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*I Corps Area  
Aug 67*

From: Commanding General  
To: Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
(Attention: Deputy for CORDS)

SEP 11 1967

Subj: Corps Revolutionary Development Overview, August 1967

Ref: (a) COMMUSMACV msg 260535Z/Dec 66 (Conf NOFORN 54520) from  
Porter and Westmoreland  
(b) COMMUSMACV msg 220935Z/Mar 67 (Unclas 09619) from MACRDS

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b) the subject report is sub-  
mitted herewith.

2. GENERAL COMMENTS

a. RD Workers and Military

(1) The month of August was a major test for the US-GVN effort in I Corps. The Viet Cong appreciably stepped up their attacks and terrorism and RVN officials were preoccupied with election preparations. The result was a considerable slowdown in RD progress. The fact that no major setbacks, except in Quang Ngai, occurred in the face of the VC offensive and the elections was considered a source for cautious optimism. All provinces continued to report the RD Program behind schedule, though most still predict completion of the major portion of the program by year end.

(2) Enemy efforts did not concentrate on the RD Program. Contacts between the Viet Cong and RD Teams failed to rise appreciably. Objective of the VC campaign in August was to level a psychological blow against the RVN severe enough to disrupt election plans and frighten voter participation at the polls. Significant attacks occurred in every ICTZ province, including the following:

August 7 - Quang Ngai Junk Base shelled and attacked with heavy losses and almost total structural destruction;

August 12 - Trieu Phong District Headquarters, the center of Quang Tri's RD campaign, partially overrun, with heavy casualties and 40% damage to facilities;

August 13 - Huong Dien District Headquarters, Thua Thien, 95% destroyed;

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August 26 - attacks on Hoi An, Quang Nam provincial capital, and Dien Ban, National Priority Area, totalling over 200 persons killed, wounded, or missing;

August 27 - Hue city mortared;

August 29 - Thang Binh District Headquarters, Quang Tin, partially overrun;

August 30 - Quang Ngai city mortared and attacked, followed by freeing of over 1,000 prisoners and harrassment of ten RD teams east of the city.

This coordinated attack was the most serious blow. One CORDS civilian district representative was killed in action and four RD Teams have not yet been reported back in their hamlets. Quang Ngai's RD effort received a major setback.

(3) A further alarming rise in the number of VC assassinations and abductions was also a part of the carefully planned enemy campaign. Figures for the past three months are as follows:

	<u>Assassinations</u>	<u>Abductions</u>
June	59	56
July	155	102
August	198	223

While a majority of these occurred in Thua Thien in July, nearly half were in Quang Nam in August.

Despite their stepped up terrorism, the VC were noticeably unsuccessful in their objective of disrupting the election. All provinces reported a high level of political activity and no slackening of interest in the election.

(4) RD Team performance ranged from "unchanged" to "slight improvement", according to provincial reports. Forty teams have moved to second semester hamlets, including twenty during August. In only a few instances was RD Workers' involvement in partisan political activity a serious problem. Quang Ngai noted that the elections provided an excellent opportunity for the teams to promote popular identification with the national government.

(5) According to GVN statistics, hamlet establishment proceeded apace during the month. As of August 31, 74.3% of the first phase New Life Hamlets had been completed and 27.3% of the second phase. The figures for Consolidated Hamlets were 77% and 52% respectively. The MORD reduced the number of 1967 New Life Hamlets in ICTZ from 123 to 121 and the number of Consolidated Hamlets from 108 to 95, according to two messages dated August 22 and 23.

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## b. Political

(1) Politically ICTZ was completely dominated by the elections. The number of registered voters rose by 90,000 from September 1966 and the new total of 911,861 represented 15.5% of the national electorate. Attention focused on the visits of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates to ICTZ. Though the originally scheduled visits aborted due to poor planning in Quang Tri, the rallies finally held in DaNang and Hue on August 27 and 28 drew the largest crowds to date anywhere in Vietnam.

(2) The many partisan local groups launched an active, critical dialogue aimed at the GVN handling of the election. Major charges of alleged GVN sabotage and rigging of elections centered on aborting of the August 6 Quang Tri rally and the August 18-19 seizure of 19 Dai Viet Party members at a campaign planning meeting in Thua Thien. However, the authorities were, strictly speaking, acting entirely within the law and there has been no evidence of any real coercion used against the individual voter. Though launching a major propaganda effort against the new UBA Charter, the Buddhists decided to participate in the elections and, in an 11th hour decision, announced their support of Suu's candidacy.

(3) The Dai Viet Party, the VNQDD, and the Buddhists have threatened demonstrations if Thieu and Ky, the probable winners, are elected. With all three groups making similar threats, the post-election period may well be the most dangerous and volatile since Struggle Five in June 1966. A possible moderating influence may be the involvement of these groups in the October 22 lower house elections, which began in late August with heavy filing by all parties and groups.

