat the pacification effort. Therefore, units in support of Revolutionary Development are primary targets for enemy operations. Finally, the improvement indicators cited were, generally, across the board improvements applying equally to those units in support of Revolutionary Development as well as to those not in support of Revolutionary Development. Consequently, though the assignment of a part of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces to support Revolutionary Development may have contributed indirectly to some improvement in indicators, it is more attributable to a general increase in Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces military professionalism.

Special examples of recent effective actions by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces in Second Corps and Third Corps are as follows:

A. Second Corps:

Operation KHAM ZEL 167 (2-12 August 1967): Airborne Task Force 1 and elements of the 43rd Infantry Regiment conducted a search and destroy operation in Kontum province to disrupt the enemy's summer monsoon offensive. Two battalions of the 174th North Vietnamese Army Regiment were engaged west of Dak Seang near the Laotain border. More than 9,000 artillery rounds were fired and 150 tactical air sorties flown in a three-day period in support of the friendly forces. ARVN forces overran the enemy defenses. Results: North Vietnamese Army 209 killed (body count) ARVN, 12 killed.

Operation AN DAN 805, a search and destroy operation being conducted by the 41st Infantry Regiment in Binh Dinh province since 12 March 1967 demonstrates long-term effectiveness. Thus far, the operation has resulted in 306 enemy killed as compared to 86 ARVN killed. During the month of September 1967, ARVN forces killed 71 enemy while losing 14 in this operation.

B. Third Corps:

Defense of Tan Hung in An Loc district by the 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment on July 11. Shortly after midnight an element of the 141st North Vietnamese Army Regiment attacked the compound at Tan Hung. Over two hundred 60mm, 82mm and 120mm mortar rounds and numerous anti-tank rockets were received in conjunction with a two-pronged ground assault by an estimated 1,000 enemy troops of two battalions. The main attack penetrated

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the inner bunker defenses while supporting attacks tried to breach the perimeter at other points. A counterattack was mounted which destroyed the enemy forces that had succeeded in breaking into the compound. Contact continued for four and one half hours as the North Vietnamese Army tried several assaults and made attempts to evacuate their casualties. Results: 161 North Vietnamese Army killed (body count) and 90 individual and crew-served weapons seized; ARVN lost 20 killed and 2 weapons.

Operation F-8, initially employing the 52nd Ranger Battalion and a task force of the 4th AC Squadron, was launched against the 3rd Battalion, 275th Viet Cong Regiment in central Long Khanh province on June 27.

Having made contact, the 52nd was reinforced by the 35th Ranger Battalion, and the 2nd Battalion, 43rd Infantry Regiment was airlifted in to join the operation. Numerous fire-fights took place from the afternoon of the 27th through the 28th. On the 29th contact was made with a dug-in Viet Cong company and it was driven out of its position in coordination with supporting air and artillery. The objective area contained a battalion size base camp with trench lines and a small training site. Overall results: enemy lost 167 killed (body count); ARVN lost 51 killed.

In Phouc Long province near Song Be during the early morning hours of October 27, the 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 5th ARVN Division Command Post came under heavy mortar and rocket attack. It was followed by a three-pronged ground attack by the 88th North Vietnamese Army Regiment. Approximately 3,000 artillery rounds, 1,000 mortar rounds, and aircraft supported by friendly units. Results: 134 North Vietnamese Army killed (body count), 1 detainee, 37 individual and 20 crew-served weapons captured; ARVN, 13 killed. END COMMENT

Our politico-military objectives here are basically to contain the invasion from the North while increasing the percentage of the population in the South under Government of Vietnam control, at the same time trying to help establish a democratic South Vietnamese Government with the ability to maintain that control. Viewed in terms of these objectives, we have made steady progress on all fronts since our first combat troops arrived here in March 1965.

Evidence of our progress with respect to the enemy net manpower losses in South Vietnam is evident from the following estimates:

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	<u>Recruiting</u>	<u>Infiltration</u>	<u>Losses</u> <u>(all causes)</u>	<u>Net</u>
1st qtr 1966	7,000	12,000	8,300	+10,700
2nd qtr	7,000	7,100	8,100	+ 6,000
3rd qtr	7,000	5,600	9,200	+ 3,400
4th qtr	5,500	3,300	9,900	- 1,100
1st qtr 1967	3,500	6,300	14,900	- 5,100
2nd qtr	3,400	6,000	15,300	- 5,900
3rd qtr	3,100	6,000	13,400	- 4,300

Note: It should be clearly understood that these figures are estimates and subject to refinement.

