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A STUDY OF THE MILITARY SUPPORT OF PACIFICATION  
IN SOUTH VIETNAM, APRIL 1964-APRIL 1965 (u)

An abstract for a thesis presented to the Faculty of  
the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

IDA

by

PAUL E. SUPLIZIO, Major, USA

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
1966

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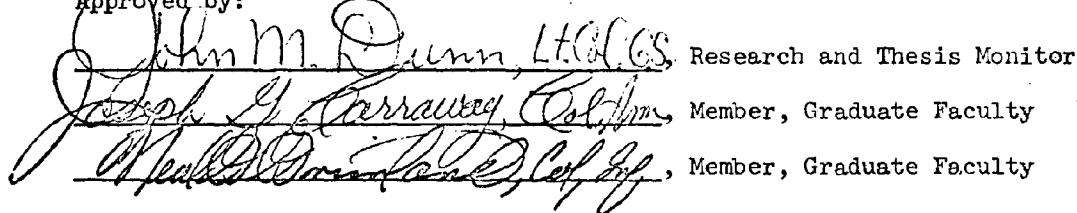
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## U. S. ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE

## (Abstract Approval Page)

Name of Candidate Paul E. Suplizio, Major, USATitle of Thesis A Study of the Military Support of Pacification  
in South Vietnam, April 1964-April 1965

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the military support of pacification under the Chien Thang plan which was designed to defeat the insurgency in South Vietnam, during the period April 1964-April 1965.

The thesis presents a comprehensive view of the major factors shaping the course of the war from the standpoint of both the Government of Vietnam and the Viet Cong. Individual chapters deal with "The Organizational Weapon," "Viet Cong Strategy During 1964-1965," "The Viet Cong Military Build-up," "The Chien Thang Pacification Plan," and "A Balance Sheet of the Chien Thang Plan, April 1964-April 1965." Major aspects of United States advice and assistance to the Government of Vietnam in the field of military support of pacification are also treated in the study.

To acquire an understanding of Viet Cong organization and strategy, exhaustive research was undertaken using the extensive holdings of translations of captured documents and prisoner interrogation reports available in and through the Fort Leavenworth Library. Official letters, memoranda, reports, and other documents of United States Government agencies in Vietnam, in particular the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, were also utilized. The extensive microfilmed holdings of the files of the latter agency, produced by the Battelle Institute, were of special value. Important decrees, directives, plans and other documents of Government of Vietnam agencies were also available, in translation, through the foregoing sources.

The Viet Cong organization for population and resource control is portrayed in detail. Systematic mobilization of the manpower and material resources of the population by the Viet Cong, in order to broaden their base of power and narrow that of the Government, is indicated to be a prime factor responsible for the disappointing results of the Chien Thang plan during the period under consideration.

A finding of the study is that the mobilization activities of the Viet Cong control apparatus, carried on in an environment relatively free of Government interference, permitted the Viet Cong to accomplish a major build-up of their forces and to escalate the war to a new level of intensity during the period under review. Certain vulnerabilities of the Viet Cong, found to be inherent in the mobilization process, are indicated in the study.

The study analyzes the basic assumptions and concepts of the Chien Thang plan, according particular attention to the factors influencing the employment of military forces in consonance with the "spreading oil stain" strategy. Research indicates that the concepts of the Chien Thang plan were primarily applicable to a guerrilla threat, and that the Viet Cong advance to mobile warfare rendered the military support of pacification more difficult.

The study analyzes the trends in population control, over time, in twenty provinces which were considered most critical to the Viet Cong, and in South Vietnam as a whole. This analysis confirms the disappointing results of the Chien Thang plan, and indicates that at the end of the first year of the plan Government military forces were near the limit of their ability to bring additional population under pacification.

A comparison of Government and Viet Cong strength and force ratios in the twenty provinces discloses a general deterioration in the position

of the Government between the beginning and end of the first year of the Chien Thang plan. This fact, together with the developing population control and security situation in the provinces, indicates the general inadequacy of military resources to support the pacification concepts of the Chien Thang plan. In particular, paramilitary forces apparently were not increased sufficiently to permit the release of regular forces from securing missions, and this limited the capability of regular forces to continue expansion of the pacification areas.

Evidence also indicates that substantial regular forces were committed to several pacification areas that were incapable of mutual support. This resulted in a dispersion of force among separate enclaves, each of which conducted its own battle. In addition, the policy of stabilizing forces in the pacification areas generally inhibited reinforcement of one pacification area by another. It is concluded that this use of regular troops contributed to the defeat of the plan.

The study suggests that the use of regular forces for population security missions, when the availability of paramilitary manpower is limited, is not the best use of such forces. The study further suggests the possibility of adopting preclusive manpower policies and military measures to strike at the war potential of the enemy by disrupting his mobilization activities.

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## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The requisites of government are these: that there should be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler. The first two may be dispensed with if we must, but if the people have not faith in their ruler there is no standing for the state.---Confucius

With the onset of the lunar New Year in 1964, the National Government of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)<sup>1</sup> and the Vietnamese Communist (Viet Cong)<sup>2</sup> enemy stood at a crossroads in their revolutionary war, a war which in its struggle for food, arms, and men apotheosized the ancestral teaching of Confucius concerning the three pillars of the state and the passing of the mandate of heaven. In Saigon, the mandate had already passed twice since 1 November 1963, and not an officer of the Military Revolutionary Council was unaware that preservation of their rule would require a major effort to restore government authority during 1964. In the jungles of Tay Ninh Province, the Viet Cong leadership laid plans to advance its struggle for power by a campaign that would raise the Viet Cong from a position of relative inferiority to a position

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<sup>1</sup>The country known as South Vietnam is, formally, the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). Its government is referred to officially as the Government of Vietnam, while the press usage is South Vietnamese Government, or simply the Government. These forms will be used interchangeably in this paper.

<sup>2</sup>The insurgents in South Vietnam today are known as Viet Cong (VC), which translates as "Vietnamese Communist". They are supported by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), more commonly known as North Vietnam.

of relative ascendancy over the Government of Vietnam by early 1965. This paper is the story of the failure of the Government's effort to restore security during the crucial year from April 1964 to April 1965<sup>3</sup>; concurrently, it is the story of the success of the Viet Cong campaign which brought South Vietnam to the brink of disaster and ultimately contributed to the deployment of United States troops.

This paper will attempt to establish the major reasons for the failure of the national plan for the restoration of security, a comprehensive blueprint which the South Vietnamese Government named Chien Thang, or "Struggle for Victory". This plan came to be referred to by the official American community as the National Pacification Plan. This title was derived from the central concept of the plan, which was to defeat the insurgency by "pacifying" South Vietnam. The term "pacification" owed at least part of its prominence to its public-relations value, for it was asserted to embody the truism that a purely military solution to the conflict was impossible. According to the Chien Thang Plan, "pacification of an area is the restoration of public security and improvement of the living conditions of the inhabitants of that area in all fields, political, economical and social."<sup>4</sup>

A major postulate of this paper is that a useful way of understanding the conflict in South Vietnam is to view it as a struggle for

<sup>3</sup>These dates are selected to coincide with the first full year of the National Pacification Plan, which is further explained in the text. Also, with the large-scale deployment of United States troops to South Vietnam after April 1965, and increased intervention by the People's Army of North Vietnam, the character of the war underwent a major change. The story of those events is beyond the scope of this paper. Furthermore, that story is still being written.

<sup>4</sup>Commander-in-Chief, Vietnamese Armed Forces (CINCVAF), Annex E (Technique of Pacification Operations) to the Chien Thang Plan (Saigon: Camp Tran Hung Dao, 221200 H Feb 1964), p. 1-E. (CONFIDENTIAL).

political control of the population and resources of the country. A simpler way of saying this is that the conflict is a struggle for population control. The purpose of making this postulation is to clarify the essential character of the form of warfare to be dealt with in this study, as well as to provide a theoretical starting point and guidepost for inquiry.

In traditional military theory, which is derived principally from the experience of inter-state warfare, the object of war is the destruction of the armed forces of the enemy in order to break his will to resist.<sup>5</sup> The political objective of conventional warfare may be the conquest of territory or the subjugation of the population and resources of the enemy country, but the application of military power to defeat the opposing armed forces in battle is viewed as the essential first step in the attainment of the political goal.

On the other hand, in the theory of warfare practiced by the Viet Cong<sup>6</sup> in South Vietnam, the object is to strike directly at the population and resources of the country, to bring these under effective political control, and to isolate the opposing government and army from their base of popular support. This theory of warfare calls for the application of politico-military power to gain control over an

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<sup>5</sup>The classical theory of warfare is best exemplified by the writings of Jomini, Clausewitz, and Schieffen. See Edward Mead Earle (ed.) Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought From Machiavelli to Hitler (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1941), especially Chapters 4, 5, and 8. See also B. H. Liddell Hart, Strategy (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1954), Chapters 19-22.

<sup>6</sup>The Viet Cong technique of insurgency follows the general lines on "revolutionary war" laid down by Mao Tse-Tung and Vo Nguyen Giap. See Mao Tse-Tung, "Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War," "Strategic Problems in the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla War," and "On the Protracted War," Selected Works (New York: International Publishers, 1954), I, 175-253 and II, 119-243; and General Vo Nguyen Giap, People's War People's Army (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962).

ever-widening section of the rural populace, to progressively expand the population and resource base of the insurgency while narrowing that of the Government, and in this way to produce a change in the balance of political and military power that will insure the eventual collapse of the Government.<sup>7</sup>

The object of counterinsurgency in Vietnam is to oppose the insurgent struggle for population control and to restore Government control over the population under the influence of the Viet Cong.<sup>8</sup> The process of restoring public security, that is, restoring effective political control in an area, is known as pacification. Pacification seeks to separate the insurgent from the people, thereby crippling and making possible the ultimate defeat of the insurgency. Pacification embraces a host of techniques and programs designed to provide security, establish effective government, and enhance the authority of government by works of social amelioration. According to an official United States source, "the term pacification encompasses all civilian, military

<sup>7</sup>The typology of warfare introduced here consists of two categories: inter-state warfare and insurgent warfare. The concepts and methods of inter-state warfare form a well-developed body of doctrine, are well known, and are embodied in Western military organizations. The concepts and methods of insurgent warfare, and counterinsurgency, are still being developed and have not been fully digested by any Western military establishment. Insurgent warfare is a form of internal war in which a political elite seeks, through a combination of political, psychological, and military means, to conquer political power by gaining control over a sufficient quantity of the population and resources of a country in order to produce the isolation and eventual collapse of the opposing government and armed forces. An important margin of resources to support the insurgency may be provided by outside powers. Insurgent warfare is often called "revolutionary war," but because of the favorable emotive content of this term it appears undesirable to dignify insurgency with the name. While inter-state and insurgent warfare establish basic types of war, guerrilla warfare is merely a specific technique applicable to any type of war.

<sup>8</sup>The Viet Cong technique of insurgency is dealt with in Chapters II and III. The Government pacification program is the subject of Chapter V.

and police actions to eliminate organized VC military activity, detect and eliminate the overt and covert VC political apparatus and nurture economic, political and social development of a viable economy."<sup>9</sup>

When it is stated that insurgency aims at population control, and that the object of pacification is population control, it is meant that political control over population and associated resources (including essential production and lines of communication) is established. Political control is based upon a power relationship, which determines those who control and those who are controlled. Political control is the shaping of the external behaviour of an individual or group in accordance with the policies and decisions of those exercising power.<sup>10</sup> Such power stems from a combination of physical coercion, consent, and--very important in the Vietnamese culture--the habit of obedience to an authority with the prestige of a demonstrated ability to govern effectively.<sup>11</sup> Population control is, in effect, the exercise of political rule over one or more villages or hamlets of the country.

The primary instrument of Viet Cong population control is the political-military organizational structure dominated by the Communist Party. In the Viet Cong system, organization is a surrogate for endogenous social bonds and revolutionary consciousness among the peasantry.

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<sup>9</sup>Letter, Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, 2 March 1965, Subject: "The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures." (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>10</sup>For the theoretical structure underpinning the presentation of this paragraph, see Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950), pp. 48-49 (Sanction and Consent), 71 (Influence and Policy), 74 (Decision), 75 (Power), 86-88 (Control), 97-99 (Choice and Coercion), 132 (Control Structure), 133 (Authority), 186-188 (Effective Control), 208 (Rule).

<sup>11</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, The Structure of Nations and Empires (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 3-9.

The function of organization is to overcome the lack of social cohesion in Vietnamese society above the village level, and to mobilize a conservative peasantry for revolutionary action.<sup>12</sup>

Creation of a military arm takes the least conservative element of the peasantry, the young men, and places them in a disciplined organization which responds to the will of the Party. This organization must be fed a continuous supply of weapons, food, and manpower. Weapons can be captured or obtained from the outside, but the supply of food and manpower depends on the extent of population control. Party organization in villages and hamlets, linked to the masses by means of "liberation associations" which transmit the Party will, insure the provisioning of Viet Cong forces. In this way, the peasantry is continuously engaged in providing the manpower and material resources consumed by the "people's war." At the same time, all Viet Cong organizations are knit together in a hierarchical structure culminating in the Central Office of South Vietnam, thereby achieving unity of effort by the party, mass, and military organizations.

The National Pacification (Chien Thang) Plan of 1964-1965 was intended to extend systematically the political authority of the Government of Vietnam into areas which had fallen to the Viet Cong. The core of the Government's program for gaining control of the rural areas remained the Strategic Hamlets, now renamed New Rural Life Hamlets. This was an attempt to establish a viable hamlet community, complete with

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<sup>12</sup>On the characteristics of Vietnamese peasant society, see Gerald Hickey, Village in Vietnam (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963), especially the last chapter. The fact of the Viet Cong insurgency has led some to challenge the thesis of a conservative peasantry, but this is not substantiated by the work of Hickey or the observation of others who have had close contact with the Vietnamese peasant.

defense works and militia, in order to provide a modicum of security against the Viet Cong. The task of constructing strategic hamlets, or pacifying those that had fallen under some degree of Viet Cong control, was seen as developing through three phases: first, clearing an area of Viet Cong military units--a task of the regular forces; second, securing the villages and hamlets of the area--a task of the paramilitary forces and National Police; and third, developing health, education, and living standards in the area to gain the support of the populace and the acceptance of the Government of Vietnam's political authority.

It would be beyond the scope of this paper to discuss every aspect of this ambitious plan. In particular, the civil programs that loomed so large in the securing and developing phases must be the subject of another study. All that will be done in this study is to indicate their general character and manner of integration with the military effort. This paper will be limited, then, to the military support of pacification under the Chien Thang Plan.

The employment of military forces under the Chien Thang Plan was primarily a problem of efficient allocation of scarce resources to satisfy competing requirements. In a counterinsurgency campaign, perhaps more so than in any other kind of war, there are never enough resources to go around. The Government must provide security throughout its territory, and it dares not withdraw from many low-priority areas for fear of the repercussion upon its authority of the ensuing loss of prestige. The military consequence of this political requirement is dissipation of force: the effort to defend everywhere leads to being strong nowhere, or at least not more than few places at a time.

With limited mobile forces available, the fundamental problem

is to decide whether to employ them to search out and destroy Viet Cong military formations, or to provide security in populated areas. The question is whether to emphasize operations against the enemy force, or to emphasize the defense of villages and hamlets. In the former case, a large part of the military effort would be directed against Viet Cong bases, to destroy enemy supply caches, training facilities, and installations. In the latter case, the major effort would be directed toward clearing and holding key areas containing sizeable concentrations of population and resources. The Chien Thang Plan opted for the employment of mobile forces to secure the population and resources of the country. The question of whether or not this was a correct decision must be faced, and a tentative answer is presented in this paper.

This study is written at the Military Mission-Joint Staff level. It is not concerned with the tactics and techniques of any particular force, but with the major roles and missions of each force, its allocation to a territorial command, and its success or failure. This is a problem that presents itself at the Mission level, the level at which General Westmoreland would advise his counterpart in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

Three major hypotheses which explain the failure of the National Pacification (Chien Thang) Plan during the period April 1964-April 1965 will be tested in this paper. These are:

- (1) that there was a massive Viet Cong force build-up during this period, a build-up made possible by exploiting the South Vietnamese population under Viet Cong control for two basic resources: manpower and food;
- (2) that the Viet Cong escalated the war to a new level of intensity, involving maneuver in larger formations and a deliberate

undertaking to engage and destroy the Government's regular troops in battle; and

(3) that the Government's inadequate military resources, together with the dissipation of mobile forces through their employment on population security missions, contributed to the defeat of the plan.

In brief, the strategy of "caring enough to send the very best" troops to protect the populace failed because the Viet Cong were able to consolidate their control in their own areas, launch a massive recruiting campaign to build up their forces, and then attack with superior forces the Army of Vietnam's battalions and companies scattered throughout forty-three provinces. The Chien Thang Plan was developed to eliminate the Viet Cong control apparatus, counter the threat of guerrilla warfare, and halt the decline in the Government's population control. These measures may very well have been appropriate, and successful, during the previous year of the war. However, by the time the plan was implemented, the military measures it called for were unsuited to the threat posed by a major escalation for the war by the Viet Cong.

The author's assignment to Vietnam, from 27 May 1964 to 27 May 1965, coincided closely with the first year of the Chien Thang Plan.

His duty as an Operations Staff Officer in the Combat Operations Center, Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, provided an invaluable opportunity to visit most of the provinces of South Vietnam and to evaluate the use of military resources in support of the pacification effort. The author served initially as an operations briefing officer at the Daily Staff Conference, and later was responsible for data collection to support this daily briefing. In this capacity, he came in frequent contact with most of the major information-gathering agencies in Saigon and the field, such as the Joint Operations

Center, High Command; the Pacification Plans and Operations Branch of J-3, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam; the Hop Tac Secretariat;<sup>13</sup> the United States Operations Mission; and the four corps tactical operations Centers.