## 3. Psychological

a. The enemy demonstrated his continued ability to conduct attacks and extensive terrorism, seemingly at will, throughout ICTZ during August. This demonstration represented an important psychological victory for the Viet Cong. Quang Nam reported a "pronounced" psychological effect within the civilian community and Quang Ngai considered the VC attacks equally sobering. This setback followed four straight months of considered "progress". However, enthusiasm for the elections helped sustain morale and divert attention from enemy gains. Hopefully, demonstrated GVN election successes will at least partially balance the psychological advantage gained by the VC.

b. Throughout ICTZ the Vietnamese Information Service excellently marshalled all available resources to publicize the election and promote voter interest and participation. This outstanding performance was in sharp contrast to the general failure of VIS to support the RD campaign with their staff and equipment. It demonstrated (as for CA elections) that, with adequate direction or pressure from Saigon, VIS can be an effective tool in the war with the enemy.

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## 4. Economic

Prices and wages remained generally unchanged except for slight increases in a few items. The RD effort is having a definite, positive economic effect in relatively secure areas, though any major impact must, by nature, be long term. The opening and widening of roads into hamlets and the subsequent commercial traffic is the most significant early effect.

## 5. Security

In contrast to the past four months, no province reported an improvement in security during August. Quang Ngai and Quang Nam felt the security situation in their provinces had seriously deteriorated. Other provinces noted little change, though Quang Tin stated that the large-scale ARVN-US operations kept the enemy off balance.

## 6. Areas of Progress

## a. Revolutionary Development

(1) Three district RD Coordinating Committees have been formed in the National Priority Area districts in Quang Nam. Their weekly meetings, including Vietnamese and CORDS district officials, have thus far successfully identified problem areas, determined solutions, and emphasized the potential of revolutionary development.

(2) The RD Public Administration courses brought rudimentary training to 706 village and hamlet officials in June and July in ICTZ province capitals. The two-week courses stopped prior to the elections but are expected to resume in early September.

(3) Quang Tin found lack of provincial banking facilities a hindrance to obtaining funds for RD projects. CORDS personnel now arrange to transport CVN officials weekly to Hoi An via helicopter so that the necessary funds can be received for timely program accomplishment.

(4) The Ministry of Education has decided to locate a normal school for training primary teachers at Hue. At present teachers must be transported to Qui Nhon for training. In the past the majority of students at the Qui Nhon normal school have been from ICTZ. The staff for the new school is now being trained and the new facility will hopefully be opened by mid-1968.

(5) The Quang Nam provincial administration has demonstrated considerable foresight in the formation of a Flood Relief Committee this past month. The Committee is already anticipating monsoon period problems and planning to stock emergency materials in certain districts.

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(6) Most provinces continue to report agriculture as the most effective New Life Development Program. Quang Tri noted that RD hamlets received 75 sprayers, 1,190 kgs of insecticide, and 16 water pumps. Other accomplishments in agriculture included the completion of 40 pigsties and 9,000 meters of irrigation canals in Quang Tri's RD areas.

(7) The number of Hoi Chanh rose from 192 in July to 236 in August. During this month the yearly total surpassed that of all twelve months of 1966. This landmark, however, was one month behind schedule. On August 12 a 36-man APT graduated from training in Quang Tri and on August 19, twenty-two returnees completed training for the Kit Carson program.

b. Military

(1) U.S. battalion-size and larger operations decreased from 18 to 13 and small unit operations decreased from 40,864 to 40,011. A breakdown of all enemy losses in ICTZ for the month of August is listed below:

	<u>III MAF</u>	<u>RVNAF</u>	<u>ROKMC</u>	<u>USSE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
KIA (CONF)	2061	685	121	42	2909
KIA (PROB)	2051	389	70	0	2510
Detainees	1901	296	121	13	2331
PW/NVA	16	0	0	0	16
PW/VC	96	138	20	3	257
Rtnee/NVA	2	0	0	0	2
Rtnee/VC	15	173	46	0	234
Weapons	542	325	26	28	921

(2) In keeping with Phase 1 of the election plan, I Corps ARVN units increased the tempo of their operations during August. 47 large operations were conducted, an increase of 3 over July, but the number of significant contacts decreased by approximately 50%. This decrease in enemy contacts is reflected in a reduction in the total enemy killed during the month.

(3) Morale in ARVN combat units continued to remain high. One indication was a further decrease in the number of ARVN deserters. In addition, a four-month downward trend in operational strength figures was reversed in August.

(4) RF training, both refresher and of newly activated companies was accelerated when I Corps received approval to train RF companies at Hoa Cam Training Center. Newly activated RF companies will begin basic training and 18 companies will enter refresher training at Hoa Cam during the balance of the calendar year. Previously, all I Corps RF training was conducted at Dong Da National Training Center, which is now scheduled to capacity.