COMMENT: Losses quoted are based on known enemy losses (killed, died as a result of combat (DOW/DIS), prisoners of war, and military Hoi Chanh) plus estimated unknown losses from non-battle casualties and simple desertions.

MACV has not arrived at any breakout of enemy killed related to various forces, identification of bodies (North Vietnamese Army, Viet Cong Local Force/Main Force, Viet Cong guerrilla, etc.). In the field this usually cannot be made. When possible, losses are ascribed to individual units. MACV considers that all known losses and estimated losses (non-battle casualties and simple desertions other than Hoi Chanh) are from his armed forces since we know that the enemy has battle casualties which are never confirmed by body count. We recommend that no effort be made to apply percentages of losses to forces and that MACV assumption of all losses against enemy armed forces be utilized. Wounded figures are not utilized in loss figures and are not assessed against the enemy.

We agree that surfacing balance sheets on enemy gains and losses would not be useful at this time. END COMMENT

Evidence of North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong loss of morale is as follows:

A. Under the Chieu Hoi program there has been an increase of ralliers from about 11,000 in 1965, to about 20,000 in 1966, to nearly 24,000 to date in 1967.

COMMENT: Refugees are not included in Chieu Hoi numbers reported.

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Initial screening of personnel coming under friendly control is conducted by Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, U.S. / Free World forces, or other agency making contact. Almost immediately, interrogation is conducted by the Government of Vietnam with U.S. observers at which time the Government of Vietnam makes the decision whether the personnel are to be considered Hoi Chanh, refugee, deserter, etc. The Government of Vietnam is hypersensitive about ascertaining the validity of returnee status. The explanation for the sharp decline in Hoi Chanh since April is discussed in detail in another Saigon cable. END COMMENT

B. Numerous captured documents, ralliers, and prisoners of war testify to the difficulties of Viet Cong administrators maintaining contact with their cadre under U.S. military pressure, the difficulties in Viet Cong recruitment and taxation, resulting in forced conscription and higher Viet Cong taxation, the greater difficulties of the Viet Cong in dealing with the population, the difficulties in some areas of obtaining food and medicine, and the increased failure of Viet Cong administrative cadre in many areas.

C. Numerous captured documents, ralliers, and prisoners of war testify to North Vietnamese Army losses of 20-25 percent and more from bombing, sickness, disease and desertion before reaching their destinations in South Vietnam, and to lack of food and medicine and poor morale among North Vietnamese troops after they arrive. However, about ten percent of North Vietnamese Army recover from their sickness and eventually complete the trek. Hence the overall attrition is about 15 percent.

COMMENT: We are currently preparing for release, packages of captured documents and reports of interrogations of prisoners and defectors on the following subjects: recruitment, manpower losses, food and supply problems, health and medical problems, losses, infiltration hardships, friction with Viet Cong ranks, falling morale, and weakening Viet Cong combat effectiveness. END COMMENT

Although there were few documents available two years ago by comparison with what we have now, those which apply tend to document the enemy's declining fortunes. END COMMENT

Evidence of military progress in the South is as follows:

A. The enemy has been unable to mount a major offensive although intelligence indicated he planned to do so last May and June.

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B. The enemy has gained no major victories comparable to his 1965 successes in an engagement of battalion size or larger in over a year.

COMMENT: The best way to counter arguments that the enemy's strategy is to cause maximum friendly casualties and tie down maximum friendly forces while waiting us out at an acceptable cost to himself is to demonstrate that this is his secondary strategy and that he has been prevented from employing his primary strategy of mounting large scale offensives because of steadily improving friendly military strength. The important point is that the enemy has been forced to adopt less than optimum measures, and from the comparisons of casualty rates, territorial and population holdings, Chieu Hoi and refugee data, there is legitimate question as to his success with this secondary strategy. This "waiting strategy" sacrifices population control, the key objective of the war. The enemy would not take this loss if he had any other alternative. END COMMENT

C. A program to neutralize 41 enemy base areas in South Vietnam (that is to say to drive the enemy there from and destroy enemy installations therein) was initiated in June 1966. To date, we have penetrated or attacked almost all these bases, and, as of August 1967, had neutralized 14 of them.

COMMENT: With regard to MACV reporting of enemy base areas, the targeting effort is continually directed to a country wide scrutiny of potential or suspect areas. MACV J2 is able to reconfigure some areas and identify new ones based on new intelligence.