The special burden of a briefing officer is the task of presenting nor merely factual, but meaningful, reports. The problems of organizing information channels and identifying progress indicators in a counterinsurgency campaign are staggeringly complex, but the requirement for significant data for decision-making is an ever present one. General Westmoreland was fully cognizant of this problem, for in a private discussion with his briefing officers he stressed the importance of meaningful information, and emphasized his point by stating: "What I need is a fresh look for new tools to analyze and manage this war."<sup>14</sup>

This confrontation with the problem of meaningfully interpreting daily events led the author, and many other officers, to the concept of population control. Once the insurgency, and counterinsurgency, are viewed as a struggle for population control, this concept serves as a standard for interpreting the data and gauging the progress of the war. For example, when the Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, is informed that the Viet Cong have attacked a hamlet, it is more significant for him to know the ensuing status of population control in that hamlet, than it is to know the number of casualties in the action or the number of weapons lost. What is significant is whether

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<sup>13</sup>The Hop Tac Secretariat was a staff agency of MACV and the High Command which was concerned with the execution of the Hop Tac Plan, a special plan for the pacification of the critical ring of provinces around Saigon. See below, Chapter V.

<sup>14</sup>This statement was made in the presence of the author in early June, 1964.

the hamlet is still under Government control, which requires, inter alia, that local officials remain in the hamlet and not flee to the nearest fort or town. It is unfortunate that in the Daily Intelligence Briefing the results of Viet Cong incidents were reported in terms of personnel and weapons losses and not in terms of population control data.

Concern for population control likewise leads to the realization that often it is not the reported Viet Cong "incidents"<sup>15</sup> that are significant, but what is going on that is not reported. Many forms of intimidation, other than terrorism, are simply not reported; yet the introduction of a Viet Cong "liberation front committee" into a hamlet may often begin with a subtle form of intimidation. Low incident rates, as reported through intelligence channels, may also indicate effective Viet Cong control of an area. A common saying around headquarters, to the effect that "there are no Viet Cong incidents in Hanoi," illustrates this truth. That is why an area may be quiet for a considerable period, and then it is discovered that a new company of Viet Cong has been recruited in the area. Recruitment, of course, is a function of population control.

Just as reports of enemy activities should indicate the impact on population control, so also should reports of friendly operations. In this view, the battlemap for a counterinsurgency war is not a terrain map but a population density map of the country. A population density map will depict the ecumene of the province, district, or area of concern. It is here that one can expect the enemy to make a major effort,

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<sup>15</sup>Viet Cong incidents were reported through intelligence channels, and the number of these incidents for a specified time period and locale were compiled according to five major categories: attacks, terrorism, sabotage, propaganda, and antiaircraft fire. See USMCV, Daily Sitreps.

and it is this area that the Government must hold at all costs.

In general, population density is a major factor influencing force allocations and areas of operations. A greater return, in terms of population control, can be obtained from troops committed to security missions in areas of higher population density. (However, population density is not a determining factor; attention must also be paid to border regions, key producing areas, and lines of communication). Moreover, the returns, in terms of population control, should be reported in the Daily Operations Briefing along with personnel and weapons losses inflicted upon the enemy.

The importance of population control was recognized by the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. Population density maps were in use, and major force deployments were in areas of high population density. Pacification was designed to expand Government population control, and statistics of population control were published monthly for each Province. However, there was much room for improvement in converting data on Viet Cong incidents and Government operations into an estimate of marginal changes in population control, so as to have a sensitive indicator of progress in this area.

In summary, this paper will deal with the military support of pacification during the first year of the National Pacification (Chien Thang) Plan, from April 1964 to April 1965. An important postulate of this is that insurgency is a struggle for political control over the population and resources of a country. To recapitulate, the three major hypotheses to be tested are:

(1) that there was a massive Viet Cong force build-up during the period of the Chien Thang Plan, April 1964-April 1965, a build-up made possible by exploiting the South Vietnamese population

under Viet Cong control for two basic resources: manpower and food;

(2) that the Viet Cong escalated the war to a new level of intensity, involving maneuver in larger formations and a deliberate undertaking to engage and destroy the Government's regular troops in battle; and

(3) that the Government's inadequate military resources, together with the dissipation of mobile forces through their employment on population security missions, contributed to the defeat of the plan.

The next chapter will consider the mechanism by which the Viet Cong extended their domination over the rural areas, and mobilized the manpower and material resources of those areas for a major offensive against the Government. This mechanism was a highly sophisticated organizational instrument--the organizational weapon.

## CHAPTER II

## THE ORGANIZATIONAL WEAPON

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organization.---Lenin (1904)

With the common people of the whole country mobilised, we shall create a vast sea of humanity and drown the enemy in it, remedy our shortage in arms and other things, and secure the prerequisites to overcome every difficulty in the war.---Mao Tse-Tung (1938)

Introduction

(U) In his book, The Organizational Weapon, published in 1952, Professor Philip Selznick frames the theoretical issues of an inquiry into Communist techniques of manipulating the masses, in the following words:

If large population groups are to be used as 'social levers,' where is the arm to move the lever? How should this arm grasp the lever? How may its hold be maintained? The special problem of leadership posed to leninism is that of joining a revolutionary elite to the social force which it hopes will carry it to power.<sup>1</sup>

(U) This chapter will deal with the answers to these questions derived from experience with the Viet Cong insurgency in South Vietnam. The object is to reveal the specific organizational structures by means of which the Viet Cong system of population control is installed, developed, and manipulated to provide the resources to sustain an armed insurrection against the government. This task is important for two

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<sup>1</sup>Philip Selznick, The Organizational Weapon: A Study in Bolshevik Strategy and Tactics (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1952), p. 81.

reasons: (1) it provides an explanation of how the startling increase in Viet Cong military strength from early 1964 to early 1965 could come about, allowing the Viet Cong to achieve a power position of parity, if not ascendancy, over the Government of Vietnam; and (2) it demonstrates the difficulties of uprooting or checking the expansion of the Viet Cong system of population control.

(U) What we are confronted with in an insurgency is a force whose peculiar strength is derived from an organizational apparatus capable of harnessing the energies of the peasantry and mobilizing their resources for protracted armed conflict. As students of Mao Tse-Tung and Vo Nguyen Giap have learned, this "people's war" is supposed to develop from a defensive stage, to an equilibrium of opposing forces, and thence to an offensive stage.<sup>2</sup> As the power of the People's Liberation Army increases in each phase, combat is developed on an ever-intensifying scale. Obviously, this growth in military power must have some material basis, and this is provided by the systematic exploitation of the population of the "liberated areas" for their production and manpower.<sup>3</sup> In short, the entire populace is to be mobilized for war, a task which calls for superior organization.

(U) The mobilization of the peasantry is for protracted war, not for a short-lived "general uprising." Consequently, the organizational system must be stable, capable of weathering periods of reversal,

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<sup>2</sup>Mao Tse-Tung, "Strategic Problems in the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla War" and "On the Protracted War," in Selected Works (New York: International Publishers Co., 1954), 2, 119-243. Vo Nguyen Giap, People's War People's Army (Washington: GPO, 1962), pp. 28-30.

<sup>3</sup>Mao Tse-Tung, "Economic and Financial Problems During the Anti-Japanese War," "Let Us Get Organized," and "We Must Learn to do Economic Work," Selected Works, 4, 105-110, 228-235, 148-156. Much of Mao's wartime writing is devoted to the production problem.

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and capable of adapting to changed conditions.

(C) It will be shown that the organizational apparatus of the Viet Cong is well-suited to fulfilling these requirements. The Viet Cong organization evinces all the characteristics, and engages in all the activities, of a supreme political authority for the territory and population under its control. It is, first and foremost, a governmental organization exercising governmental powers. To the extent that, over time, it succeeds in bringing effective government to those under its sway, it becomes endowed with a modicum of legitimacy and prestige that shows up in the form of habitual obedience to its will. One consequence of the exercise of this effective governmental power is that, despite heavy losses, the system has been able to increase the numerical strength of the Viet Cong forces during each year of the war.<sup>4</sup>

(U) The technique of establishing "dual authority" in the country, a phenomenon which French writers of the Viet Minh War of Resistance refer to as "parallel hierarchies,"<sup>5</sup> is a long-standing Leninist one.<sup>6</sup> The Vietnamese Communists, however, have raised the art of creating dual Authority in a peasant society to a highly modern and sophisticated activity. It relies upon the installation of a party control apparatus in each hamlet and village, primarily by subversion of government authority and the selective use of terror and coercion.

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<sup>4</sup>Annual Viet Cong strength and casualty data are contained in U.S., Department of Defense, Defense Intelligence Agency, Special Intelligence Supplement: Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam, SIS 1031-65, October 1965, pp. 36-38. (SECRET).

<sup>5</sup>See Revue Militaire D'Information No. 281, Feb-Mar 1957, portions of which appear in translation in U.S. Army Special Warfare School, "The Insurgency in Indochina," AS 9136 (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army SWS, Aug 1963), p. 14. The term has been popularized by Bernard Fall.

<sup>6</sup>Lenin, "On the Dual Power" (1917), contained in Robert V. Daniels, A Documentary History of Communism (New York: Random House, 1960), pp. 91-95.

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(U) Several weighty consequences follow. First, the establishment of this control apparatus does not depend upon the conquest of territory by an armed force, but upon militant propaganda and the selective use of terror to coerce and intimidate. Second, the expansion of the apparatus is a function of party strength, cadre activities, quality of central Government officials, degree of security provided by the central Government, confidence of the peasant in the Government's ability to provide this security, belief in the ultimate victory of the Viet Cong, and a host of other material, social, and psychological factors. Party control is not dependent upon the military balance alone. Third, the expansion of the apparatus cannot be checked solely by the application of military power.<sup>7</sup> Military forces are primarily employed to pursue or to provide security against Viet Cong incursions into Government-held areas.<sup>8</sup> In general, military units are neither organized nor trained for the task of eliminating the Viet Cong control apparatus.<sup>9</sup> Thus, it

7 "The VIET CONG political element is the main source of power and supply. Military action alone will not defeat this element." Appendix 1 (Psychological Warfare) to Annex D to Operation Order Hop Tac 1, 12 Aug 1964, p. D1-1. (SECRET). (This Operation Order launched the Hop Tac plan, a comprehensive and ambitious scheme to pacify the top-priority provinces surrounding Saigon.) It was generally recognized that more than military action would be required to defeat "the VC infrastructure," as the Viet Cong political organization was known. See letter, Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, 2 March 1965, Subject: "The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures." (CONFIDENTIAL).

8 The employment of military forces under the National Pacification Plan is discussed in detail in Chapters V and VI. For definitions of types of operations conducted in the over-all counterinsurgency effort, see "The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures," pp. 2-4, 7-9.

9 This was recognized both in Vietnam and in U.S. military doctrine. See "The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures," passim; Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, J-2, Study entitled "Remove the VC Infrastructure," Aug 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL); and Letter,

is possible for Viet Cong population control to increase even though the Government's armed forces are scoring military victories.

(U) The insurgent struggle for the establishment of political control over rural population is a form of social conflict upon which the military operations of the war are superimposed. The subterranean

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United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, II Vietnamese Corps Detachment (Pleiku, Vietnam), 5 Sept 1964, Subject: "VC Political Infrastructure." (CONFIDENTIAL). The last-mentioned source states in part:

"The recent interest of your headquarters in the VC Political Infrastructure has resulted in this headquarters embarking on what we call the "VC Political Infrastructure Program." This program consists of two parts: (1) identifying the personalities in the VC political infrastructure and placing their names on charts of the appropriate echelon of the VC government, and (2) the systematic elimination or incarceration of the identified personalities.

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Limited research at this headquarters has revealed that the elimination of this Infrastructure forces us into a Police/Intelligence type of warfare. This type of warfare where it has been successful (and in order to be successful) has been based on basic harsh laws that enable the police and para-military police to enforce 'Population Control' and 'Resources Control' in selected areas, for the purpose of 'isolating the insurgents from their indigenous source of (1) supply, (2) manpower, and (3) intelligence.'"

U. S. military doctrine recognizes the special character of anti-infrastructure warfare, and the limited suitability of military forces in this role. FM 31-73 states:

"The primary objectives of population and resources control are to Identify and neutralize the insurgents, their organization, their activities, and influence. . . .

Civil control measures are basically police functions. Civil police should initiate controls because-

- (1) They are best suited by training and experience
- (2) Their area orientation results in a closer relationship with the local population.
- (3) They permit military forces to concentrate on offensive counterguerrilla operations.

Where local police are incapable, local paramilitary forces,

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struggle for population control goes on even during lulls, cease-fires, and build-ups, with every Viet Cong advance foreshadowing an increased capability to project military power.

(S) According to our own account, Viet Cong population control increased by half a million, from 3,048,800 in December 1964, to 3,502,500 in September 1965,<sup>10</sup> a period during which the United States military build-up in South Vietnam took place. During this period the United States increased its combat battalions in South Vietnam from 2 to 34, the Viet Cong increased their combat battalions (officially confirmed battalions, not including 9 regular North Vietnamese battalions) from 53 to 74, and the ratio of total friendly Viet Cong strength in battalions declined from 2.4 : 1 to 2.2 : 1.<sup>11</sup> In other words the period of the

including home guards, village militia, and police auxiliaries are organized and trained as reserves.

Military forces are used only as expedients since extended assignment to this duty detracts from their main mission of counter-guerrilla offensive operations."

U.S., Department of the Army, Advisor Handbook for Counterinsurgency, FM 31-73 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 23 April 1965), p. 28.

<sup>10</sup>U. S., Department of Defense, Defense Intelligence Agency, Special Intelligence Supplement: Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam, SIS 141-66, Jan 1966, p. 25 (SECRET).

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 28. (S) The data for "Infantry-type Battalions in South Vietnam" is as follows:

	<u>RVN</u>	<u>U.S.</u>	<u>THIRD NATION</u>	<u>VC</u>	<u>PAVN</u>	<u>RATIO FRIENDLY TO ENEMY</u>
1965 1st Quarter	128	2		1	53 0	2.4 : 1
1965 3rd Quarter	132	34		1	74 9	2.0 : 1

Third Nation refers to forces of Australia, New Zealand, and Republic of Korea. PAVN refers to North Vietnamese regular forces, the People's Army of Vietnam. The ratios in the text exclude PAVN and Third Nation battalions in order to demonstrate the capability of the Viet Cong alone.

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United States build-up, the Viet Cong not only expanded their population control, but their own build-up of battalions was sufficient to offset ours.<sup>12</sup>

(U) How much of the Viet Cong build-up is attributable to gains in population control cannot be estimated, but it seems reasonable to assume that any augmentation of their military manpower pool facilitates the build-up of their military strength. In short, in a situation where it is desirable to have two or three battalions for every battalion of the enemy, an increase in the insurgent force is a very serious matter, for it imposes a multiplied force requirement on the friendly side if the augmentation of enemy strength is to be offset. Moreover, if the population control of the friendly side is declining at the same time, it is caught in a trap which must ultimately prove fatal. It is apparent that prohibiting the enemy from raising a battalion is just as important as introducing two or three new battalions. Consequently, operations to prevent or hinder the raising and training of new enemy units, and to expand friendly population control to reduce the enemy manpower pool and check the growth of his military strength, are crucial to any strategy

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to offset the U.S. force build-up. However, the rate at which the Viet Cong built their forces probably could not have been sustained without the infiltration of trained cadres from North Vietnam. During 1964, when the Viet Cong build-up was taking place, the probable total yearly infiltration was 12,424, an increase from 7,906 in 1963. Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>12</sup>(S) In terms of actual combat power, the USMACV estimate was that an ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) battalion was equivalent to a VC battalion, a U.S. Army battalion (three rifle companies) was equivalent to two ARVN battalions, and a U.S. Marine battalion (four rifle companies) was equivalent to three ARVN battalions. Hence if the ratio of friendly to enemy forces is stated in terms of battalion-equivalents, the comparison is much more favorable to the friendly side. However, since battalions usually operate as units, a force ratio of actual battalions would seem to depict more realistically the dimensions of the insurgency than a ratio based on battalion-equivalents. See USMACV, Intelligence Estimate of the Situation, 23 March 1965. (SECRET).

to defeat the insurgency.

An Over-View of the Viet Cong Apparatus of Population Control

(U) It will be helpful to lay out the basic components of the Viet Cong system of population control before undertaking a more detailed examination. These components are the party organizations, the administrative organizations, the mass (or front) organizations, and the village guerrillas, militia, and local forces. The manner of operation, state of development, and degree of control exercised by these structures is conditioned primarily by the degree to which their intrusion or establishment is contested by the legal government. It will, therefore, be useful to adopt the Viet Cong system of classifying the areas of interest into "liberated areas" (under Viet Cong control), "disputed areas" (where Government control is being contested), and "enemy-occupied areas" (under Government control).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Republic of Vietnam (hereafter RVN), Central Intelligence Organization (hereafter CIO), National Interrogation Center (hereafter NIC), Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103-65, (DIA 6075034865) 28 May 1965, p. 3. (CONFIDENTIAL). These categories are described by Nguyen Van Tron as follows:

Liberated Areas. These were areas in which the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) Armed Forces and local security forces had failed to establish their control and where the RVN village administrative authorities and political organizations had disappeared completely. In this area, the VC armed forces and popular groups, such as the farmers, youths, and women's groups, could openly operate.

Contested Areas. These were areas in which the hamlets and villages were located near RVN outposts and were under RVN control, but where the VC were able to establish the popular groups and their armed units.