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## 7. GVN/ARVN Performance

a. The picture of GVN performance throughout ICTZ during August was mixed. Public Safety Advisors reported a decline in police morale and performance due to not knowing the outcome of the elections. Some police officials feared possible removal from present positions as a result of the elections. Quang Ngai noted with interest the public, anonymous accusations against several prominent provincial GVN officials. Refugee officials in Quang Nam were again censured in U.S. reports for their unsatisfactory performance. On the other hand, service chiefs and provincial officers in Quang Tri received praise for their heightened interest in RD. The caliber and motivation of GVN officials continues to vary widely. There is increasing agreement among American advisors that efforts should be made at the highest levels to seek the swift removal of public officials whose performance is clearly unsatisfactory.

b. Quang Tri reported that the 1st ARVN Regiment has been using night ambushes and raids along the periphery of the RD area with significant and encouraging results. In addition, RD support battalions in Quang Tri have demonstrated their interest in civic action by bridge and hamlet fortifications construction and by regular MEDCAPS and similar activities. Hopefully, favorable examples such as these will inspire other ARVN units.

c. ARVN leadership continues to be the most serious handicap to further military improvement. There is a definite need for more aggressiveness, initiative, and drive throughout the chain-of-command. Company grade officers and NCOs require extensive instruction in tactics and techniques to include fire and maneuver. Work continues in the formulation of a completed training schedule for every ARVN unit with emphasis on training in fire and maneuver. More forceful, positive leadership by officers at all levels is a prerequisite for any substantial improvement in ARVN performance.

## 8. Problem Areas

a. Slight progress was made in improving the difficult ICTZ refugee situation. Increased high level interest brought limited immediate tangible relief and promises and concrete plans for additionally needed assistance in the near future. Accomplishments in August included the assignment of a full-time ICTZ liaison officer for CORDS, removal of the corrupt Quang Tri SCR Chief, the GVN scheduling of a Corps-wide refugee conference September 9, implementation of an improved reporting system, and a few small-scale emergency relief shipments. However, continued shortages of roofing and food, lackluster SCR officials, VC terrorism directed against refugees, and GVN election involvement seriously hampered refugee relief efforts. An estimated ten thousand new refugees brought in during August joined thousands of recent refugees lacking minimum essentials. Refugees remain a major problem for ICTZ.

b. Logistics problems continued to plague I Corps. Shortages of construction materials, especially roofing, prevented the completion of

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hamlet school, Self Help, and other vital RD projects. Many refugees remained without adequate shelter due to lack of roofing. Quang Ngai reported Montagnard refugees drifting back to VC areas because of no food commodities. The provinces are concerned that they face the approaching rainy season with poorly stocked warehouses. Large shipments of roofing are reportedly due in DaNang early in September. Hopefully this belated shipment will arrive in ICTZ before the monsoon. Inadequate transportation is nearly as difficult and complex a logistics problem as commodity stocks. The provinces continue to ask for additional CORDS and MORD trucks for internal distribution of commodities. Repeated requests through both GVN and US channels have brought no significant results.

c. A continuing problem that has been passed to higher levels is the difficulty of obtaining MSS security clearances without substantial bribes. Hoi Chanh trained at DaNang Vocational School cannot obtain jobs with their newly acquired skills because they lack the proper security clearances. This problem deserves the immediate attention of Saigon MSS counterparts.

d. Lack of security is, of course, the epitome of Vietnam's problems. Enemy attacks and terrorism increased significantly in August. The enemy demonstrated thoroughness of planning, detailed prior reconnaissance, excellent coordination of fire and maneuver elements and violent, swift execution. In most instances diversionary attacks occurred nearly simultaneously with the main attack in order to confuse and divide the friendly reaction. A significant aspect of these attacks was the continuation of the trend in ICTZ for the enemy to employ sapper elements. Sapper tactics and units proved to be very effective and appeared to have been employed evenly throughout I Corps. The problem of increasing security and countering enemy attacks remains.

e. Security for hamlets which RD Teams have completed and left is an important problem of particular concern to ICTZ at this time. In many cases RD Combat Youth and/or People's Defense Groups have been recruited and trained by the RD Teams to protect the hamlet. However, weapons have not been supplied for these local defense forces. Four of the five I Corps provinces refer to this specific problem in their August Special Joint Reports. Action must be taken to provide arms and ammunition for the RD Youth/People's Defense Groups if Revolutionary Development is to succeed in ICTZ.

#### 9. Conclusions/Recommendations

a. The momentum achieved in the RD Program over the past four months suffered a serious setback in August. A return to normal progress in September will depend on a lowering of VC activity, a willingness of GVN to again concentrate on RD, and an increased ability of the Allies to cope with enemy tactics. The first two items are expected to occur following the September 3 elections. Hopefully these will ease the challenge of the third requirement.

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b. It is recommended that MACCORDS take necessary and appropriate action to improve issuance of MSS security clearances.

c. It is recommended that MACCORDS persuade the appropriate GVN agency that weapons for the RD Youth/Self Defense Groups must be promptly issued from province stocks.

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