

INFORMATION

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Thursday, November 30, 1967
2:10 p.m.

Mr. President:

I believe you will wish to go through this with some care. It is an analysis of two polls taken in I Corps and II Corps on Vietnamese attitudes.

Pres file

W. W. Rostow

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South Vietnam Nationwide Hamlet Public Reaction Survey

During the period July - September 1967, Vietnamese employees of the Saigon Center for Vietnamese Studies, under JUSPAO supervision, conducted a public reaction survey in 122 hamlets throughout South Vietnam. These hamlets are located in 15 provinces spread through all four Corps regions. A total of 1313 respondents were interviewed in privacy. In viewing the results, it should be borne in mind that the survey had to be restricted to localities which are reasonably secure and accessible.

Thus far, the results of the surveys in First and Second Corps have been tabulated. In the First Corps, these comprised 218 interviewees in 25 hamlets located in two provinces. In the Second Corps, there were 231 interviewees from 24 hamlets located in three provinces.

The results of the surveys in the two Corps are remarkably alike. The significant point of difference between the two is that the villagers in the First Corps said that their life is worse now than it was a year ago, whereas a relatively large proportion of the people in the Second Corps feel that their life has improved during the past year and will continue to improve in the coming year. Obviously, the reason for this difference is the fact that the war has escalated in the First Corps area during the past year, and particularly just prior to the survey period which in First Corps was the first two weeks of July, while at the time of the survey in Second Corps, the war had de-escalated.

One of the most interesting responses was to the question of how do the people feel about the presence of American forces in the country.

	<u>First Corps</u>	<u>Second Corps</u>
Welcome the presence	71%	71%
Do not welcome	6%	6%
Noncommittal	23%	23%

In the First Corps, half of the respondents welcome the American presence because it aids the fight against Communists and

assures security and peace for them. The others focus on economic and other aid aspects. In Second Corps, which is more secure, the American presence is welcomed mainly because the Americans help them fight the Communists, and partly because they extend economic and other aid.

On the point of who is responsible for the continuation of the war, the following responses were made:

	<u>First Corps</u>	<u>Second Corps</u>
Do not know	40%	45%
Of the others:		
North Vietnam	39%	29%
Viet Cong	23%	29%
Communist China	28%	28%
Soviet Union	17%	16%
United States	6%	8%
South Vietnamese Govt.		3%

The most frequently stated reasons for the continuation of the war are colonialism and ideological and economic expansionism. More than half of the respondents seem undecided or reluctant to offer any suggestion on how to bring the war to an end. Of those who do, a plurality advocate intensification of the war with about half as many calling for efforts toward negotiation. Whatever the suggestions, in both Corps, more than two to three times as many want the Government of Vietnam to "do it" as want the U. S. to "do it."

On the other hand, there is definite pessimism on the question of how long the war will last. The responses on this question were:

	<u>First Corps</u>	<u>Second Corps</u>
Less than one year	4%	7%
One to five years	10%	11%
More than five years	14%	12%
Do not know	72%	70%

Of significance in both Corps is the relatively high feeling of security among the villagers questioned, the satisfaction with the way in which the forces protect their hamlets (90 percent expressed satisfaction in the Second Corps) and the high percentage of satisfaction both with the way in which hamlet elections were held and with the elected individuals (about 70 percent in Second Corps and 87 percent in First Corps). As for the personal behavior of the protective forces, more than 90 percent are satisfied. The small percent who are not satisfied refer to the arrogant bullying or vandalistic behavior, and disregard to personal property on the part of the troops.

On the question of what the forces of the Government and its Allies should do to fight the Viet Cong effectively, 60 percent of the respondents in both Corps had no opinion. Among the others, the following responses were given:

	<u>First Corps</u>	<u>Second Corps</u>
Intensify military pressure	9%	16%
Provide adequate security for the population	11%	7%
Fair and sympathetic treatment of the population	15%	7%

In the Second Corps, others called for better training and discipline of the forces and for helping the people by better farming methods and building hospitals.

The primary objective guiding these suggestions is to defeat the Viet Cong rapidly; the secondary and third are to win the villagers' hearts and to take the initiative away from the Viet Cong.

Among the great number of economic and sociological questions that were posed, perhaps the most interesting comparisons between an escalating and de-escalating war situation can be seen in the responses on the present economic situation and aspirations for the future.

When asked to compare their situation now with a year ago, the following responses were obtained:

	<u>First Corps</u>	<u>Second Corps</u>
Worse	40%	33%
Better	20%	33%
Same	39%	33%
Why is it better?		
Higher income and crops	12%	19%
Better and more secure traveling conditions	5%	21%
Why is it worse?		
Inflation	19%	11%
Poor crops and lower income	16%	17%

Insecurity was another reason (6%) for worse appraisals in the Second Corps while defoliation plus road and air strip construction (8%) was mentioned in the First Corps.

The following results were obtained when the respondents were asked what they felt their situation would be a year from now:

	<u>First Corps</u>	<u>Second Corps</u>
Better	9%	18%
Worse	13%	8%
Same	29%	26%
No opinion	49%	48%

Higher income and more security are the main reasons for optimism, while poor crops, insecurity and inflation account chiefly for the pessimism.

An interesting response was received when people were asked to describe in a few words what a Viet Cong is and what he does.

The majority of the respondents reflect a highly derogatory image of the Viet Cong. The Viet Cong were described as "brutal," as "terrorists," as "traitors," and as "subservient to Communist China or Russia." A minority of the respondents seem indifferent or non-committal on this question.

The Revolutionary Development program is widely known and the image of the Revolutionary Development cadre is, by and large, favorable. After listening to a brief explanation of the objectives of Revolutionary Development, all respondents were asked what they thought should be done in their respective hamlets to achieve these objectives. Of those who expressed suggestions, the following were noted:

	<u>First Corps</u>	<u>Second Corps</u>
- building or repairing public utilities (water and power systems, canals, roads, bridges, etc.)	35%	41%
- supply and low-cost sales of agricultural and fishery implements, e.g., seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, sampans, buffaloes	28%	28%
- public buildings, e.g., dispensaries, schools, hamlet offices, information offices	13%	22%
- measures to provide security	5%	20%
- helping needy people by providing jobs, food, medicine, etc.	13%	10%
- supply and low-cost sales of construction materials to villagers	8%	5%
- loans (unspecified)	5%	2%

Other items which are covered in the survey and which could be illustrated, if desired, are:

1. Use of media as sources of information. Loud speakers are the dominate source of information on inside-district events; radio on outside-district events. Printed media play a minor role.

2. Effects of Allied aircraft/artillery attacks on hamlets. A substantial proportion of the respondents experienced local Allied air or artillery strikes. A majority attributed the attacks to GVN forces. In the Second Corps, 27 percent of those whose hamlets were struck, acknowledged that the hamlets were attacked in order to return or open fire on the enemy or prevent him from taking over.

3. Chieu Hoi program. The Chieu Hoi program is widely known and there is good potential for people in secure hamlets appealing to relatives in Viet Cong ranks to rally.

4. Local hamlet elections. Nearly all people in whose hamlets local elections were held in the Spring of 1967 expressed satisfaction in the way in which they were conducted and with the outcome.

5. Constitution. There is a little cognizance of the Constitution and even less substantial information on it.

6. Government land title and tenure program. A great majority of all respondents do not own the land they till, yet knowledge about the program is very limited. A brief explanation, however, elicits majority approval.