

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 1st Battalion (Airmobile), 502d Infantry
APO San Francisco 96383

AVDG-BD-C

18 October 1968

SUBJECT: Viet Cong Evaluation of the Situation in Quang Dien

The attached letter is an evaluation of the situation as of 5 September 1968 in Quang Dien as seen by a Viet Cong. The author was one of four VC killed in an ambush by D, 1/502d on 12 October 1968. He was identified as Hoang Ban Trung of K300B believed to be a unit in K300, the Political Section of Thua Thien Hue Military Region. Trung is carried in OB files as Major Nguyen Van Phu, Troop Propagating Unit Leader, Political Section, TTHMR. Subject was armed with a 9 mm Chicom pistol.

Leslie D. Carter
For LESLIE D. CARTER
LTC, Infantry
Commanding

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Several reports have been sent to you for your consideration and action but to no avail. We haven't received any suggestion or instruction from you at all on our technical mission, while we are facing many difficulties on both enemy situation and technical mission.

Today I send this report again for your consideration and suggestion. Truly speaking, you do not understand the real problem and difficulty of our area, and perhaps even Mr. NAM could not give you the real situation of this area when he came to your meeting, because he does not stay in this area.

The enemy is using the "SWEEP AND OCCUPY" tactics, concentrating US and Vietnamese troops to operate from one village to another. Within each village, they will concentrate to operate in each hamlet such as PHONG NHIEU village. While they are operating in the entire village, they concentrate their main effort only in some hamlets. It will be the same when they move to another village, searching from one hamlet to another; and when they get through, the PF's are sent in to continue the search. They may also have the US troops operating long time in one area, then the PF's are sent operating in another area. When they spot something strange or some guerillas they fire artillery and use helicopter to lift US troops or even PF's, which now also become CAVALRY troops to search and run.

We used to say that they go sweeping; it is not sweeping now, but we must say they go looking for underground bunkers. It has never been like this that the US troops are very patient in searching underground bunkers. First of all, they fire a lot of artillery so that we have no way of escaping, we have to hide in secret bunkers. Then they will spread out, each group with shovel will keep searching in each garden, and they will move only to another garden when they get through with this one. They do not leave any area unsearched, and they continue the search day after day.

So doing, they cause a lot of casualties to us, of which most were killed and Chieu Hoi. Most of military action cadres were killed.

At NINH DAI (village) no village military action cadres are left, all of them were killed or captured long time ago. You might ask why we did not recruit to fill in, but actually we no longer have the real force, there are only the Secretary General and about 3 fellow comrades left.

At BAC THUAN (vil.) from village cadre down to the hamlet, no more cadres are left, the village military action chief got killed. At NAM THUAN only the District Secretary General is left, the village chief and village cadres were killed including the village military action cadre. At QUANG HOA (vil.) the secretary was captured, village and hamlet cadres were killed, one of two village military action cadres was killed, the other was captured. At DONG HUNG and TAY HUNG, one was killed, one captured and one rallied (Chieu Hoi). Especially comrade KY, district general secretary in charge of this area, also rallied. At PHONG NHIEU, there is only one military action cadre left; we don't have any information on the other two. At QUANG THAI, we haven't heard from that village since a long time.

Of the district military action cadres, there are only myself and two other fellows left (BAO and MINH); the rest include Mr. XUAN who already rallied and 5 other fellows killed. So now there are only 3 district military action cadres left living separately in 3 different areas. It is very hard to communicate with each other. I, myself, have also some difficulties communicating with comrade NGO. I haven't received any information or mail from NGO or NAM since one month ago. (NGO is the district chief, and NAM is his deputy.)

In using the "SWEEP AND OCCUPY" tactics, the enemy has attempted to:

- Intentionally round up and annihilate all our cadres and local guerillas in order to create a secure area of their own,

- Maintain a permanent pressure on the local population (living in our controlled area) so that the people have to move into their area. This intention has been realized successfully. There are no more people left living in QUANG THAI, PHONG NHIEU, all the people already moved to the enemy area. It is the same in NINH DAI long time ago, the same in BAC THUAN. In

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NAM THUAN there are only 10 out of 300 families left in HALAND Hamlet; only 1 family left in QUANG HOA, the rest already moved to the enemy areas, or resettled by the enemy in strategic hamlets where the People Self Defense force had been set up. In NAM THUAN, the HA CANG hamlet, which used to be the strongest liberation hamlet, is now their strongest strategic hamlet with 2 or 3 fences around in which there are 2 PF platoons defending; besides that, at day time they have People Self Defense force on duty which include men and women from 15 years old to 45 years old; XUAN TUY, NGHIA LO, LAI TRUNG, LAI XA hamlets in QUANG HOA village, or THANH CAN, NAM DUONG hamlets in BAC TRUAN also become their strategic hamlets.

After that, they push forward the communist denunciation movement, keep pressure and watch closely our infrastructures, some of them already defected, or were detected by ralliers. This caused much trouble among the people; the people now lose confidence in the final victory of the people revolution. The confidence in the cadre also is diminished because many cadres rallied, some of them just joined the revolution recently, some have just been coming back from North such as XUAN, district military action cadre, and KY, district secretary. In addition to that many guerillas and local main force troops have been killed causing much influence and trouble among the people. We may say that this is the most critical, bitter, and difficult stage we ever had in Quang Dien. Recently, they used dozers to plow NINH DAI, and now QUANG THAI, PHONG NHIEU. They almost got through with PHONG NHIEU now including La Van hamlet located near Highway 1 from which the people have moved away. They also burned and destroyed everything left behind by the people in the liberation areas, including houses, temples and even trees and bushes, and they forced the people to go back to the area to cut or defoliate by hand what they could not burn. They started cutting trees and bushes in QUANG HOA day before yesterday, then the typhoon came they had to stop it. Besides that they suffered 1 KIA and 2 WIA by grenade booby trap while chopping down trees, that made them slow down a little. These are something on the enemy activities and people situation I want to bring up to you so that you can easily understand the difficulties of this area on the technical mission of ours.

On the technical mission, first of all I want to report to you that I have received a message on the Military action meeting that would be held at Sub Region HQs on the 8 of September, but I could not make it, because it was too late when I received that message on the 3 of September. I would meet many difficulties on the way; the road to Phong Nhieu - Quang Thai is very dangerous and supposing I could make to Quang Thai, there would be no place to stay. The situation now is very different from before; you might wonder why NAM could make it - that is because he already stayed in Quang Thai.

Since the enemy use that tactics, the military action program faced many difficulties. Our infrastructures have been detected or do not have confidence in us. Even our secret agents surrendered to the enemy. It is very difficult to build up new agents or infrastructures now. We could not go into the hamlet to get in touch with our men because the enemy has a very effective control and checking system. If we ask our men to go out of the hamlet to a certain location to meet us, they would be afraid and scared to come out; if they do come out, they would be interrogated and bothered afterward and they would never come out again. Most of the village military action cadres were killed and no one left to carry out the military action program, and even if there are some left, it would do no good now.

There are only 3 district military action cadres left, about 16 or 17 are prisoners. We don't know where the three are now, they were suppose to move to Quang Thai at that time under the surveillance of DUNG, but when DUNG was wounded, no one took his place. PHAN and TRUYEN were supposed to take over but no word from them until now.

That is all about the local situation. Next I would like to extend my regards to all of you. As to me, I have no problem with my health but I am very thin and tense every moment now. It would be very nice if I could go to the meeting to talk to you.

In the end of this letter, I wish you and our men good health and many victories to come.

5 September 1968

TRUNG