RVN Areas. These were areas in which the RVN administrative authorities and political organizations operated freely and where the majority of the people were residing in the New Life Hamlets or were under strict control of the RVN Government. Viet Cong operations in these areas were very restricted and limited. Ibid., p. 3.

(U) The party organizations consist of party committees at village, district, province, and region level, culminating in a party central committee at the national level, known as the Central Office of South Vietnam.<sup>14</sup> These are the policy-making and executive organs of the Viet Cong movement in South Vietnam, and they provide the command element at each echelon of control--village, district, province, region, and nation.<sup>15</sup> According to the testimony of a former province

<sup>14</sup>For territorial organization of Viet Cong regions and provinces, see Chapter III.

<sup>15</sup>The organization and functions of Viet Cong agencies at each level have been documented thoroughly, as this is standard order of battle information obtained from each prisoner and defector during interrogation. The following sources are particularly valuable. Viet Cong 5th Region: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Huynh, Log No. 3-24-65, 6 Apr 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); Interrogation Report of Doan Lot, Log No. 7-246, 6 Oct 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL); RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Van Sac, SIC Report No. 56/65, 29 Mar 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); Report of Interrogation of Doan Lot, SIC Report No. 31-65, 27 Feb 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); Viet Cong 6th Region: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Quoc Ba, Log No. 10-394, 20 Nov 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong 3d (Western) Region: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 11-83, 19 Nov 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL) and Log No. 1-92-65, 27 Jan 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone (Region): USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Dinh Cong Det., Log No. 6-4-65, 1 July 1965 (DIA 6075 0458 65) (CONFIDENTIAL); RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 67/65, 14 Apr 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL) and SIC Report No. 87/65, 8 May 1965 (DIA 6075 0219 65) (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Quang Ngai Province: RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Dang Minh. SIC Report No. 102/65, 25 May 1965, (DIA 6075 0317 65) (CONFIDENTIAL); USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Thanh Sach and Nguyen Van Sac. Log No. 10-184, 6 Jan 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); and RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Thanh Sach, SIC Report No. 88/65, 11 May 1965, (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Binh Dinh Province: RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Do Khoi, SIC Report No. 61/65, 10 Apr 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); and USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Vuong Duoc, Log No. 5-5-65, 17 May 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Gia Lai Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen The Ky, Log No. 10-490, 29 Dec 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL) and Log No. 1-263-65, 4 Feb 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Binh Duong Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Bay, Log No. 11-72, 19 Jan 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Kien Tuong Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Le Van Hai, Log No. 6-6-65, 22 June 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Tu Nghia District, Quang Ngai Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation

committee member:

The Party is the highest organization in any VC organization [sic] in the DRV as well as in the RVN. Therefore the Party is responsible for drafting policy and guide lines suitable for the situation of each period of time for various organizations of the Party to carry out. According to the organization principles applied so far, the

Report of Vuong Thi Manh, Log No. 1-338-65, 6 Feb 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); and Interrogation Report of Nguyen Dit, Log No. 8-255-65, 2 Oct 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Mo Duc District, Quang Ngai Province: RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Doan Duoc, SIC Report No. 63/65, 23 Apr 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Go Dau District, Tay Ninh Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Le Van Lieu, Log No. 10-28, 22 Dec 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Hong Nhu District, Kien Phong Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Ngoc Tung, Log No. 2-137-65, 28 Feb 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Phu My District, Binh Dinh Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Do Khoi, Log No. 11-13, 3 Dec 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Lai Thieu District, Binh Duong Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Thi Muon, Log No. 12-331, 13 Jan 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Tra Cu District, Vinh Binh Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Le Van Nghiem, Log No. 1-41-65, 18 Jan 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL), and RVN, CIO, NIC, SIC Report No. 237/65, 7 Sept 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Mo Cay District, Kien Hoa Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Thai Hoa, Log No. 5-309-65, 9 Jun 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL) and RVN, CIO, NIC, SIC Report No. 249/65, 14 Sept 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong Binh Dai District, Kien Hoa Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec. Interrogation Report of Tran Van Hung, Log No. 6-268-65, 30 Jun 1965 (DIA 6075 0454 65, 11 Jul 1965) (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong organization in Kim Son village, Dinh Tuong Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Sinh, Log No. 9-286, 24 Sept 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong organization in Xuan Son village, Cai Lay District, Dinh Tuong Province: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Hoa, Log No. 12-322, 14 Jan 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Viet Cong hamlet organization: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document (Notebook of a VC Political Officer), Log No. 7-378-65, Oct 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); Captured Document entitled: "Draft of Missions of VC Sub-Cell," Log No. 5-265, 13 Oct 1964; Captured Document entitled: "Experience Combat Villages Construction in Mountainous Areas," Log No. 11-157, 10 Mar 1965 (FOUO); Captured Document entitled: "Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," Log No. 11-158, 23 Jan 1965 (FOUO); RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Van Uy, SIC Report No. 107/65, 29 May 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL) and SIC Report No. 84/65, 7 May 1965 (DIA 6075 0279 65) (CONFIDENTIAL); RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 54/65, 30 Mar 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL) and SIC Report No. 103/65, 28 May 1965 (DIA 6075 0348 65) (CONFIDENTIAL). See also USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Documents (Long An Province Organization Charts), Log No. 5-173-65, 8 Jun 1965, (DIA 6075 0299 65, 4 Jun 1965) (FOUO). A secondary source is Letter, Headquarters, USMACV, 26 Jan 1965, Subject: "Organization of a Viet Cong Province" (File No. C-18745.100) (CONFIDENTIAL). The information furnished by the cadre

highest echelon of the Party is the Central (Party) Committee and the lowest is the (Party) Chapter.<sup>16</sup>

(U) The "Party" is the People's Revolutionary Party of South Vietnam, which is the formal name of the Communist Party. Until 1961, party members belonged to the Lao Dong Party of Vietnam, which is the Communist Party that led the Viet Minh resistance against the French and now rules North Vietnam. In 1961, the Lao Dong Party in South Vietnam changed its name to People's Revolutionary Party of South Vietnam in order to foster the impression that the insurgency was purely an internal affair of the South Vietnamese people. Documentary evidence establishes

listed above pertains to the 1964-early 1965 period. General information on Viet Cong principles of organization is furnished in the interrogation reports of Nguyen Van Uy, Tran Van Hung, Tran Quoc Ba, Nguyen Huynh, Nguyen Van Tron, and Nguyen Thi Muon. In order to assist in the evaluation of sources used most frequently in this chapter, the following additional information is furnished. Nguyen Van Uy, prior to his capture on 17 October 1964, was a member of the Propaganda and Training Section Committee, Western Nam-bo (lower Mekong delta) Region. Tran Van Hung, prior to his capture on 5 April 1965, was a District Party Committee member in charge of Civilian Proselyting, Binh Dai District, Kien Hoa Province. Tran Quoc Ba, prior to his defection on 29 June 1964, was a Senior Captain, B.4 Province Committee member, acting as Secretary of Khiem Duc District, B.4 (Quang Duc) Province. Nguyen Huynh, prior to his capture on 9 August 1964, was a member of Binh Dinh Province Civilian Proselyting Committee, in charge of religion proselyting. Nguyen Van Tron, prior to his capture on 19 November 1964, was a member of the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone Civilian Proselyting Committee, in charge of Youth Proselyting. Nguyen Thi Muon, prior to her capture on 3 October 1964, was a Training and Education cadre subordinate to the Lai Thieu District Party Committee, Binh Duong Province. Do Khoi, prior to his capture on 15 December 1963, was Secretary of the Village Party Chapter Committee and concurrently armed propaganda unit leader, My Hoa village, Phu My District, Binh Dinh Province. Vuong Thi Manh, prior to his capture on 9 July 1964, was Assistant Chief, District Party Committee Office Section, Tu Nghia District, Quang Ngai Province. Dang Minh, prior to his capture on 8 September 1964, was Deputy Chief, Military Intelligence Sub-section, Quang Ngai Province Military Affairs Section (headquarters of Quang Ngai Province forces). Doan Duoc, prior to his capture on 24 June 1964, was Chief, Financial Section, Mo Due District Committee, Quang Ngai Province. Doan Lot, prior to his capture on 28 April 1964, was a Senior Sergeant and Party member, 117th Transportation Company, Rear Services Section, Fifth Military Region.

<sup>16</sup>Tran Quoc Ba, p. 1/II.

that the Lao Dong Party and People's Revolutionary Party are the same Communist Party.<sup>17</sup> A captured Viet Cong document, dated 7 December 1961, states in part:

The People's Revolutionary Party has only the appearance of an independent existence; actually, our party is nothing but the Lao Dong Party of Viet-Nam (Viet-Minh Communist Party), unified from North to South, under the direction of the central executive committee of the party, the chief of which is President Ho.<sup>18</sup>

(U) The basic unit of party organization is the party chapter, which consists of three or more official party members.<sup>19</sup> The importance which the Viet Cong attach to the party chapter may be seen from the following extract from a captured document:

The Chapter is a basic organization and the foundation of the Party. All Party members work in Chapters. Together, all Party Chapters make up the Party. The Party is strong when Chapters are strong.

The Party Chapter is the intermediary between the Party and the masses. . . . The Party can be regarded as a tree; the people is the soil, and the Chapters are roots. The tree is green and flourishes when its roots dig in deeply into the soil.

The Party Chapter is an agency which directly carries out the correct line and policy of the Party. The Party Chapter propagandize the Party correct line and policy among the masses and transforms it into a struggle force of the masses. . . . The Chapter is a combat outpost of the Party set up among the masses from which, daily and directly, the Chapter has to confront the enemy.<sup>20</sup>

(C) In the rural areas, the Viet Cong strive to establish a Party Chapter in each village, although large villages may have more than

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<sup>17</sup>For a translation of the relevant documents, see U. S., Department of State, Aggression From the North: The Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign To Conquer South Viet-Nam, Dept. of State Publication 7839 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, Feb 1965), p. 57.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 15, 17. Interrogation Report of Tran Van Hung, pp. 29, 30.

<sup>20</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Role and Mission of Party Chapter in Rural Areas," Log No. 3-235, 5 Oct 1964, p. 1. (FOUO).

one party chapter.<sup>21</sup> As might be expected, the strength of the village party chapters varies according to the degree of Viet Cong population control. In "liberated areas," the chapters may have a large membership, there being no fixed upper limit.<sup>22</sup> In "disputed areas," chapters may have only the minimum of three members; and in villages under Government control, chapters may be non-existent.<sup>23</sup>

(C) The lowest command echelon in the Viet Cong system of organization is the party chapter committee. In principle, this committee is elected by the village party chapter, but in practice it is usually appointed.<sup>24</sup> It is directly subordinate to the district committee, whose directives it receives and executes.<sup>25</sup> According to a former high-ranking Viet Cong cadre:

The (Party) Chapter Committee is the place where all missions are concentrated and executed according to the Party directives. It is also a hyphen joining the Party and the masses, in other words, the Village (Party) Chapter Committee is a school or an experimental agency used to test the Party policy lines among the masses.<sup>26</sup>

(C) The organization of a party committee provides for a secretary, who is responsible for over-all leadership; an assistant secretary;

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<sup>21</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 15-17. Tran Van Hung, pp. 28-31. Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 1/II-3/II.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Within the chapter, cells of from 3-5 members are formed, and additional cells are formed as the chapter grows. However, these cells are designed to facilitate meetings and training, and to insure security. They are not a party command organization, as is the party chapter. See Nguyen Van Uy, p. 17, and Tran Van Hung, p. 30.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. "Usually the admittance (to a Committee) of village echelon cadre must be approved by the Province (Party) Committee, of District echelon cadre by Region (Party) Committee and of Province echelon cadre by the Central Office (COSVN)." Tran Quoc Ba, p. 2/II. See also Nguyen Huynh, p. 21.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Tran Quoc Ba, p. 2/II.

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and a variable number of members who are each responsible for a functional area of activity, such as military affairs, economy and finance, or propaganda and training. Each member has complete charge in his own field, and is responsible only to the party committee for his actions.<sup>27</sup> Of course, where the party chapter is small, members must assume responsibility for more than one functional area. This increases the workload and makes it difficult to perform all functions well.<sup>28</sup>

(c) The Viet Cong chain of command functions on the principle of centralized policy guidance and decentralized execution. The party committee at each echelon studies the directives and resolutions of the next higher echelon, and forms its own plan of action after taking into account the peculiar characteristics of its own situation. The party committee at each echelon does not have to submit its plans to the next higher echelon for approval prior to execution. In effect, the party committee has complete authority to act according to the requirements of the local situation, as long as it keeps the next higher echelon informed as to its problems in meeting assigned goals.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 15-25. Tran Van Hung, pp. 28-34. Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 1/II-8/II. See also, "Consolidation of the Finance and Economy Machinery from U to Hamlets," passim.

<sup>28</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, passim. Tran Van Hung, passim. Tran Quoc Ba, passim. Nguyen Huynh, passim.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. See also Captured Document, "Role and Mission of Party Chapter in Rural Areas," p. 5. An indication of the broad mandate of the Committee is provided by Tran Quoc Ba, who states: "Briefly, in addition to the execution of the Province General Policy, the District (Party) Committee is entitled to settle all problems falling within the sphere of activity of the District." Tran Quoc Ba, p. 3/II. The Party Committee at each echelon (village, district, province and region) is sometimes referred to as the Party Executive Committee. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 4; Tran Quoc Ba, p. 2/II; Tran Van Hung, p. 29; Nguyen Van Uy, p. 16. When a village has three or more Party Chapters, a Village Party (Executive) Committee is set up. Similarly, each district with three or more Village Party Chapters establishes a District

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(c) The party organization at each echelon follows command and staff lines. Specialized sections or agencies are created at each level of the chain of command to assist the party committee in standard functional areas, such as military affairs, economy and finance, and propaganda and training. These sections are subordinate to the party committee of their echelon, and are under the general supervision of a responsible committee member. In most cases these sections are operators as well as staff elements. For example, the economy and finance section may control one or more warehouses or production sites, and the military affairs section will control a staff section, political section, and rear services (supply) section in addition to military units.<sup>30</sup>

(c) The Viet Cong consider the specialized section or agency as a basic unit of their political organization.<sup>31</sup> An agency party chapter is formed to encompass all cadre<sup>32</sup> belonging to a specialized section or agency subordinate to district or higher level.<sup>33</sup> By early 1965, in the Viet Cong Central and Western Regions (Mekong Delta), the following specialized section subordinate to region, province, and district

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Party Committee. Nguyen Van Uy, pp. 17-20; Tran Van Hung, pp. 29-33; Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 2-3/II.

<sup>30</sup>Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 19, 23-24. Tran Van Hung, pp. 31-34. Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 4/II-7/II. Nguyen Huynh, pp. 57, 61.

<sup>31</sup>"Each specialized branch is a basic unit." Tran Van Hung, p. 32. "Each specialized branch constitutes a fundamental unit." Nguyen Van Uy, p. 19.

<sup>32</sup>The term "cadre" refers to all members of a Viet Cong organization who exercise a modicum of responsibility, from an assistant squad leader or assistant cell leader to the highest authorities. It includes both party and non-party members of the organization. A specialized section is usually led by party members, but not all members of the section need be party members.

<sup>33</sup>Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 18-19. Tran Van Hung, p. 31.

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committees could be found: military affairs, front affairs,<sup>34</sup> civilian proselyting,<sup>35</sup> propaganda and training,<sup>36</sup> organization,<sup>37</sup> security,

<sup>34</sup>Front affairs was responsible for supervising the activities of Liberation Front Associations, which are the mass organizations of the party. These associations are discussed below.

<sup>35</sup>Civilian proselyting section was responsible for instructing and supervising lower-echelon cadre in the mission of indoctrinating the masses to support the Viet Cong and carry out the party policy. It might have subordinate sections for youth proselyting, women proselyting, religious-group proselyting, and minority-group proselyting. For a good discussion of the civilian proselyting function, see Nguyen Huynh, pp. 56-60, 65-70; and RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 116/65, 9 Jun 1965 (DIA 6075 0363 65) (CONFIDENTIAL). In practice, the civilian proselyting and front sections were often combined. See Nguyen Huynh, Ibid; Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 67/65, passim; and Doan Duoc, p. 4. Furthermore, the propaganda lines and policies for civilian proselyting varied, depending upon the local situation and whether the area was "liberated," "disputed," or "enemy-occupied." See Nguyen Huynh, passim; Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Reports No. 67/65, 54/65, 87/65, and 116/65, passim; Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, passim; Tran Van Hung, passim; and Tran Quoc Ba, passim. See also, Vuong Thi Manh, p. 13.

<sup>36</sup>Propaganda and training section was responsible for preparation of training materials for the cadre, and publication of propaganda materials based upon party policies and the local situation. It might have a subordinate training school, press section, and psychological and entertainment team (which toured the liberated areas, urged youths to join the VC, and entertained the troops). See Do Khoi, pp. 3, 7; Doan Duoc, p. 4; Nguyen The Ky, pp. 15, 19; and Vuong Thi Manh, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup>Organization section was responsible for the organization of the cadre, and for supervision, assignment, and promotion of cadre. It maintained biographical data on the cadre, and kept in touch with cadre views and activities. See Do Khoi, pp. 3, 7; Doan Duoc, pp. 3-4; and Vuong Thi Manh, p. 11.