When indicators of possible enemy use warrant it, potential base areas considered for incorporation in the inventory, and when evidence supports it, new base areas are added.

We believe the enemy may need fewer big in-country base areas now versus two years ago, but he does have a need for some since he has less freedom of movement outside these areas. There are numerous examples in each Corps area of big in-country base areas presently used by the enemy including Base Areas 101, 114, 225, 237, 337, 360, 470, and 480.

Out-of-country base areas provide a sanctuary but have limited values as a base from which to conduct country-wide operations. END COMMENT

D. From 1966 to 1967 thus far, enemy killed in action per month has increased 63 percent, enemy weapons captured have increased 65 percent (1,600 to 2,600 per month), enemy mortar rounds destroyed have increased 500 percent (7,500 in 1966, and 19,000 in six months of 1967). Small arms

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ammunition captured or destroyed has increased 125 percent (1.1 million rounds in 1966, and 1.5 million in six months of 1967), and enemy rice captured or destroyed has increased nearly 50 percent (13,000 tons in 1966, and 10,000 in six months of 1967).

E. The enemy to friendly killed in action ratio has increased from 3.2 to 1 in 1966 to 4.0 to 1 during the first six months of 1967, and has continued to increase since then. The weapon gained to lost ratio has increased from 2.1 to 1 in 1966 to 3.8 to 1 in the first six months of 1967, and has continued to increase since then.

Evidence of increased effectiveness of the bombing in the North is:

A. There has been a marked increase in the time necessary to effect repairs of bridges, marshalling yards, bypasses, etc., indicating labor and material problems.

COMMENT: Based on all available sources of intelligence and specifically photo reconnaissance of lines of communication facilities in North Vietnam, the enemy is having considerable difficulty repairing bomb damage to highway and railroad bridges. The example shown of the repair of the Hanoi Railroad/Highway Bridge, JCS #13, is not necessarily indicative of the repair capability all along the lines from China to Hanoi. Conversely, in the case of JCS #12, the Paul Doumer Bridge, with a span dropped on August 11, the bridge was not reopened until September 26. Forty-six days were required for this repair in which, no doubt, all available resources were employed. We believe that North Vietnam is deferring more people to the task of rail repair and experiencing ever increasing difficulty in rail restoration efforts. END COMMENT

B. In May 1967, over 150 thousand short tons required transshipment to bypass effects of interdiction on the Northeast Railroad, and in August 1967, the figure had risen over 70 percent to 260 thousand short tons, with a total from May 1 to September 20, 1967, of 932 thousands short tons.

COMMENT: Our estimates of the tons of transshipment required in the Northeast Railroad are based on a DIA estimate that 1,000 short tons of cargo per day were throughput on the Northeast Railroad in 1966 and that the enemy seeks to maintain or improve this figure.

The number of targets carried as disrupted are multiplied by 1,000 tons to arrive at a daily tonnage transshipment figure, since we assume that 1,000 tons will have to be transshipped at each point of interdiction. For instance, On August 13, 1967, 8 targets on Railroad 2 were unservicable. Therefore,

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8 x 1,000 or 8,000 tons of interdiction cost in transshipment were computed for that day. If the enemy is to maintain a throughput of 1,000 short tons per day and obtain maximum use of the serviceable portion of the railroad, at every point of interdiction 2,000 short tons of goods would have to be handled (1,000 off-loaded and later reloaded onto rail cars). A figure of only 1,000 short tons per point of disruption is used because the enemy does not have to transship in all cases where disruption occurs. They have three alternatives: they can wait for repairs and thus tie up valuable rolling stock; off load the material so that the rolling stock can be released; or transship by trucks. Once supplies are off-loaded, they may refinish their journey on trucks and not be reloaded onto rail cars.

These are the assumptions and methods used to arrive at our estimate of transshipment cost. The purpose of the estimate is to show magnitude of disruption and to indicate that we have severely degraded the efficiency of the railroad system and exacted a very high cost for its continued use.

END COMMENT

C. The port of Haiphong has become more and more congested, with ships waiting two months to unload.

COMMENT: Analysis of our holdings indicates that ship congestion at Haiphong has been reduced considerably from the average layover of 43 days during August to 22 days during September, and to approximately 18 days during October, to date. The final layover figure for October may well be even lower. These decreases do not reflect an improvement in port capacities or an alleviation of stockpiles. They do indicate fewer and smaller ships calling at the port and loading of more perishable goods. The stockpiles near Haiphong port remain. END COMMENT

D. Friendly aircraft loss rate has declined from 18.1 aircraft per 1,000 sorties in 1966, to less than ten per 1,000 sorties in 1967.