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military proselyting,<sup>38</sup> economy and finance,<sup>39</sup> public health,<sup>40</sup> base, security guard,<sup>41</sup> and communications-liaison. The agency party chapters of these specialized sections organized an agency party committee which was responsible for the leadership and internal organization of the

<sup>38</sup>Military proselyting section (also called troop and civil servant proselyting section) was responsible for all activities targeted at the enemy (Government) armed forces and civil servants. This section instructed lower-echelon cadres on the methods and procedures of inducing Government troops and civil servants to desert or provide information to the Viet Cong. See Do Khoi, pp. 4, 7; Doan Duoc, p. 4; and Vuong Thi Manh, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup>Economy and finance section was responsible for production (including agricultural production and animal husbandry in base areas), purchases, fund drives, annual contributions (taxes), and estimates of income and expenditures. See Do Khoi, Ibid; Doan Duoc, p. 5; Nguyen Huynh, pp. 61-65; RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Tan, SIC Report No. 89/65, 13 May 1965 (DIA 6075 0226 65) (CONFIDENTIAL); and USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Consolidation of the Finance & Economy Machinery From U to Hamlets," Log No. 12-419, 26 Jan 1965 (FOUO). See also, Vuong Thi Manh, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup>This section is the latest one to be organized by the Viet Cong. It was first formed at region level during 1964, and some province sections were being established during early 1965. It was designed to enhance Viet Cong administration of the liberated areas by initiating public health programs. See Nguyen Van Uy, p. 23; and Le Van Hai, pp. 20-21. It is apparent that this section was introduced at a relatively advanced stage of the insurgency.

<sup>41</sup>Security guard section is responsible for the defense of base areas, where headquarters and support facilities are established. The layout and organization of the base area is the responsibility of the base section. The security section, on the other hand, is responsible for police and counterintelligence activities in all areas of interest. In the liberated areas, it is concerned with controlling and preventing the entry of Government agents. Security sections, responsible to the local village party committee, are established in each village, to control the "people's networks" which inform on the presence of strangers in the area. At district level, a security section with a subordinate confinement camp for prisoners is established. On the other hand, the principal function of the security section in contested areas is to maintain dossiers on Government officials, landlords, and other "cruel persons." See Do Khoi, pp. 4, 7; Doan Duoc, p. 4; Le Van Lieu, pp. 9-10; and Vuong Thi Manh, p. 12.

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section.<sup>42</sup>

(C) There is no vertical chain of command extending from the specialized sections of higher echelons to specialized sections of lower echelons.<sup>43</sup> Since the chain of command runs from party committee to party committee at each echelon, the specialized section of a higher echelon is required to send all directives to lower echelons through party committee channels.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, if the specialized section of a higher echelon wishes to physically contact the specialized section of a lower echelon, it must first obtain a letter of introduction from its own party committee to the subordinate party committee.<sup>45</sup>

(C) While there is no command line between the specialized sections of higher and lower levels, there is, however, a channel of communications. Through this channel flow routine reports, circulars and bulletins to exchange work experiences, and other communications on purely technical matters that do not have the effect of a directive.<sup>46</sup> Only party committees may issue directives or resolutions to subordinate

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<sup>42</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 18-19. Tran Van Hung, p. 32. Thus, there is a province military affairs committee (the "Agency Party Committee" of the military affairs section), which heads the province military affairs section; a province civilian proselytizing committee which heads the province civilian proselytizing section, etc. See Nguyen Huynh, p. 3. This principle is followed in each of the subordinate sections of a specialized section, where a committee called a party organ is formed to provide leadership. Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 24. Tran Van Hung, p. 34. Nguyen Huynh, pp. 57, 61.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. Nguyen Huynh states that in an exceptional case, to be legal, a directive sent by a higher-echelon specialized section to a subordinate party committee should be signed by the chief of the specialized section in the name of the higher party committee. Nguyen Huynh, p. 57.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

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echelons. Consequently, specialized sections influence policy in their field of activity primarily by submitting plans for consideration by the party committee. When such a plan is adopted by the party committee, it becomes a party resolution, and the specialized section is charged with supervising the execution of the resolution.<sup>47</sup>

(C) During 1964, Viet Cong military forces were usually organized with a platoon at village level, a company at district level, one or more battalions at province level, and a variable number of battalions or regiments at region level.<sup>48</sup> The command of these forces was exercised through the military affairs section (or military affairs committee) of the village, district, province, or region party committee.<sup>49</sup> Thus, political-military unity of command was achieved at each echelon. However, because of the special nature of military operations, the Viet Cong found it necessary also to subordinate all military forces to a vertical chain of command. This chain of command ran from military

<sup>47</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report 103/65, pp. 8-9. Nguyen Thi Muon, p. 11. Letter, Headquarters, USMACV, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, 10 July 1964, Subject: "Type Viet Cong Political/Administrative Organization." (CONFIDENTIAL). There were also forces subordinate to the Central Office. Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> The military affairs section consisted of a command section; a staff section with subordinate sections for operations and training, military intelligence, and communications; a political section with subordinate sections for organization (in charge of cadre affairs), propaganda and training, troop proselytizing, and security (the political section presented commendations, administered discipline, and made promotions of cadre and soldiers); and a rear services section with subordinate sections for quartermaster supply, military subsistence, military medical, and arms. To the military affairs section were attached one or more subordinate units. See RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Dang Minh, SIC Report No. 79/65, 5 May 1965 (DIA 6075 0269 65) (CONFIDENTIAL); USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Ho Hoang Phuong, Log No. 6-49-65, 31 July 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); Nguyen Tho Ky, parasite; and USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document, Subject: "Rear Services," Log No. 1-234-65, 14 Feb 1965. (FOUO).

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affairs section to military affairs section, and constituted an exception to the rule that there would be no vertical chain of command between specialized sections.<sup>50</sup>

(C) The party committee retained a powerful voice on military operations in its area and could even veto operations directed by higher military headquarters if it saw fit. Tran Quoc Ba states that "a military unit coming from another place to attack a certain post must withdraw immediately if the Village (Party) Committee does not approve, even though this unit is subordinate to the Region or the Central Office."<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Nguyen Van Uy states that if a military unit should receive instructions from a higher military headquarters that the party committee wishes it to disregard, it should disregard such instructions and allow the respective party committees to resolve the dispute.<sup>52</sup> It is clear, therefore, that while military units are subject to two chains of command, in case of conflict the political chain is superior.

(U) With its broad mandate, control over its own specialized sections, and a powerful voice in military operations, the party committee achieves virtually complete unity of command of both political and military elements of the Viet Cong organization within its area of responsibility. Furthermore, the subordination of the military to the political chain of command insures that military operations continuously support political objectives. A captured Viet Cong document states:

Strict observance of the following principle is necessary: There should be a close coordination between the military and political objectives. Each battle should bring advantages in the political

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<sup>50</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 24.

<sup>51</sup> Tran Quoc Ba, p. 3/II.

<sup>52</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 24.

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field and should be placed under the 'absolute' leadership of the local Party Committee echelons.<sup>53</sup>

(c) Since the presence of party committee members is required in the field, to supervise party work in their sphere of activity or engage in other party missions, the party committee does not meet continuously. Instead, routine meetings are scheduled as follows: party chapter and village party committee, once a month; district party committee, once every three months; province and region party committees, once every six months.<sup>54</sup>

(c) The function of providing continuous guidance to subordinate elements during the interval between party committee meetings is the responsibility of the most powerful subordinate section of the committee, the current affairs section. The Viet Cong do not consider current affairs to be a specialized section, for it is concerned with general, not special, party affairs.<sup>55</sup> The need for current affairs is explained by Nguyen Van Uy as follows:

Before 1963 [sic], there was only one member in charge of current affairs, therefore the solution to any problem was not properly and timely adopted and lacked unified action.

For that reason, the Region Party Committee issued a Resolution instructing Party Committee echelons (Chapter Party Committee, District Party Committee, Province Party Committee) to make available from 2 to 3 Current Affairs members from the beginning of 1964.<sup>56</sup>

The function of current affairs is to receive reports from specialized sections and lower echelons; to receive and disseminate resolutions and

<sup>53</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Mission and Guide-Line for District and Province Local Units," Log No. 11-43, 11 Nov 1964, p. 6. (FOUO).

<sup>54</sup>Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 24-25. Tran Van Hung, p. 34.

<sup>55</sup>Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 19.

<sup>56</sup>Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 21.

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directives from higher echelon; and to assign work and provide guidance and assistance to the specialized sections and lower echelons. In other words, it assumes the party committee mission.<sup>57</sup>

(C) Current affairs sections of village and chapter party committees meet twice a month, while current affairs sections of district and province party committees meet once a month. In the interim, current affairs assigns work to a standing group (or standing committee) consisting of a current affairs member and one or two other cadre. The standing committee is in charge of day-to-day operations, and is in over-all control of the province or district. The district standing group meets once every three days, and the province standing group meets once every five days.<sup>58</sup>

(C) Like members of the party committee, cadre of the specialized sections at district level and below participate directly in operations.<sup>59</sup> Province-level cadre are also used to reinforce lower-echelon organizations when these are weakly developed or when a major task is to be performed.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, specialized sections must be viewed as

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<sup>57</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 21-22. Tran Van Hung, p. 33. Nguyen Huynh, p. 57, 61.

<sup>58</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 21-22, 24-25. Vuong Thi Manh, p. 11. Nguyen Thanh Sach, pp. 2,5. Dang Minh, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Tran Van Hung, p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> As an example, Nguyen Huynh states: "Late in 1963, the production leadership in the delta was considered as an immediate mission, therefore the Economy and Finance Section of the Province Party Committee sent its personnel to hamlets and villages located along the mountains (newly liberated areas) in Hoai An, Hoai Nhon, Phu My, Phu Cat districts (Binh Dinh Province) to coordinate with the farmer's associations of the District and villages in view of assigning . . . missions to each area." Nguyen Huynh, p. 60. See also Nguyen Huynh, passim; Tran Quoc Ba, passim; and Captured Document, "Consolidation of the Finance and Economy Machinery From U to Hamlets," passim. For an example from an earlier period, when almost all cadre were sent to the field, see Letter,

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operating arms of the local party committee as well as staff sections. This is an important distinction that is not readily perceived from a simple block diagram of the party structure. At higher echelons the staff function emerges more clearly, but it is still blended with operating responsibilities.<sup>61</sup>

(C) The political structure described above is a product of growth and adaptation to the changing conditions of insurgent conflict. The process of organizational development is continuous, with the organs established in the liberated areas achieving a more advanced state than those in the contested or Government-controlled areas.<sup>62</sup> As new problems arise, the organizational machinery is tailored to meet the challenge. Tran Quoc Ba discloses that the Viet Cong found it necessary

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Headquarters USMACV, MAC J23 Serial 0348, 2 April 1963, Subject: "Letter of Transmittal" (File No. C-18745.29-C, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Library), which transmits a translation of a captured document entitled: "Situation of Party Build-up and Consolidation in 1962," passim (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>61</sup> Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 4/II, 6/II. Doan Lot, passim.

<sup>62</sup> For varied and numerous examples of Viet Cong organizational growth, see Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, passim; Tran Van Hung, passim; Tran Quoc Ba, passim; Nguyen Huynh, passim; Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 67/65; Nguyen Tho Ky, passim; Le Van Nghiem, passim; Tran Thai Hoa, passim; Do Khoi, passim; SIC Report 237/65; SIC Report 249/65. A unique organizational development was the formation during 1964 of "Grasping Opportunity" Committees, which were charged with preparation and execution of special plans during the period of a Saigon coup. See Do Khoi, Log No. 11-13, p. 27; and Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 54/65, pp. 4-5. According to Nguyen Van Tron, each Party branch at all levels of the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone (Region) was required to prepare a "grasping opportunity" plan to be forwarded to the Special Zone Committee for approval. During periods of political turmoil, the Special Zone "Grasping Opportunity" Committee "was to assume command of all cadre and was to utilize all facilities at all branches and levels in order to achieve its mission." (Tron, p. 4.) The "Grasping Opportunity" Committee was directly responsible to the Special Zone Committee. Tron, ibid. Thus, the "Grasping Opportunity" Committee was a stand-by planning agency which, at the appropriate moment, was inserted into the regular chain of command to direct Viet Cong operations under the special conditions created by political turmoil in the capital. It was a unique organizational solution to a unique problem.

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to dissolve some district committees in order to assign the cadre to armed propaganda teams when the Strategic Hamlet program was introduced.<sup>63</sup> Nguyen Huynh tells of serious food shortages in the Central Vietnamese highlands during late 1962, whereupon the Viet Cong considerably strengthened the economy and finance machinery in order to improve the situation by the following year.<sup>64</sup> When it became the policy of the Khanh Government to enlist the religious minorities--Cao Dai and Hoa Hao, as well as Catholics--in the anti-Communist struggle, the civilian proselytizing sections of the Viet Cong were strengthened for "religious proselytizing."<sup>65</sup>

(C) A major factor limiting the development of the Viet Cong political apparatus is the shortage of trained cadres.<sup>66</sup> This requires that the available cadres assume responsibility for more than one function, with a resulting increase in work-load and reduced ability to reap the benefits of specialization. According to Nguyen Huynh, no religion proselytizing cadre were available in the districts and villages of Binh Dinh Province as of mid-1964. Consequently, this mission had to be assumed by cadre in charge of farmers proselytizing, or by chiefs of civilian proselytizing sections.<sup>67</sup> Tran Van Hung states that the Viet Cong were unable to establish "enterprise Party Chapters" in the rice-mills, ice plants, and electrical power plants of Binh Dai District, Kien Hoa

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<sup>63</sup> Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 22-23/I, 27-31/I.

<sup>64</sup> Nguyen Huynh, pp. 60-65. See also "Consolidation of the Finance and Economy Machinery From U to Hamlets," passim, (late 1963-early 1964 period).

<sup>65</sup> Nguyen Huynh, pp. 66-70. Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 13.

<sup>66</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, passim, especially p. 18. Tran Van Hung, passim, especially p. 31. Tran Quoc Ba, passim. Nguyen Huynh, passim.

<sup>67</sup> Nguyen Huynh, p. 67.

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Province, "due to the shortage of backbone cadre."<sup>68</sup> Moreover,

Most of the Party members in Binh Dai District are young. Therefore they are very enthusiastic and their combat spirit is very high, but their knowledge of the policy line and operative methods is still poor and as a result they have sometimes deviated [from the prescribed policy].

In addition, there was a number of old-time Party members with a good record of achievements and loyal to the Party but their level of understanding was very low.<sup>69</sup>

When the Viet Cong of the Western Region (lower Mekong delta) determined in July 1964 to strengthen their proselyting activities among the religious groups, ethnic minorities, and refugees in the delta, they encountered obstacles in the form of a lack of sufficient cadre and a low level of awareness among party members of the importance of this mission.

The Viet Cong's solution to this problem was to direct province and district committees to assign additional cadre to their civilian proselyting sections, employ mobile training teams to conduct brief courses for civilian proselyting cadre, and conduct additional indoctrination on the civilian proselyting mission.<sup>70</sup> Numerous other examples of the shortage of trained cadre could be cited.<sup>71</sup>

(U) As additional cadre become available, they are assigned so as to permit specialization. A good illustration is the Viet Cong plan for establishing the economy and finance machinery of Tay Ninh Province by June 1964. The following excerpts reveal that the general organizing principle was specialization of function from province committee

<sup>68</sup> Tran Van Hung, p. 32. This comment applies to the early 1965 period.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>70</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 13.

<sup>71</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, passim. Tran Quoc Ba, passim. Tran Van Hung, passim. Nguyen Huynh, passim. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 87/65, passim.

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to hamlet;

Any District which still has a Party Committee member in charge of more than one function is required to gradually relieve him from these functions to allow him to specialize in branch.

At present . . . the financial and economic tasks increase every-day. It requires to have 1 District Party Committee member to be in charge of . . . each type mission. Each District Party Committee should assign one of its members to one type of mission according to the assignment of work. . . .

#### Village finance and economy section:

Assign personnel to those villages where the finance & economy section are established but the shortage of cadre exists.

Efforts should be made to establish these sections in those villages which have had none.

### Hamlet Finance & Economy cells:

Amy hamlet which has had no cell of this kind is required to set it up.

Strategic hamlet Party chapter and area cadre groups must assign 1 cadre to assume this mission.

Each Strategic Hamlet must have at least 1 key cadre to assume this mission.<sup>72</sup>

(c) The desire for cadre specialization, together with the tendency to establish new "occupational specialties," such as public health, leads to a continuous requirement for trained cadres. The struggle process generates a further requirement, such as the need for "backbone cadre" to organize enterprise, town, and market Party Chapters.<sup>73</sup> Even success imposes a burden, for every "liberated" village must soon have its own economy and finance section, security section, and other elements of the apparatus.

72 "Consolidation of the Finance & Economy Machinery From U to Hamlets," p. 7. This document was disseminated in late 1963, and called for completion of actions directed prior to June 1964.

73 Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 5, 8/II.

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(U) Since the training of cadres, together with the organization and consolidation of the party apparatus, requires time, it is evident that every respite given the Viet Cong can be used by them to enhance the development of their infrastructure. It is also evident that the infrastructure can be far more efficient in mobilizing manpower and resources for the Viet Cong when it can operate in an environment substantially devoid of Government presence.

(C) Infiltration from North Vietnam constituted an important source of trained cadres for the Viet Cong political organization, as well as for military units.<sup>74</sup> For example, in June 1963 the North Vietnamese regime<sup>75</sup> ordered 550 regrouped political cadre<sup>76</sup> to report to Son Tay Training Center in North Vietnam to begin training for infiltration into South Vietnam. According to Vuong Thi Manh, who was a member of this group:

All the 550 students were political cadre. Most of them were Village Chapter Committee members, a few were District Committee

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<sup>74</sup>In this section, only the infiltration of political cadre will be considered.

<sup>75</sup>In North Vietnam, the over-all direction of infiltration into South Vietnam was, on the Party side, the responsibility of the Reunification Department or Central Reunification Committee of the Lao Dong Party; and, on the Government side, the responsibility of the Reunification Commission or Reunification Front. Vuong Thi Manh, Do Khoi, and Nguyen Huynh received their orders to report for infiltration training from the Central Reunification Committee. Vuong Thi Manh's reception ceremony included an address by an official of the Reunification Front, and Do Khoi's group was addressed by the Chief of the Central Reunification Committee. See Vuong Thi Manh, pp. 4-6; Do Khoi, Log No. 11-13, pp. 3, 6-7; and Nguyen Huynh, p. 51. See also the organization chart in Aggression From the North, p. 59. Tran Quoc Ba also studied at Son Tay, prior to his infiltration in February, 1960. Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 2-3.

<sup>76</sup>"Regrouped cadre" or "cadre returned from regroupment" refers to those natives of South Vietnam who fought for the Viet Minh during the Resistance War and, after the signing of the Geneva Accords in July 1954, went to North Vietnam to live and work. This movement of Viet Minh cadres to the North is not as well known as the mass exodus of refugees from the North which took place at that time. Vuong Thi Manh,

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members and the remaining students were Party members. They were native from various provinces of the South such as Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa provinces. There were about 20 men native from Quang Ngai province.<sup>77</sup>

After eleven weeks of training, which included instruction on the party mission and policies in South Vietnam, the trainees were divided into five infiltration groups. Vuong Thi Manh became a member of Infiltration Group 5, composed of 72 cadre from Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, and Phu Yen, which departed on 7 September 1963 and arrived at a reception station of the Viet Cong Fifth Region in late November 1963. There the infiltration group was divided into six elements for further assignment. Vuong Thi Manh's element of 12 men was assigned to the Quang Ngai Province Party Committee. Upon arrival, he was further assigned to the Tu Nghia District Party Committee, while others were assigned to the Province Party Committee and to Duc Pho District.<sup>78</sup>

Do Khoi, and Nguyen Huynh were regrouped to North Vietnam on Polish vessels. See Vuong Thi Manh, p. 3; Do Khoi, p. 3; and Nguyen Huynh, p. 2. Do Khoi states that his group consisted of cadres of all branches of the Binh Dinh Administrative Resistance Committee who had joined the Viet Minh for three years, together with their relatives. Do Khoi, p. 3. Nguyen Huynh states that his group consisted of personnel of the Binh Dinh Public Security Service. Nguyen Huynh, p. 2. An official source places the total number of regrouped cadre at 80-100,000. See Republic of Vietnam, Ministry of Armed Forces, J2 High Command and USMACV, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Joint Publication, Viet Cong Military Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel (USMACV, Trans. Soc., Log No. 3-283-65, 9 Apr 1965), p. 1. (CONFIDENTIAL). The cadres discussed in this section worked as minor party or government officials until called upon by the Central Reunification Committee to return to South Vietnam to serve in the Viet Cong organization. See Vuong Thi Manh, ibid; Do Khoi, ibid; and Nguyen Huynh, ibid.

77. Vuong Thi Manh, p. 6.

78. Ibid., pp. 6-10. Prior to his capture on 9 July 1964, Vuong Thi Manh was Assistant Chief, Tu Nghia District Party Committee. He states that of the 140 cadres subordinate to the district committee (at district level and below), 14 had returned from regroupment to North Vietnam. Of the eight members and reserve members of the district standing committee, seven were cadres who had returned from regroupment. The District Local Force Company consisted of 110 men, of whom six were cadres returned from regroupment. Ibid., pp. 17-23.

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(C) A similar story is told by Do Khoi, a native of Binh Dinh Province who regrouped to the North in 1954 and returned to the South to join the Viet Cong in 1962. He and 52 others, "who were mostly SVN cadre regrouped to NVN and selected from work and agricultural sites, enterprises, and government agencies,"<sup>79</sup> attended a fifteen-day training course at a school subordinate to the Central Reunification Committee at Hoa Binh, North Vietnam. After processing at the Fifth Region's reception station, Do Khoi was assigned to the Binh Dinh group, composed of 22 men. This group arrived at a station in Binh Dinh Province on 30 September 1962, and was given a ten-day "advanced political training course" by a propaganda and training cadre of Binh Dinh Province. At the graduation ceremony, the Assistant Secretary of the Province Party Committee assigned the cadre to various villages and districts of the province. Do Khoi and six others were assigned to Phu My District. He subsequently became the Village Party Chapter Secretary and armed propaganda unit leader of My Hoa village, Phu My District.<sup>80</sup>

(C) Nguyen Huynh, who had been working for the Ministry of

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<sup>79</sup>Do Khoi, Log No. 11-13, p. 5.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-14. Part of the training was in the "five operational steps" for recruiting additional cadre. These were: (1) thorough investigation of the background, attitudes, and political leaning of the individual the party is interested in; (2) use of the investigation as a basis for drafting a "propaganda plan" for each individual, "taking into account his material and moral life, etc.;" (3) after repeated propaganda sessions, if the individual is inclined to accept the policy line, introducing him into a lower Viet Cong organization, such as a guerrilla force or "liberation farmers' association;" (4) continued education and training after the individual joins an organization; and (5) upon completion of training, assignment of a suitable mission. The Viet Cong call these steps investigation, propaganda, organization, training, and mission. In the Viet Cong system, these steps are applicable to any political task (for example, the subversion of a hamlet); hence the "five operational steps" are stressed in training. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

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Construction in Hanoi, received his summons from the Central Reunification Committee in June 1960. He and 24 other natives of Binh Dinh Province attended a one-month, pre-infiltration training course conducted in Hanoi by cadre of the Central Reunification Committee. According to Huynh, the Binh Dinh Infiltration Group "was composed of political cadre from District Committee members and lower."<sup>81</sup> Subsequent to his arrival in South Vietnam, he was sent by the Binh Province Party Committee to attend a training course "on the situation and revolutionary mission in South Vietnam." Huynh states that this course was designed to answer questions "which had not been satisfactorily explained during the previous SVN Infiltration Course."<sup>82</sup> Later, since the province committee was short of propaganda and training cadre, Huynh was sent to attend a Party Indoctrination Course. Attendance at the above courses occupied the period from August to November 1961. Thereafter, when the Binh Dinh Party Committee decided to activate its civilian proselyting section in May 1962, Huynh and two others became the first members of that section. By December 1962 the civilian proselyting section had been reinforced with additional cadre, and had set up its own agency (i.e., section office). After that time Nguyen Huynh was a member of the civilian proselyting section in charge of religious affairs until his capture on 9 August 1964.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Nguyen Huynh, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., Huynh also received training in the "five operational steps." Ibid., pp. 3, 53.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 3, 51-53. Of the seven members of the province civilian proselyting committee in early 1964, two were regrouped cadre and the other five were "underground cadre" who had remained behind in 1954. Of the fourteen district-level cadre who were in charge of civilian proselyting in seven districts (most of these were current affairs members, concurrently in charge of civilian proselyting), seven were regrouped cadre. Ibid., pp. 57, 65-66.

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(U) The foregoing examples suffice to give an indication of Viet Cong reliance upon infiltration from North Vietnam to help overcome the shortage of political cadres in South Vietnam. In this way, they were undoubtedly able to build their political organization in a shorter time than would otherwise have been possible. It is impossible, with the data available, to accurately gauge the importance of infiltrated cadre to the Viet Cong.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, the importance of the political command structure in the over-all Viet Cong organization, the relatively high standing of infiltrated cadre in this command structure, and the ability of cadre to multiply themselves through recruitment and training (thereby assimilating local leadership elements), are factors which indicate that infiltration provided a crucial margin of a resource essential to the development of the insurgent movement. Without an increase in the number of political cadres, the growth of the insurgency would have been self-limiting, as the party's ability to organize and control the population is limited until additional cadres become available.

<sup>84</sup> A few of the cadre cited in this chapter were asked during interrogation to give a biographical description of their associates in the service of the Viet Cong, to include a statement of whether the individual was an infiltrator or not. It is possible to analyze these lists to determine the frequency of infiltrator appearance. For example, of the 27 province and district-level cadre known to Dang Minh in Quang Ngai Province, 9 were persons who had returned from regroupment. Dang Minh, SIC Report No. 102/65, pp. 7-11. In addition, 9 of the 28 province and district-level cadre of Quang Ngai known to Nguyen Thanh Sach were persons who had returned from regroupment. Nguyen Thanh Sach, pp. 6-9. On the other hand, of the 64 region and province-level cadre known to Nguyen Van Uy, only six had returned from regroupment, and five of these were in the military affairs section at region level. Nguyen Van Uy, Log. No. 1-92-65, pp. 29-34. Of the 51 cadre of the Dong Thap 63 Battalion (this battalion operated in the Central Nam-bo Region, i.e., the upper Mekong delta) known to Le Van Dat, 16 were persons who had returned from regroupment. USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Le Van Dat, Log No. 3-42-65, 28 Apr 1965, pp. 15-21. (CONFIDENTIAL). From this fragmentary data, it is only possible to gain a general appreciation of the extent of infiltrator participation in the cadre echelons of various Viet Cong organizations.

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(U) The party apparatus described above is the political organization of the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. This is the policy-formulating and command structure of the insurgents.

(U) It is also necessary to consider the organizational structure which links the party to the masses, and seeks to engage the masses in a "people's war" against the Government. This is the function of the mass or front organizations of the Viet Cong. Such organizations serve to transmit party mandates to the masses, and to execute the party will at the village and hamlet level. Tran Quoc Ba states that,

After having accomplished the indoctrination and propaganda of the masses, the VC first mission will be to organize the masses into groups according to age to suit the character of each type of target personality. In this way, can we succeed in indoctrinating in depth and properly assigning missions to each individual who will find it possible to contribute his creative suggestions to the organization.<sup>85</sup>

(C) By far the most important of the Viet Cong's mass organizations are those aimed at mobilizing the rural population. These are the Liberation Farmers' Association, the Liberation Youth's Association, and the Liberation Women's Association.<sup>86</sup> Each of the associations is composed of cells of up to ten members and, depending upon the number of members, each contains sub-groups composed of three or more cells, and one or more groups comprising the association chapter at the village

<sup>85</sup> Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 12-13/II.

<sup>86</sup> Tran Van Hung states that a majority of the people living in the liberated areas belong to one of the three associations. Tran Van Hung, p. 40. Tran Quoc Ba implies the same; see Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 31-15/II. Nguyen Van Tron states that in the area of the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone approximately three-fourths of the farmers living in the liberated areas belonged to the Liberation Farmers' Association. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report 103/65, p. 4. The three associations are also among the first "revolutionary installations" established in areas where the Viet Cong seek to expand their control. Nguyen Dit, *passim*.

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level.<sup>87</sup> Each association is headed, at the village level, by an executive committee and a civil affairs committee. The civil affairs committee participates in the administration of the village; it is concerned with such functions as marriages, rituals, and settlement of land disputes.<sup>88</sup> The executive committee is responsible for indoctrinating the people on party policy,<sup>89</sup> formulating the method of implementing party directives locally, and motivating the masses for execution.<sup>90</sup>

The mission of the Liberation Farmers' Association is to increase production, collect "contributions" (taxes) for the Viet Cong, construct hamlet defenses, settle disputes arising from application of the Viet Cong land policy, and assist in the transportation of supplies and evacuation of the wounded.<sup>91</sup> According to Nguyen Van Tron, many non-members of the association also participated in these activities, but considered it a waste of time to join and attend the numerous meetings. The Viet Cong did not force them to become members.<sup>92</sup> The village and hamlet

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<sup>87</sup> Tran Quoc Ba, p. 13-14/II. Tran Van Hung, pp. 12-14, 40. Nguyen Van Tron, pp. 4-5. The group is considered the basic unit of the mass association.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. See also, Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report 87/65, pp. 6-7, and SIC Report No. 54/65, p. 6. There is also a civil affairs committee at the hamlet level.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. The indoctrination which villagers receive is actually laid before them as "Front" policy. "Front" refers to the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN), which is the national organization to which local liberation associations belong. It is shown below that Front policy is in reality party policy. For the most explicit statement of this, see Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report 87/65, *passim*.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 87/65, p. 7; SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 4. Tran Quoc Ba, p. 13/II. Nguyen Huynh, pp. 14, 56-60. Nguyen Van Uy, SIC Report No. 84/65, pp. 2-3.

<sup>92</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 4. The Farmers' Association is open to men, ages 30-45, and to married men under 30 whose family situation prevents them from joining the Liberation Youth's Association. Nguyen Duy, *passim*.

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Farmers' Associations played a particularly important part in the Viet Cong's economy and finance machinery, handling such matters as land clearance, agricultural credit, and corvée labor for construction of irrigation ditches and canals.<sup>93</sup> The civil affairs committees of the Farmers' Associations at hamlet level plays a leading role in the administration of civil affairs, such as performance of marriages, funerals, and other rituals, and settling land disputes and legal suits.<sup>94</sup>

(C) The mission of the Liberation Women's Association is to mobilize the persuasive powers of the sex for the benefit of the party. As Tran Quoc Ba says, "even though they are the fair sex, their propaganda activities have a great effect on the opposite sex."<sup>95</sup> Consequently, women are employed to urge the people to contribute resources to the Viet Cong, to propagandize young men into joining the Viet Cong forces, and to encourage other women to support their families so that their husbands and sons can join the Viet Cong. The Liberation Women also establish various benevolent associations--Soldiers' Mothers Association, Sisters' Association and the like--to assist the needy families of Viet Cong soldiers, comfort those who have lost sons and husbands, and organize financial drives for the support of wounded veterans. The Womens'

<sup>93</sup> Nguyen Huynh, p. 14. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 54/65, pp. 9-10. "Consolidation of the Finance & Economy Machinery From U to Hamlets," pp. 4-6. Nguyen Van Uy, SIC Report No. 84/65, pp. 2-3.

<sup>94</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 54/65, p. 10; and SIC Report No. 87/65, pp. 6-7. Tron's information is applicable to the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone until late 1964. In other areas, the Liberation Farmers' Association played a key role in local administration until the Viet Cong established administrative organs to assume this function. See Nguyen Van Uy, SIC Report No. 84/65, *passim*. There is evidence, cited below, that the Viet Cong did not begin seriously to develop an administrative organization until late 1964.

<sup>95</sup> Tran Quoc Ba, p. 16/II.

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Association participates in the Viet Cong "troop proselyting" mission by urging Government troops, either directly or through their families, to defect. It also plays an important role in organizing demonstrations of women to protest Government artillery firing and bombing in the vicinity of hamlets and farm lands.<sup>96</sup>

(C) The mission of the Liberation Youth's Association is to provide a source of manpower for Viet Cong militia, guerrillas, and regular military forces; to construct hamlet defenses and perform sentinel and outpost duty; to sabotage communication lines and strategic hamlet fortifications; to furnish manpower for transportation of supplies and for production at Viet Cong installations; to participate in educational, cultural, and welfare activities; and to energetically propagandize the party line.<sup>97</sup> The Liberation Youth's Association enlists rural youths, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, without discrimination as to sex, ethnic group, or religion.<sup>98</sup> The over-all purpose of the

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 54/65, p. 10. Nguyen Huynh, pp. 58-60. Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 12-14.

<sup>97</sup> Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 13-15/II. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report 54/65, passim; and SIC Report No. 103/65, passim. Nguyen Dit, passim.

<sup>98</sup> Tran Quoc Ba, p. 13/II. Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 25. Tran Van Hung, p. 35. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 4. Nguyen Dit, passim. Nguyen Van Tron states that, in the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone, "all the youths, both male and female, in the liberated areas joined the Liberation Youth Association." Nguyen Van Tron, p. 4. The requirement for all youths to belong to the association constitutes, in effect, a draft of local manpower for the contribution of specific services to the Viet Cong. Nguyen Dit confirms that this policy was also applied in Quang Ngai Province (for all youths of ages 16-30). Nguyen Dit, passim. However, Tran Van Hung discloses that in Binh Dai District, Kien Hoa Province, as of early 1965, there were approximately eight thousand male and female youths residing in the liberated area, and of these only 637 were members of the Liberation Youth Association. Tran Van Hung, p. 12. This discrepancy is not easily explained. Since Binh Dai District has a relatively well-developed Viet Cong infrastructure, the hypothesis that it was unable to handle a larger Youth's Association does not seem plausible. It would appear that in Kien Hoa

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association is to mobilize the energy and talents of the young people for the Viet Cong. The Liberation Youth's Association is an organized manpower pool from which village guerrillas and militia are drawn. In turn, the guerrillas and militia constitute a reserve of manpower for Viet Cong units.<sup>99</sup> The Liberation Youth provide the manpower for such prodigious feats as the hauling away of an entire section of road, or the construction of a maze of parapets, trenches, and underground tunnels which convert an ordinary-looking hamlet into a fortress.<sup>100</sup> When a Viet Cong unit gives battle, the Liberation Youth assist in preparation of the battlefield by laying mines and spikes, and clearing fields of fire. They organize medical groups for care and evacuation of the wounded, and provide communications-liaison teams to expedite Viet Cong communications and alert the population to the approach of Government

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the Viet Cong opted, as a matter of policy, for voluntary participation in the Youth's Association. This was, perhaps, just as effective as a larger, more loosely-controlled organization. It is not known whether the Kien Hoa pattern was repeated elsewhere in the Mekong delta. As is the case with many other Viet Cong policies, all that is established is a variable pattern among provinces. This is easily understood, given the wide latitude conferred upon Viet Cong policy-making echelons.