COMMENT: Information on aircraft loss rates is limited to MACV assigned forces: specifically, those air forces under operational control of 7th Air Force. This does not include III MAF aircraft flying missions in North Vietnam. Statistical data for 1965 is not considered reliable; however, the 6.84 loss per 1,000 sorties appears to be accurate. The 1966 and 1967 loss rates in North Vietnam for combat aircraft under operational control of the 7th Air Force flying strike, reconnaissance, flak suppression, combat air patrol and rescap sorties are: 1966 - 2.87, 1967 through September -

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2.2. If all support aircraft sorties and losses readded, the loss rate per 1,000 sorties over North Vietnam and Laos are: 1966 - 1.6; 1967 through July - 1.2. A breakout of the total sorties for North Vietnam is not possible since some support aircraft transit both Laos and North Vietnam in accomplishing their mission and are considered one sortie. Information relative to naval losses is not available in the Saigon area. We suggest DoD figures including all-service losses be used. END COMMENT

Evidence of pacification progress and increased security and administration control of the population is as follows:

A. Far more resources are now being devoted to pacification. The advent of major Free World forces is also permitting redirection of a growing proportion of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces to providing the indispensable close-in security for areas being pacified. Some 53 ARVN Regular battalions, 213 Regional Force companies, and 755 Popular Force platoons are currently assigned to direct security support of the 49 Revolutionary Development campaign areas. The number of Revolutionary Development teams (including Montagnard teams) has risen from 453 at the end of 1966 to 611 on August 31, 1967, and should reach 697 by the end of 1967. The Revolutionary Development Ministry budget rose from 1.8 billion piasters in 1966 to 2.5 billion piasters in 1967, mostly for self-help and other projects to help the people in Revolutionary Development hamlets.

B. Various means are being explored to supplement Revolutionary Development teams, thus speeding pacification, such as civil-military teams found successful in Binh Dinh, the quarter-zone approach found successful in Binh Thuan (some hamlets historically are divided into quarter zones with leaders, and these leaders are now being paid to develop hamlets in accordance with Revolutionary Development concepts) etc.

C. Based on Government of Vietnam data from December 31, 1965, to date, a net of approximately 13 percent of the population has been added to Government of Vietnam control during this period, bringing the present total to approximately 70 percent, with Viet Cong control extending to 14 percent and 16 percent contested. Our Hamlet Evaluation System, which is more conservative than Government of Vietnam, lists 68 percent under Government of Vietnam control compared to 64 percent in January 1967, 17 percent under Viet Cong control versus 19 percent in January 1967, and 15 percent contested. Our figures indicate only 2.8 million people left under Viet Cong control compared to 11.6 million under Government of Vietnam control.

D. The "control" figures are verified by the elections. The recent Presidential elections were held in areas containing approximately 75 percent

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of the people in the country, indicating that areas secure enough to hold elections exceed those listing under Government of Vietnam control either by the Government of Vietnam or by our Hamlet Evaluation System. The increase in registered voters between the Constituent Assembly election and the Presidential election was between 11 and 12 percent, much of which was occasioned by the increase in secure area, thus confirming the figures of increased percentage of people subject to Government control.

E. Threat to the enemy of pacification is evidenced by his concerted effort to destroy Revolutionary Development teams. His failure to do so is indicated by the fact that he has failed to destroy any team and, although the number of teams has increased, the number of incidents has remained relatively constant. Improvement of the team fighting ability is shown by a comparison of March and July of this year, both of which months has 126 Viet Cong incidents against the teams, but with the number killed in July (32) only one-third of those killed in March (101).

COMMENT: Since purification of early Hamlet Evaluation System figures is continuing, we do not think it is wise now to compare current Hamlet Evaluation System score with January. However, we do consider that comparison of April and September scores does show the six-month trend. Although Hamlet Evaluation System percentages are not precise to the nearest one percent, we do not see any advantage to rounding off to the nearest five percent. Doing so would disguise trends which are the important product of the Hamlet Evaluation System. Moreover, we have already given the press figures to the nearest one percent. END COMMENT

Evidence of improved communications and logistics, so necessary to pacification, nation building and general economic well-being, is:

A. Of militarily essential roads, those open during daylight hours increased from 73 percent in February 1966 to 85 percent in August 1967. Essential roads which can be traversed without military escort in daytime increased from 29 percent to 50 percent.