<sup>99</sup>Tran Quoc Ba, p. 15/II. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, pp. 3-10. Both Tran Quoc Ba and Nguyen Van Tron stress the importance which the Viet Cong attach to winning the support of the young people. The former cites the following Viet Cong slogan: "The Youths are available wherever they are needed to perform difficult works." Tran Quoc Ba also states that the Viet Cong praise the youth as "models in the emulation of scoring achievements" and "a mainstay in the build-up of a self-sufficient economy." He concludes that, "in the VC eyes, the youths are presently a very important arm [which] can perform any kind of mission assigned by the Front and the Party." Tran Quoc Ba, p. 15/II. Nguyen Van Tron describes the measures taken by the Viet Cong to strengthen the "youth proselytizing movement" and the Liberation Youths' Associations in order to facilitate the recruitment of 6,500 youths (one-third female) during the last quarter of 1964. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 54/65, pp. 7-9. Since the males alone are the equivalent of eleven battalions, the payoff of the effort spent upon the youth organizations is evident.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid. See also, "Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," passim.

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troops.<sup>101</sup>

(C) The Liberation Youth also engage in constructive activities, such as teaching sanitation and disease prevention. They instruct the farmer on improved methods of cultivation, and assist in the establishment of schools and first-aid stations.<sup>102</sup> In Tu Nghia District, Quang Ngai Province, the Liberation Youth's Association sponsors a Liberation Children's Association in which membership is compulsory for all 10-15 year old children. The children's cells meet every evening for singing. Periodically, the children's sub-group meets for instruction by a youth-group member on warning signals, rules of secrecy, and on art and cultural activities.<sup>103</sup>

(C) The Viet Cong consider the role of the young people so important that they have established a party youth organization, the People's Revolutionary Youth Group (also known as the Labor Youth Group), to bring the most zealous elements of the youth under the direct influence and control of the party. According to Nguyen Van Uy,

The People's Revolutionary Youth Group is the closest organization of the Party. . . . The Group is organized according to the Party system and is under the leadership of the Party. . . . The Group has a vertical chain of Command from the Group Central Office to village.<sup>104</sup>

It should be noted that the People's Revolutionary Youth Group is considered important enough to warrant, in principle, a vertical chain of command paralleling that of the party. However, this chain of command does not in fact exist, because each group echelon is placed under the

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<sup>101</sup> Nguyen Dit, passim.

<sup>102</sup> Tran Quoc Ba, p. 15/II.

<sup>103</sup> Nguyen Dit, passim.

<sup>104</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 25.

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control of the party organization at the same echelon. Thus, the village sub-group is placed under the village party committee, and so on.<sup>105</sup>

(C) Membership in the People's Revolutionary Youth Group is open to all youth, ages 16-25, who accept the Group regulations.<sup>106</sup> The Group is organized in military units as well as in hamlets and villages in the "liberated" and "contested" areas.<sup>107</sup> A sub-group is established in any village, agency, enterprise, or military unit that has three or more group members. A sub-group which has several group cells may form an executive committee designated as party group committee, composed of a secretary, assistant secretary, and a number of members. Two or more sub-groups comprise a group, which may form a district, village, or agency group committee.<sup>108</sup>

(U) The People's Revolutionary Youth Group serves to assimilate some of the best leadership elements of the youth to the party. It also provides a source of party members and cadre, furnishes cadre for the Liberation Youth's Associations, and supervises and controls the Liberation Youth's Associations for the party. In effect, the party has created the People's Revolutionary Youth Group as a buttress for the Liberation Youth's Association.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. Tran Van Hung, p. 35. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 87/65, pp. 3-6.

<sup>106</sup> Tran Van Hung, p. 35. Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 25. USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Political Indoctrination Program for the First Quarter of 1965," Log No. 2-54-65, 14 Feb 1965, p. 2. (FOUO).

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. USMACV, J-2, Trans, Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Quoc Thai, Log No. 10-234, 8 Dec 1964, pp. 21-23. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>108</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 25. Nguyen Quoc Thai, p. 22. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, passim. Tran Van Hung, p. 35.

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(C) Party control of the People's Revolutionary Youth Group is assured by placing the village and hamlet sub-groups under the supervision of a youth proselytizing cadre responsible to the village party committee. Similarly, a district youth group is placed under the supervision of the district party committee.<sup>110</sup> In the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone (region) the party and group are fused at the top (at region level, immediately above district) by appointing a party cadre as secretary of the region youth group. Other party cadre are appointed as members of the region youth group committee, which formulates policy for the youth group.<sup>111</sup> In the Viet Cong western region, toward the end of 1964, the youth group had been organized only up to district level; the youth proselytizing sections of province and region party committees handled group affairs above district level. The youth proselytizing section of region often appealed to the youths of the region in the name of the Region Group Executive Committee. This committee, however, was non-existent, although there were plans to establish it around the end of 1964.<sup>112</sup>

(C) Party control of the mass organizations is exercised through the executive committees of the Liberation Farmers', Women's and Youth's Association. At village level, the executive committees of the Farmers', Women's, and Youth's Associations are staffed by cadre from the Farmer's, Women's, and Youth Proselytizing Sections of the village party chapter committee. When the People's Revolutionary Youth Group is organized, the

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<sup>110</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 25. Tran Van Hung, p. 35. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 4; and SIC Report 87/65, passim.

<sup>111</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 87/65, pp. 3-4.

<sup>112</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 25.

the executive committee of the Liberation Youth's Association is staffed entirely by youth group members. The association executive committees are also placed under the supervision of the village party chapter committee.<sup>113</sup> Thus, party control over the mass organizations is exercised both from within and from without these organizations. Nguyen Van Tron states:

The role of the party at the village level is very important since all positions of authority are held by party members who serve as the leaders and 'prime movers' of all activities in the village. Consequently, the party clandestinely places its members into every organization to direct their activities and to foster the party's aims.<sup>114</sup>

(C) At the hamlet level, the association groups and sub-groups are headed by group leaders who are either party cadre or who are supervised by party cadre. The local sub-group of the People's Revolutionary Youth Group provides the leadership for the Liberation Youth's Association. Party cell leaders or other party and group members are appointed to head the hamlet civil affairs committees of the associations.<sup>115</sup> Thus, at the lowest level the key leadership positions in the mass organizations are held by the party and party group.

(C) The chain of command of the Liberation Farmers', Women's, and Youth's Associations at the hamlet extends to the respective executive committees at the village, and then to the farmers', women's, and youth proselyting sections of the village party committee.<sup>116</sup> This places the front associations in the party chain of command. Theoretically,

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<sup>113</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 4; and SIC Report No. 87/65, p. 6.

<sup>114</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 87/65, p. 6.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. See also SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 4; and Tran Quoc Ba, pp. 13-14/II.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

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there is a command line from village executive committees of the Front Associations to district front committees, and so on to the National Front. Nguyen Huynh states that:

As Front Committees, the Executive Committees of the Liberation Farmer, Women and Youth Associations of higher echelon (Province, District) were authorized to openly send to district and village levels the communiquees and directives concerning the mission and policies applied in liberated areas, when the Executive Committee of the Liberation Associations had been established. (Italics supplied).<sup>117</sup>

Huynh further discloses that:

The VC Civilian Proselyting Section of Binh Dinh Province Party Committee had been assigned the mission of activating the Province NFLSVN; therefore it was called the 'Civilian Proselyting and Front Section.' (Italics supplied).<sup>118</sup>

A final revelation by Nguyen Huynh is that, although the civilian proselyting and front section of Binh Dinh Province had been established in December 1962, the executive committees of the front associations still had not been constituted by the time of his capture in August 1964.<sup>119</sup>

(c) It is clear that, at district level and above, the formulation of policy for and management of the affairs of the Liberation Front Associations is in the hands of the Farmers', Women's, and Youth Proselyting Sections of the appropriate party committee. There is considerable evidence to corroborate this pattern.<sup>120</sup> In effect, the front committees above village level exist only on paper. Propaganda

<sup>117</sup> Nguyen Huynh, p. 57.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 87/65, passim; SIC Report No. 67/65, passim; SIC Report No. 54/65, passim; SIC Report No. 116/65, passim. Tran Quoc Ba, p. 19/I. Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, pp. 16, 23. SIC Report No. 237/65. See also the sources previously cited in the discussion of Viet Cong district, province and region organization.

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appeals to the masses, and directives to village front executive committees, are issued in the name of district or higher level committees of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. However, these communications actually originate in the civilian proselytizing section of the party apparatus.<sup>121</sup>

(C) The meshing of party and front association makes the party influence felt throughout the entire spectrum of social activity. For example, village and hamlet finance and economy sections, subordinate to village party committees, provide guidance on production and taxation while the Farmer's Associations "educate farmers and motivate them for execution."<sup>122</sup> Party committees provide instructions on the objectives, timing, and propaganda themes of political demonstrations, while the "political struggle-leading sections" of the front associations execute the decisions of the party.<sup>123</sup>

(U) The Liberation Farmers', Women's and Youth's Associations encompass the various strata of the peasantry. There are, however, additional strata of the population--physicians, authors, journalists, artists, students, civil servants, laborers, merchants, Catholics, Hao Hao, Cao Dai, Buddhists, Cambodians, Chinese, montagnards and others--whom the Viet Cong seek to unite against the Government. The organizational

<sup>121</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 87/65, passim. Nguyen Huynh, pp. 56-57. Tran Quoc Ba, p. 19/I. See also USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Van Theu, Log No. 9-345, 5 Jan 1965, p. 15. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>122</sup> "Consolidation of the Finance & Economy Machinery From U to Hamlets," p. 6.

<sup>123</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, p. 12. The Women's Association is assigned a paramount role in staging demonstrations at the local seat of Government, and in lodging protests and complaints. The party coordinates "political struggle" activities within the towns with those in the countryside. Ibid. The elaborate struggle apparatus of the Viet Cong is depicted in "Long An Province Organization Charts," p. 1.

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embodiment of the united front policy is the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam, which in principle is composed of member associations drawn from all social strata.<sup>124</sup> According to the High Command of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, "every political and military activity in SVN at present bears the name of the Front."<sup>125</sup>

(C) Although in reality the front exists only on paper at district and higher levels, in some instances the Viet Cong have formally constituted National Liberation Front Committees in order to dramatize the allegedly widespread popular support for the front. These committees are intended to embody a broad representation of the various social strata of the community, and to symbolize the united front in whose name the war is waged. Since the Viet Cong at times publicly announce the membership of these committees, it seems permissible to use information provided by the Republic of Vietnam High Command to illustrate their varied composition. According to this source, the Phu Yen Province National Liberation Front Committee was elected by a conference of 103 front representatives held from 16 to 21 March 1965. The membership of the committee includes a chairman, representative of the intellectual notables; a vice-chairman, representative of the Vietnam People's Revolutionary Party, a province party committee member; a vice-chairman, representative of Montagnards; a vice-chairman, representative of Liberation Women's Association; an administrative clerk, representative of former resistance members; an administrative

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<sup>124</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled, "Political Lines of the Party in the Present Patriotic War," Log No. 12-2, 10 Mar 1965, passim. (FOUO).

<sup>125</sup>RVN, Ministry of Armed Forces, High Command, J-2, and USMACV, J-2, (Joint Publication), Viet-Cong Political Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel, Log No. 6-512-65, 15 July 1965, p. 25. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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clerk, representative of school children; a member, Buddhist representative; a member, representative of artists and writers; a member, representative of the Liberation Army; a member, representative of teachers; a member, representative of Liberation Youth's Association; a member, representative of the Liberation Farmers' Association; a member, representative of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (the opposing army) officers; and a member, Caodaist representative. Of the nineteen members, the High Command lists seven who are carried in the Order of Battle as belonging to some section of the party apparatus.<sup>126</sup> This accords exactly with the formula prescribed by a letter of "Instructions" on policy toward the front, issued on 28 March 1961: "To secure a broad base of representation within the Front, the number of Party members on committees of the Popular Front should not exceed two-fifths of the total membership."<sup>127</sup>

(C) Nothing better illustrates the purely formal role played by the National Liberation Front Committees, and their dependence upon the party, than the situation of the Saigon/Gia Dinh National Liberation Front Committee. Because of the political importance of the capital, it could be expected that at least here the front would be more highly developed and would play a more active role. Such, however, is not the case. Nominally, the front has a committee which includes representatives of political parties, artists, writers, intellectuals, journalists, students, workers, farmers, women, school children, Catholics, and even capitalists. It also has an associated Student and School Boy Association,

<sup>126</sup> Political Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel, p. 283.

<sup>127</sup> Thu-Bien "Instructions," 28 Mar 1961. A copy of this document, together with partial translation, appears in U. S., Department of State, A Threat to the Peace: North Viet-Nam's Effort to Conquer South Viet-Nam (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, Dec 1961), II, 94-95.

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a Liberation Artists and Writers Association, a Patriotic Teaches Association, and a Liberation Women Association.<sup>128</sup> However, Nguyen Van Tron, who until his capture on 19 November 1964 was in charge of the Youth Proselyting Department of the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone Committee, states that in reality the front was a non-existent organization used by the special zone committee to cover its activities. The special zone committee, according to Tron, has as one of its subordinate specialized sections a National Front and Civilian Proselyting Section, with subsections for youth proselyting, farmer proselyting, women proselyting, and city departments.<sup>129</sup> Tron states:

In actuality the National Liberation Front in the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone existed in name only. The various functions allegedly credited to the National Liberation Front . . . were in reality performed by the Civilian Proselyting Section, which was also known as the National Front Section of the SGDSZC.<sup>130</sup>

(C) The available evidence strongly supports the conclusion that the front is subordinate to the party at all echelons. On the basis of the evidence available to the author, the relationship between the

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<sup>128</sup> Political Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel, pp. 295-296.

<sup>129</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report 67/65, p. 10. See also, SIC Report 87/65, passim; and Dinh Cong Det, pp. 13-16. Dinh Cong Det is a former cadre of the Capital City Propaganda Net, who rallied on 16 Dec 1964. He confirms the organizational information given by Tron.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 6. At times it is necessary for the Viet Cong to resort to subterfuge to conceal the domination of the party organs over the National Liberation Front. Such was the case in early 1964, when a European newspaperman visited the Phu Loi secret zone to interview the Viet Cong. There a reception, arranged for by the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone Committee, was presided over by Huynh Tan Phat, the Chairman of the Saigon/Gia Dinh National Liberation Front Committee. Several cadre of the special zone committee, including Tron, were in attendance, and they introduced themselves as members of the National Liberation Front. The whole affair was put on by the Special Zone Committee, says Tron, "to deceive the people and give the illusion that the National Liberation Front actually existed as a full-fledged organization." Ibid., p. 7.

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National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam and the Central Office of South Vietnam cannot conclusively be shown to be one of subordination of the front to the Central Office. The weight of the evidence, however, creates a strong presumption that this is the case. The factors which create this presumption are, first, the subordination and instrumental relationship of the front to the party at all lower echelons, including Saigon/Gia Dinh; and, second, the Viet Cong organizational scheme of paralleling the party organization with a front organization, and subordinating the latter to the former. The Government of Vietnam and the United States Government both hold that the front is subordinate to the Central Office of South Vietnam.<sup>131</sup>

(U) What is striking in this picture of an impotent and undeveloped front alongside a dominant party possessing a well-articulated hierarchical structure is that, as a consequence of its preponderance in organizational strength, only the party is able to govern. The conclusion is inescapable that initially, as rural areas are brought under its control, the party apparatus is encumbered with the administration of the so-called liberated areas. The very success of the combat party imposes a burden which limits the prospect of further success. If the Viet Cong rule is to be accepted, it must be an effective rule. Order and security must be provided for in the rural areas. Public health,

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid., pp. 7, 19. Evidence of VC Capt. Nguyen Van Thanh, captured on 10 September 1964, to the effect that the VC are applying the scheme of "three parallel ruling bodies" of Mao Tse-Tung, according to which the party controls the masses, the armed forces, and the government, is cited. Nguyen Van Tron states substantially the same thing. Tron's description of the Viet Cong scheme is that the party will create, at each echelon, a NFLSVN committee responsible for proselyting functions; a military affairs committee responsible for political direction of the military; and a liberation committee responsible for government-administrative functions. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 87/65, passim. See also U. S., Department of State, Aggression From the North: The Records of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, Feb 1965), p. 59.

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education, and social welfare must be provided. At the minimum, the manpower and material resources of the liberated areas must be mobilized in support of the war effort.

(U) The organization of an effective administration is imperative; at the same time it is doubtful if the party can afford the cadres needed to set up an administrative system. As a result, at least initially, no separate administrative structure distinct from the party can emerge. Only later, when conditions permit, can the party follow the model of every Communist state by establishing administrative organs which receive policy guidance from the party.

(U) Such, at least, appears to have been the case in South Vietnam. Systematic efforts to articulate a separate administrative system did not begin until the last half of 1964, that is, not until the Viet Cong had launched the general offensive phase of their insurgency.<sup>132</sup> The still-embryonic administrative organization of the Viet Cong was yet another instrument of population control, set up to relieve the party of its administrative burden, and enabling it to function more efficiently as a combat party.

(C) Prior to the establishment of separate administrative organs, the village party chapter committee is responsible for political administration as well as party functions at the village level.<sup>133</sup> At the hamlet level, however, the administration is divided functionally. The hamlet military unit, usually a guerrilla squad, is responsible for construction of fortifications, control of movement in and around the hamlet, and hamlet defense. A hamlet security unit, subordinate to the security

<sup>132</sup>See below, Chapter III.

<sup>133</sup>Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 5. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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section of the village party committee, is responsible for surveillance of strangers and defense against espionage. The Liberation Farmers' Association, through its civil affairs committee, is responsible for handling land disputes, legal suits, marriages, funerals, and so forth.<sup>134</sup>

(C) Nguyen Van Uy states that in late 1962 the Viet Cong established an administrative organization for the hamlets and villages in the liberated areas of the Western Region (lower Mekong delta). Each hamlet was to have an administrative section elected by the people. The section consisted of from five to seven members including a chief, deputy chief, and members responsible for each of the following areas: military affairs, security, propaganda, health, and finance. The administrative section of the village was similarly constituted; however, members were appointed by the front associations instead of being elected. Above the village level, the district or province front committees--in reality, the civilian proselyting and front sections of the respective party committees--were responsible for administrative affairs.<sup>135</sup> It is not known to what extent the Viet Cong were able to introduce this administrative organization into the many villages and hamlets which fell under their control during 1963 and 1964. No doubt, in many of these the task of administration fell to village party chapter committees and front associations.

(C) Undated Viet Cong organization charts captured in Long An Province on 1 April 1965 shed some light on village organization in that province. The line of authority for village administration is from the village party committee to a village chief, and thence to the following

<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

<sup>135</sup>Nguyen Van Uy, SIC Report No. 84/65, passim.

GROUP - 4  
Downgraded at 3 year intervals  
Declassified after 12 years

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subordinate sections: military, security, double liaison (intelligence), and propaganda and education. There is also a deputy village chief "in charge of party group," who controls the youth group sections in the hamlets and military units. There is no hamlet chief. Instead, the village chief exercises authority through the Farmers', Women's and Youth's Associations, each of which have sections in charge of a certain number of house groups.<sup>136</sup>

(C) According to Nguyen Van Tron, the Viet Cong in the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone had not succeeded, as of November 1964, in establishing their planned administrative organization. The plan, which called for the establishment of "Liberation Committees" at village, district, and region levels, could not be implemented because of the existing war situation and the acute shortage of cadre. Instead, the governmental administrative functions had to be entrusted to subordinate sections of the special zone and district committees. At the village and hamlet levels, the standard party administrative machinery was in effect. The village party chapter committee governed the village; and the hamlet military unit, security unit, and Farmers' Association shared responsibility for the hamlet.<sup>137</sup>

(C) In contrast with the foregoing, the Viet Cong in Tu Nghia District, Quang Ngai Province, had been able to establish a separate administrative organization by August 1964. Each village had both a village party committee and a village self-administration committee; and a hamlet self-administration cell was established in each hamlet. The front associations also existed and no doubt participated in administration

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<sup>136</sup>"Long An Province Organization Charts," pp. 2-3.

<sup>137</sup>Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 87/65, passim.

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to some extent.<sup>138</sup>

(C) The burdens of administration received the attention of the party at the highest level. During October 1963, the administrative problem was discussed at a Civilian Proselyting Convention for South Vietnam, sponsored by the Central Office of South Vietnam and attended by cadre from all seven regions. Those in attendance were especially impressed by the difficulties encountered in the administration of villages and hamlets in the large areas that had come under Viet Cong control. As a result, it was decided to establish a separate administration at the village and hamlet level in the liberated areas.<sup>139</sup>

(C) In the highland area the formula adopted by the convention was to form a popular racial autonomous committee, and to use this committee to elect a village liberation committee. The village liberation committee would then elect hamlet administrative committees. If necessary, a district liberation committee could also be elected in a similar manner, but the separate administration stopped at district level.<sup>140</sup>

(C) In other liberated areas, the procedure was to form a Village People's Council, similar to that which existed during the Resistance War against the French. The Council would consist of from nineteen to twenty-seven members, one-half of whom were to be party members, and one-fourth of whom were to be members of the Revolutionary People's Youth Group. The Council would then appoint the village liberation committee, composed of five to nine members, of whom one-third were to be party members. Hamlet administrative committees, composed of five

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<sup>138</sup> Nguyen Dit, passim.

<sup>139</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 116/65, pp. 6-7.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

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members, one-third of whom were to be party members, would also be appointed. In the contested areas, where the Viet Cong influence was relatively weak, the civilian proselytizing (front) sections of the village party committees were to administer the villages and hamlets.<sup>141</sup>

(U) Evidence indicates that the Viet Cong made serious attempts to strengthen their administrative machinery at village and hamlet levels during 1964.

(C) In August 1964 a district-level cadre of the Viet Cong Gia Lai Province rallied to the Government and reported that the district policy was to strengthen village governmental machinery by establishing village self-administration committees, which would include a village chief, assistant chief, military affairs member, security guard member, economy member, and sanitation member. Hamlet administrative councils, consisting of a chief of the administration section, an economy cadre, a youth and youngster cadre, and a security and protection cadre, would also be formed.<sup>142</sup>

(C) In mid-October 1964, the Viet Cong of Khanh Hoa Province chose two townships as testing places for the organization of administrative committees, which would perform the duties of security, propaganda, staging demonstrations, and generally supporting the insurgency.<sup>143</sup>

(C) In December 1964, a captured document revealed that the Viet Cong were attempting to have "rural management councils" completely

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<sup>141</sup>Ibid.

<sup>142</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen The Ky, Log No. 10-490, 29 Dec 1964, p. 12. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his defection on 13 Aug 1964, Source was Propaganda and Training Cadre of the Area 7 Party Committee, Gia Lai Province.

<sup>143</sup>U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "Formation by the Viet Cong of Low-Level Administrative Committees to Gain Firmer Control of Rural Areas," FVS-10, 921, 23 Oct 1964, p. 1. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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organized by early 1965, and to this end were conducting educational courses for the people and political training for their township and hamlet administrative cadres.<sup>144</sup> At the same time, the Viet Cong Zone Committee for Central Vietnam ordered its province committee secretaries to stand ready to attend a course on the "Program to Set Up the Government."<sup>145</sup>

(c) A significant indication of Viet Cong experimentation with various administrative forms of organization occurred in January 1965 when the National Front Committee for Phong Dinh Province ordered its subordinate district committees to begin establishing rural management boards to replace township and hamlet front committees. At the township level, these boards were to be composed of a chairman, who was formerly the front township committee secretary; a deputy chairman, cultural and social commissar; a security commissar; a financial commissar; and a defense platoon. At the hamlet level the boards were to consist of a chief, a security commissar, and a defense squad. The boards' activities were to include collecting taxes, issuing travel permits, trying lesser criminals, and maintaining security and order in the rural areas.<sup>146</sup>

(c) Another document of the 1964 period reiterates the concept of turning the front into a government:

NFLSVN committees at various levels are to be responsible for governing the people under the close direction of the Party. People's self-help governments in townships and hamlets especially need improvement. An outline of responsibilities and a program of

<sup>144</sup>U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "CIO Security Situation Summary," FVS-11,085, 18 Dec 1965, p. 2. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>145</sup>U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "CIO Security Situation Summary," FVS-11,113, 28 Dec 1964, p. 2. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>146</sup>U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "Establishment of Rural Management Boards to Replace Liberation Front Committees in Hamlets and Townships," FVS-11,517. 12 Mar 1965, p. 1. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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work methods must be set up for these self-help governments. Each hamlet and township should have a kind of charter which stipulates the duties and the rights of every citizen and on which the hamlet or township government can rely in leading the people in the resistance and in building up democratic societies in hamlets.<sup>147</sup>

(U) The establishment of an administrative structure in villages and hamlets requires the enlistment of a number of local cadre. It is probable that the Liberation Farmers', Women's and Youth's Associations serve as training schools for local cadre who can administer Viet Cong land, taxation, and manpower policies.<sup>148</sup>

(U) The evolution of the Viet Cong administrative organization is undoubtedly still continuing. As long as the party seeks to recruit peasant manpower, mobilize peasant production, and convert peasant hamlets into fortified areas, there will be a need to look after the health and welfare of the peasantry and to insure order and security in the areas under Viet Cong control. The party cannot avoid the burden of administrative functions. Its object, however, is to divest itself of these functions while retaining control of the masses. In this way, party cadre are freed for more important tasks.

(U) From the available evidence, it appears that the Viet Cong undertook to establish a separate administrative apparatus--at village and hamlet level--during 1964. It is difficult to conceive of this taking place if the party were kept under pressure and Viet Cong population control was being contested vigorously by the Government. A reasonable hypothesis seems to be that the Viet Cong were able to advance to this phase of their organizational work at least partly because of limited

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<sup>147</sup>U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "Viet Cong Document on Plans for the Highlands for 1964," FVS-10,967, 10 Nov 1964, p. 4. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>148</sup>For a discussion of these policies, see Chapter III.

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interference from Government forces. Evidence bearing upon the validity of this hypothesis will be considered in later chapters.

(C) The last of the Viet Cong organizational structures is their military organization. It has already been pointed out that each echelon in the party chain of command controls its own military forces. These forces are controlled through a military affairs section of the local party committee. The military affairs section is headed by a military affairs committee, composed of the commander and deputy commander of the local military unit, the chief of the unit's political section, and a representative of the party committee.<sup>149</sup>

(U) The Viet Cong military arm consists of three types of troops: main force, local force, and guerrillas.<sup>150</sup> Each of these forces has a

<sup>149</sup>The military affairs section is sometimes called "Force Headquarters," and may be practically identical to the command section of the military forces. The composition of the military affairs committee is variable, but there is always political and military representation. Ho Hoang Phuong, p. 22. USMACV, J-2, Trans, Sec., Captured Document, entitled: "Proposed Village Military Mission," Log No. 1-216-65, 12 Feb 1965, passim. (FOUO). In Quang Ngai Province, the political officer in the military force headquarters was a member of the Province Party Committee (district party committee for district forces). Dang Minh, SIC Report 79/65, pp. 2-3; and SIC Report No. 102/65, pp. 3-4. Vuong Thi Manh, p. 21.

<sup>150</sup>These are the categories employed by the Viet Cong. See USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured document entitled: "Guidelines Introducing the 196 Military Resolution of T to All Combatants," Log No. 7-174-65, 4 Aug 1965, passim. (FOUO). This document, captured on 3 June 1965, probably dates from early 1965 and outlines the goals of Western Nam-bo Military Region (lower Mekong delta) for 1965. MACV and RVN high command use the categories main force, local force, and militia. The local forces are broken down into province mobile units and district concentrated units, which are forces which operate as integral units anywhere within the province or district. Province mobile units are of company or battalion size, while district concentrated units are of platoon or company size. The militia forces are classified as guerrillas, self-defense forces, and secret self-defense forces. Since the term "secret guerrillas" is encountered more frequently in the documents, it is used here instead of "secret self-defense forces." The foregoing categories were agreed upon by MACV and high command, and affirmed in implementing directives from each headquarters. See USMACV, Description of Viet Cong Forces, Directive No. 381-4, 20 Mar 1964, (CONFIDENTIAL); and

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particular mission in support of the insurgency. Because the mission of population control is a primary task of the guerrillas, and also of the district local force, only these forces will be considered here. The main force and local force have received considerable attention from Order of Battle intelligence analysts,<sup>151</sup> and their strength and deployments are considered in detail in Chapter IV.

(U) Viet Cong guerrilla forces are another of the mass organizations of the party. In order to develop an effective "people's war," says a captured document, "the entire population needs to be militarized."<sup>152</sup> The vehicle for the militarization of the masses is a movement known as "the People's Guerrilla Warfare Movement."<sup>153</sup> The object of the People's Guerrilla Warfare Movement is to:

RVN, Ministry of Defense, J-2 RVNAF, Letter, Subject: "Classification of VC Armed Forces in South Viet Nam," 21 Feb 1964 (USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Log No. 2-212, 26 Feb 1964), (CONFIDENTIAL). Both documents agreed to reserve the term "regular forces" for PAVN (North Vietnamese) organizations. The high command document reveals a reluctance to classify province mobile forces as local forces, stating that: "The main question at present is whether or not VC province mobile units should be classified into the local forces or into the main force. . . . There are times, when wanting to emphasize the importance of province mobile units that the term Province Main Force could possibly be used." The fact is that in published Order of Battle data, the high command always kept separate account of province mobile units, while MACV did not. The Vietnamese method has the merit of making it easier to detect a build-up in Viet Cong Main Forces. See Chapter IV.

<sup>151</sup>See, for example, the two-volume Viet-Cong Military Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel. This document does not deal in any way with guerrilla forces.

<sup>152</sup>"Experience Combat Village Construction in Mountainous Area," p. 3.

<sup>153</sup>The following documents cast light on the purpose of the People's Guerrilla Warfare Movement (which is a Viet Cong policy, and not an organization), and its relation to Viet Cong strategy: "Proposed Village Military Mission;" "Guidelines Introducing the 196 Military Resolution of T to All Combatants;" USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Political Lines of the Party in the Present Patriotic War," Log No. 12-2, 10 Mar 1965 (FOUO); Captured Document entitled: "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," Log No. 6-294-65, 21 July 1965,

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Make all the people in the village understand the present military policy of the Party well, encourage each individual to struggle, indoctrinate them to realize enemy armed oppression, incite them to stand up, hold weapons and fight to protect their lives and properties. . . .

Initiate the movement of people's struggle widely. Speed up the mobilization of the entire people, regardless of age and sex, all have to stand up to build combat villages, destroy strategic hamlets, enlist in the army, implement all directives of the party, kill more enemy, annihilate him, create difficulties for the enemy, defeat him piecemeal, then completely.<sup>154</sup>

(U) Guerrilla units are organized by the Viet Cong at village and hamlet level, usually a platoon for each village and one or more squads per hamlet. The hamlet-level guerrilla forces come under the supervision of the village guerrilla unit.<sup>155</sup> When guerrillas are organized in hamlets in contested areas, where the authorities are loyal to the Government, they are called "secret guerrillas" because of the obviously clandestine nature of their operations.<sup>156</sup> In the "liberated areas," all able-bodied persons who do not belong to a guerrilla unit are expected to participate in the self-defense force or militia.<sup>157</sup> A Viet Cong document explains these categories of forces as follows:

(FOUO); "Experience Combat Villages Construction in Mountainous Area;" "Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta;" and SIC Report No. 248/65, 14 September 1965, Subject: "Organization of the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone Committee" (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>154</sup>"Proposed Village Military Mission," p. 1.

<sup>155</sup>"Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," pp. 6-7. Nguyen Dit, passim. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 8.

<sup>156</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Excerpts From a Captured VC Notebook, Subject: "Organization of Regional Armed Forces," Log No. 736, 20 Nov 1963, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL). "Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," passim. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 7.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid. The term "Self-Defense Force" is found in earlier Viet Cong documents. In late 1964 the Viet Cong adopted the terms "Guerrilla Militia" and "Self-Defense Militia." See "Proposed Village Military Mission," p. 2; "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," pp. 6-7. For simplicity, it seems best to reserve the term "militia" (or self-defense

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The Village and Hamlet armed forces consist of Village and Hamlet Guerrilla Units, people's Self-Defense and Secret Guerrillas. Village and Hamlet guerrillas are receptive male and female youths who, after the destruction of Strategic Hamlets, are trained on the spot, or concentrated in an area outside the hamlet to be trained on military and political subjects. Since they willingly participate in combat and are organized into units to operate in local areas, guerrilla units should be formed on the basis of a revolutionary Army. . . . Guerrilla units must maintain good relations with the people, be capable of motivating them, know how to propagandize and properly carry out the Party policy lines. The People's Self-Defense consists of receptive people who are conscious of the Revolution, have a legal status as regards the enemy and who have the courage to struggle politically and militarily against the enemy. Secret guerrillas are legal forces in the eyes of the enemy which operate covertly and act as observers and listeners for our armed forces.<sup>158</sup>

(U) The backbone of the village and hamlet guerrilla units are party members and People's Revolutionary Youth Group members.<sup>159</sup> The policy of the Viet Cong Fifth Region (central highlands and coastal lowlands) was that "there must be party members of committee member echelon to assume the village unit command section and key party members in guerrilla units."<sup>160</sup> For the rank and file, the guerrilla units drew upon the Liberation Youth's Association.<sup>161</sup>

(U) The hamlet self-defense forces (militia) were also led by the party and youth group, but drew primarily upon the Liberation Farmers' Association for the rank and file. A captured document of the Viet Cong Vinh Long Province Committee contained the guideline that fifty percent

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force) for the mass of the populace who are expected to participate in some way in hamlet defense, not including the guerrillas, who are a much smaller and better armed force.

<sup>158</sup>"Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," p. 7.

<sup>159</sup>Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 5.

<sup>160</sup>"Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," p. 10.

<sup>161</sup>Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 5. The guerrilla forces also drew upon the other front associations. See "Experience Combat Villages Construction in Mountainous Area," p. 5.

of the party members, seventy percent of the group members, and two-thirds of the Farmers' Association members in the rural areas should participate in the militia.<sup>162</sup> A village-level document, captured in Chuong Thien Province, stated that the militia should contain three-fourths of the Farmers' Association members.<sup>163</sup> According to Nguyen Van Tron, in the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone the Viet Cong applied the term "militia" to any group of people who carried out such duties as sabotage, transporting supplies, fencing hamlets, and so forth. Consequently, in the "liberated areas," "everybody participated in the militia."<sup>164</sup>

(C) As an illustration of a well-developed Viet Cong guerrilla structure, consider Tu Nghia District, Quang Ngai Province. Each village in the liberated and contested areas had one armed guerrilla platoon, which was directly responsive to the village party committee. Each hamlet in the liberated area contained a full-time guerrilla squad, and many part-time guerrilla cells. In each of the fifteen hamlets in the contested area, there were part-time guerrilla units. In the liberated area, members of the front associations (militia) constructed hamlet defenses under the supervision of the hamlet guerrilla unit, which was itself guided by the village guerrilla unit. Hamlet night guard was organized with guerrillas on the external fence, Youth's Association (militia) members on the main communication axes inside the hamlet, and Farmers' Association (militia) members around clusters of houses. The

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<sup>162</sup>"Resolution on the Military Mission in 1965," pp. 7-8. This policy, of course, applied to the 1965 period.

<sup>163</sup>"Proposed Village Military Mission," p. 2. This document, captured on 23 November 1964, applied to the late 1964-early 1965 period.