B. The port of Saigon, clogged with traffic a year ago, is now able to handle traffic expeditiously. Port capability has increased from slightly over one million short tons handled in the last quarter of 1965 to almost three and a half million tons handled in the second quarter of 1967.

Evidence of improvement of the Vietnamese Armed Forces is:

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A. The number of desertions this year is less than half the number for the same period last year and the number of missing in action has dropped from 1,500 in the first quarter of 1966 to 750 in the first quarter of 1967, and to 312 in the second quarter of 1967.

B. The trend of weapons lost has reversed. In the first quarter of 1966, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces lost 2,850 weapons and captured 1,400, or an unfavorable ratio of two to one. In the first quarter of 1967, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces lost 2,050 weapons and captured 4,425, or a favorable ratio of two and one-fourth to one.

C. The percentage of contacts to total operations is up. In the first quarter of 1966, there was 360 contacts in 820 large unit operations, and in the first quarter of 1967, there were 380 contacts in 760 operations, or an increase of 15 percent. In small unit operations, the rate of enemy contacts has risen from 2.8 contacts per 1,000 in the first quarter of 1966 to 3.7 contacts per 1,000 for the first quarter of 1967 (a rise of 30 percent) to 4.3 contacts per 1,000 in the second quarter of 1967 (or a rise of over 50 percent). The total number of operations is down because of the present heavy commitment to pacification.

D. ARVN has taken a number of actions to improve its general effectiveness. This includes: (1) increased fighting in close association with American units and the corresponding increased availability of U.S. artillery and air support, (2) new and improved training courses, such as the long range reconnaissance patrol course, graduates of which are integrated with U.S. long range reconnaissance patrols and the recycling of maneuver battalions through a six-week national training center course, and (3) increased promotions from the ranks (during 1966, 500 direct commissions, 20 battlefield commissions, and 4,500 battlefield promotions were awarded NCO's also a special OCS course was offered, from which 1,700 were graduated).

E. Programs have been installed to improve the morale of ARVN, such as a pay increase in July 1966, the establishment of an ARVN commissary, and a free issue of an operations ration in the field beginning July 1967, designed to give greater mobility in the field and to prevent living off the people in the countryside.

F. Far fewer Regional and Popular Force positions have been overrun in 1967 than in the corresponding period of 1966: a revitalized training program has been instituted for Regional and Popular Forces; and U.S.

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advisors are working more extensively with Regional and Popular Forces units.

Some recent effective actions by the Vietnamese Armed Forces are:

A. In May 1967, on a combined operation with U.S. Marines in Quang Tri, an airborne battle group struck a regular North Vietnamese Army combat battalion. Result: 250 North Vietnamese Army killed; the airborne lost nine killed. Their use of supporting fires -- air and artillery -- was superb. In a five-week period in May and June, two airborne groups fought four major engagements in First Corps. Result: 833 North Vietnamese Army killed; 63 ARVN killed.

B. In June 1967, in Phong Dinh province in the Delta, two Ranger battalions and two Regional Force battalions finally ran to ground a Viet Cong Main Force battalion that had been evading combat for months. Result: 210 Viet Cong killed; Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, 5 killed.

C. In July-August 1967, the 34th and 4th Vietnamese Marine battalions participated in operations CORONADO II. The aggressive and gallant actions of these units all but destroyed the 263rd Vietnamese Main Force battalion and the elements of the 514 Local Force battalion were badly mauled. Result: 285 enemy killed; 55 friendly killed.

D. On September 6, 1967, in Quang Tin province at Tam Ky, a company of the 3rd Battalion, 5th ARVN Regiment and elements of the 3rd Troop, 4th ARVN Cavalry Regiment defeated a ground attack by the 70th and 72nd Viet Cong battalions. Result: 217 enemy killed; 21 ARVN killed.

E. On September 8, in Ba Xuyen province, Fourth Corps, an enemy company attacked a Revolutionary Development area. A Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces reaction force counterattacked. Result: 54 enemy killed, 20 sampans destroyed; Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, 4 wounded.

F. During the period September 8-15, three ARVN Ranger battalions engaged elements of the 2nd North Vietnamese Army Division in the border area between Quang Nam and Quang Tin provinces. The operational results were 212 enemy killed, compared to 32 ARVN killed.

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