<sup>164</sup>Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 5.

hamlets in the liberated area were mutually supporting, and nearby hamlets were required to send one squad to support hamlets that were the target of Government "search and clear" operations. Each village guerrilla platoon also provided a reinforcing element for hamlet guerrilla forces.<sup>165</sup>

(C) The guerrilla organization in the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone is described by Nguyen Van Tron as follows:

In general, there is a military unit in every VC controlled village. The village military unit is led by a chapter committee member or a political officer from the chapter committee, who is responsible for the development and guidance of the guerrilla and militia operations. Every hamlet in the VC controlled area has a military unit which is led by the party cell leader. All hamlet residents, regardless of their membership in the Liberation Farmer, Youth, or Women's Associations, are required to join the militia, which is under the direct control of the hamlet military unit. As members of the militia, they are required to undergo military training, build fortified hamlets, evacuate the wounded, transport supplies, and perform other duties for the regular VC forces.

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[In the contested area] the militia was practically non-existent while the local guerrilla forces were clandestinely organized to protect the villages and hamlets. At the hamlets, located near RVN outposts, the VC organized security guerrillas which were to harass the RVN troops or to assist the regular VC troops in attacking and destroying the outposts.<sup>166</sup>

It will be recalled that, in the Viet Cong system of hamlet administration in the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone, the hamlet military unit was responsible for military security, the hamlet security unit was responsible for counter-espionage, and the Liberation Farmers' Association was responsible for civil affairs. Of these, Nguyen Van Tron says, "the hamlet military unit was the most important . . . its chief was always the chief of the party cell."<sup>167</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Nguyen Dit, passim.

<sup>166</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 87/65, p. 6; SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 7.

<sup>167</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, pp. 5-6.

(C) The Vinh Long Province Committee's "Resolution on the Military Mission in 1965" contained detailed instructions to subordinate districts on "development of the People's Guerrilla Warfare Movement." The exact number of guerrilla platoons and squads to be organized by each village in the liberated and contested area was specified. In villages with several squads, the activation of a platoon command committee was directed. In addition, special sabotage command committees were to be set up at village level to direct the sabotage activities of the guerrillas.<sup>168</sup> It is reiterated that these guerrilla units (with a strength of 2700 guerrillas, organized into ten platoons and about 80-110 squads)<sup>169</sup> are not listed in the official Order of Battle of Viet Cong forces, but are merely carried on an estimated total strength basis. Yet these are precisely the units which hold a large section of the rural population in their vise.

(U) The paramount mission of the village and hamlet guerrillas is to preserve the Viet Cong system of population control where it exists, and to help establish it where it does not. The guerrillas are the front-line troops in the struggle to secure the population and material resources of the country for support of the insurgency. They cast a protective shield about the Viet Cong political organization, and they provide that organization with an essential trapping of political control: an ultimate sanction to give force to the party's will. They cannot convert the party's power into right, or its authority into legitimacy, but

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<sup>168</sup>"Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," pp. 5-7.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7, 10. During 1964, when the strength of Viet Cong main and local force units was placed at approximately 35,000, the guerrilla strength was estimated to be from 60,000 to 80,000 in all of South Vietnam. See RVN, Ministry of Defense, J-2 High Command, VC Order of Battle South of 17th Parallel (as of 31 March 1964), USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Log No. 4-38, 8 Aug 1964, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL).

they make it possible for the party to indoctrinate the people and gain gradual acceptance of its rule. They also cause the Government to scatter its resources in an effort to provide security throughout the rural areas.

(U) According to the Viet Cong, the mission of the guerrillas is to "attack the enemy in order to destroy and attrite him, protect the lives and properties of the people."<sup>170</sup> It should be noted that the combat mission is joined to the population control mission. In fact, combat is instrumental to the objective of population control, as the following statement from another source makes clear: "When the enemy conducts operations, the guerrillas carry out the mission of attrition, annihilation and interception of the enemy to protect the people's lives and properties."<sup>171</sup>

(U) In their mission of maintaining Viet Cong population control, the guerrillas are supported and reinforced by district local force companies and platoons. The local forces and guerrillas together comprise a territorial security force, as contrasted to the main force (including province mobile units) which is the mobile striking arm. According to another Viet Cong source: "All the activities conducted by local forces aim presently at recovering those material resources and manpower necessary for a protracted guerrilla warfare."<sup>172</sup> The same source makes clear that guerrillas are included in this mission.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup>"Resolution on Military Mission in 1965, p. 8.

<sup>171</sup>"Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," p. 9.

<sup>172</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Mission and Guide-Line for District and Province Local Units," Log No. 11-43, 11 Nov 1964, p. 1. (FOUO). This document, carrying the Viet Cong classification "Top Secret," was a product of the Fifth Military Region's Guerrilla Warfare Conference, held in December, 1963. Italics supplied.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid., passim. See also NIC Report No. 248/65, passim.

(U) Guerrillas are the foundation of the Viet Cong force structure, and provide a source of trained replacements for main force and local force units. The Viet Cong have the following to say about the relationship of the three types of forces:

We must have a large para-military force, a relatively strong local force and a well trained main force. A weak guerrilla force will impede the development of local force and a weak local force will hinder the development of the main force.<sup>174</sup>

.....

It is necessary to recruit the mature men and women to self defense militia and militia guerrillas of which the strength is not limited. These organizations have strategic mission as they are the strategic reserves for the build-up of the regular forces.<sup>175</sup>

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Be practical in the formation of three types of troops and develop them equally. At present, the main point is to build up the main force by strongly developing guerrilla and local forces. The principle is that guerrillas will outnumber local forces and local forces outnumber main forces.<sup>176</sup>

(U) The tasks of the guerrilla forces are many. They provide protection for party cadre, agencies, and installations.<sup>177</sup> They "serve as a tool of the party in the materialization of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the rural area . . . especially during the period of land reforms."<sup>178</sup> Thus, they provide a powerful sanction for the party's land and taxation policies.

(U) The guerrilla target is primarily the "restrictive machinery" of the Government: the local officials, hamlet militia, and paramilitary forces who preserve "the enemy grip" in the rural

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<sup>174</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>175</sup>"Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," p. 6.

<sup>176</sup>"Guidelines Introducing the Military Resolution of T," p. 5.

<sup>177</sup>"Proposed Village Military Mission," p. 1.

<sup>178</sup>"Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," p. 9.

areas.<sup>179</sup> The "Resolution on the Military Mission in 1965" states that:

The main target of militia guerrillas are SDC and combat youth, spies, tyrants, landlords and pacification cadre.

In the disputed area, every 2 guerrillas must kill 1 enemy soldier. In the liberated area, every 3 guerrillas must kill 1 enemy (including SDC, Civil Guard, regular Army, combat youth, spies, tyrants, landlords either killed, wounded or persuaded to defect by the guerrillas).<sup>180</sup>

Thus, any Government force which has a population control function is a prime guerrilla target.

(U) In the liberated areas, movement control is a guerrilla function. According to Nguyen Van Tron:

The guerrilla bands did not restrict the movement of the people, and no travel permits were required in the liberated areas. However, if a stranger entered a hamlet, the guerrilla members or hamlet members detained him and turned him over to the security cadre who, in turn, interrogated him. If the stranger proved to be friendly he was released. All cadre were issued travel permits which were good for three, six, or twelve months. The SGDSZC (Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone Committee) required all its cadre to use travel permits at all times.

The guerrilla bands at the hamlets and villages frequently checked the cadre's travel permits to prevent infiltration by RVN spies.<sup>181</sup>

Village and hamlet guerrillas also maintain the communications-liaison stations which facilitate travel by Viet Cong cadre in the liberated

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<sup>179</sup>"Guidelines Introducing the Military Resolution of T," p. 4. "Experience Regarding Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," passim.

<sup>180</sup>"Resolution on Military Mission in 1965", pp. 9, 4. The SDC are the Self-Defense Corps, a Government paramilitary force with primary responsibility for village security. The combat youth are the hamlet militia in Government-controlled hamlets. Pacification cadre are Government cadre charged with assisting in the restoration of public authority and civil administration in the rural areas, under the National Pacification Plan. The Civil Guard are a Government paramilitary force designed to support the Self-Defense Corps and combat youth in the maintenance of village and hamlet security, and to perform security missions under the control of District and Province Chiefs. Taken together, the Civil Guard, SDC, combat youth, and pacification cadre comprise a major part of the Government's apparatus of population control.

<sup>181</sup>Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, p. 6.

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areas.<sup>182</sup> In addition, the hamlet guerrillas and militia provide a nucleus for the organization of civilian labor units, which transport supplies for the Viet Cong.<sup>183</sup>

(U) An important military mission of the guerrillas is the sabotage of roads, bridges, and the National Railroad. By utilizing the manpower of the hamlets along axes of communication, entire roads have been dug up and destroyed. Routes of communication controlled by the Government are mined and attacked by harassing fire.<sup>184</sup>

(C) The blocking of traffic and collection of "road taxes" in broad daylight by a few armed guerrillas is also turned to political advantage by the Viet Cong. While a roadblock can be established with a minimum expenditure of effort, the possibility that the guerrillas may be backed up by larger Viet Cong forces requires the Government to launch a major road-clearing operation to restore traffic. This was the situation along Highway 13, between Saigon and the rubber plantations and lumber mills of Binh Long Province. Since the available forces were insufficient to launch road-clearing operations more than a few times a month, in the interim the guerrillas were able to inflict a blow against Government prestige by demonstrating the incapacity of the Government to maintain its authority on the highway.<sup>185</sup>

(C) Guerrilla forces are also assigned combat missions. In the

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<sup>182</sup> Nguyen Dit, passim.

<sup>183</sup> "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," p. 7. Local labor is used to transport supplies from station to station, along infiltration routes and transportation corridors.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid. "Guidelines Introducing the Military Resolution of T," passim.

<sup>185</sup> USMACV, J-3, Memorandum 5 October 1964, Subject: "Situation in Vicinity of Ben Cat," p. 1.

Viet Cong scheme of warfare, guerrillas are responsible for "attacks of attrition," while the other forces are responsible for "attacks of annihilation."<sup>186</sup> During 1964-1965, the Viet Cong policy was to wage guerrilla warfare while gradually advancing to mobile warfare.<sup>187</sup> Accordingly, the mission of the guerrilla forces was framed as follows:

It is necessary to confirm that the increased attrition of the enemy is a strategic problem. Therefore, guerrillas should block the enemy relentlessly and everywhere, keep him under constant pressure and create favorable conditions for regular forces to annihilate him (hit the enemy on his feet and at the same time on his head).

Closely coordinate the people's guerrilla warfare movement with three-front attacks<sup>188</sup> to counter enemy operations, encroachment and herding of people into strategic hamlets, consolidate the liberated rural areas, protect lives and properties of the people, destroy strategic hamlets, encircle and exert pressure on posts, conduct

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<sup>186</sup>"Guidelines Introducing the Military Resolution of T," p. 3.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>188</sup>"Three-front attacks" is the Viet Cong terminology for the main components of their over-all strategy: military, political, and military proselytizing (the latter refers to activities to induce Government forces to defect). "The course of struggle should sometime vary in intensity in order to suit the situation in each place and at each time. For example, if the enemy attacks our Combat Hamlets and Villages in important strategic areas where the terrain is not favorable for armed struggle, we must emphasize on political and military proselytizing activities. Conversely, in Hamlets and Villages located far from cities and where the terrain is favorable, we must speed up armed struggle in coordination with political and military proselytizing activities. . . . Political struggle and military proselytizing is to develop the gaining of initiative of the masses, maintain close contact with the enemy to conduct demonstrations against them, struggle for and divide enemy troops, sow dissension among their internal organizations, demoralize the, and restrict their terrorist and plundering activities during their sweep operations in rural areas. Political struggles . . . may be conducted . . . under other forms such as meeting, demonstration, denunciation of landlords and tyrants' crimes, punishment of wicked persons, motivation of people's hatred, show off the people's force, and nourishment of people's struggle will, especially when they are suppressed by the enemy. . . . The more the political struggle is successful, the more it will help the armed struggle and military proselytizing develop. If military proselytizing is successful it will support the armed and political activities. The proper application of the three-front attack . . . will drive the enemy from active to passive position." From "Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," pp. 3, 13.

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sniping fire and large scale attacks on posts forcing the enemy to surrender or withdraw, attack communication axes, attack on enemy convoys, or reinforcements, sweep operations, completely destroy the roads in a number of districts, and stay close to Highway No. 1 by relentlessly attacking this axis in order to attrite or to annihilate the enemy.<sup>189</sup>

By and large, in the liberated areas the Viet Cong place primary emphasis on "countering sweep operations" by means of ambush, sniping fire, and raids. In the contested areas, attacks and harassment of Government posts and strategic hamlets receives the greatest emphasis.<sup>190</sup>

<sup>189</sup>"Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," p. 9. Another excerpt from this source states that: "District local forces and village guerrilla units will attack all types of enemy troops operating in the area with purpose of supporting political missions. (Especially attack the Special Forces, Civil Guard, Self-Defense Corps, combat youth, spies, tyrant landlords)." Another formulation, from a document captured in Binh Dinh Province in Central Vietnam, shows a nation-wide similarity in the concept of employing guerrillas and local forces:

The [village] local troop and guerrilla have the mission of exterminating the cruel elements, self-defense corps members, anti-guerrilla youths, and village, hamlet spies; motivating the masses, joining with them in destroying strategic hamlets, disrupting [the enemy's] grip, countering sweeps, besieging and demolishing all the enemy's blockhouses and posts of the local area.

The [district] troop must eliminate the enemy's civil guard posts by making sudden attack, intercepting reinforcements and join with [village] troop and guerrilla to counter sweeps, assisting thus [village] force and guerrilla in accomplishing their mission.

USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Order Nr. 1, Area 500," Log No. 9-107, 10 September 1964, pp. 4-5. (FOUO). The document is dated 25 June 1964. See also, "Guidelines Introducing the Military Resolution of T," passim.

<sup>190</sup>"Guidelines Introducing the Military Resolution of T," pp. 4-5. The Fifth Military Region's Guerrilla Warfare Conference, held in December 1963, producing instructions concerning the following "combat forms" for guerrilla troops: ambush, raid ("When the enemy bivouac in or outside a hamlet or village, the guerrilla cells will coordinate with secret guerrillas to raid each of their small elements or conduct continuous harassment to wear them down."), encirclement of post and hamlet and delivery of harassing fire, sniping attack, aircraft hunting ("Fire at helicopters that are flying across or landing troops for a sweep-operation."), attack against mechanized troops and communication axes ("Organize the sabotage of road to hamper the enemy's mobility on the main communication axes they used to pass by the combat hamlets or

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(U) In the accomplishment of their missions, village and hamlet guerrillas are augmented, trained and supported by district local force companies and platoons. District local force units execute both defensive and offensive missions. They assist guerrillas in the liberated areas in opposing Government clearing operations, and in maintaining Viet Cong control over the population. In the contested areas, they coordinate with "secret guerrillas" in launching attacks against strategic hamlets and posts, with the aim of expanding the Viet Cong sphere of population control.<sup>191</sup> District local forces are, therefore, an important component of the Viet Cong apparatus of population control.

conduct sweep-operations. Organize the guerrilla cells to conduct land mine warfare on the roads . . . and use grenade clusters to destroy enemy M113 advance units."), and attack with spikes and booby traps. "Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," pp. 11-12.

<sup>191</sup>"Mission and Guide-Line for District and Province Local Units," passim. In expanding the liberated areas, the local forces also coordinate with "Armed Action Units," that is, armed propaganda teams. In the contested area, the typical Viet Cong organization for combat includes armed propaganda teams which are assigned specific villages as their operational area. If the regular party structure has not been established, these teams are placed under a control group of cadre known as the District Civil Affairs Committee. This committee is activated by the Province Party Committee, and differs from a regular district committee in that the District Civil Affairs Committee must submit its plans to the Province Party Committee for approval. The armed propaganda teams are a key instrument for the subversion of strategic hamlets. They are headed by cadre of village committee and even district committee rank. Their method of operation is to propagandize the inhabitants of a hamlet, organize the "secret guerrillas," establish the front associations, and, at the right moment, attack the hamlet from without while launching an "uprising" from within. At a general meeting of the inhabitants, the hamlet militia are disarmed, "evil persons" are denounced, and "people's justice" administered. Needless to say, if the hamlet is not well supported by Government forces, local authorities will have been intimidated into leaving before the last act of the drama is acted out. Further discussion of the "combat party" is beyond the scope of this paper. See Nguyen Huynh, passim; Tran Quoc Ba, passim; Tran Van Hung, passim; Nguyen Van Uy, passim; Vuong Thi Manh, passim; Dang Minh, passim; Doan Duoc, passim; Do Khoi, passim; Nguyen The Ky, passim; "Mission and Guide-Line for District and Province Local Units," passim; and USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., GVN Intelligence Report, Subject: "VC Modus Operandi Guide," Log No. 8-130, 22 Aug 1964, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL).

(U) The best description of the role and missions of local forces is contained in a Viet Cong document produced by the Fifth Region's Guerrilla Warfare Conference in December 1963. The following excerpts clearly depict the mission of the local force, and its relation to other components of the Viet Cong organization:

Local forces must be understood as an armed instrument of the local Party Headquarters, responsible for the execution of political and armed missions in the area concerned and for instigating the local people to fight the enemy in the three fields: political, military and military proselytizing.

All the activities conducted by local forces aim presently at recovering those material resources and manpower necessary for a protracted guerrilla warfare. (Italics supplied.)

In the enemy controlled area, local force have to conduct armed propaganda and eliminate tyrants, break the enemy grip, lead the people in their political struggle, coordinate with political cadre to set up underground installations in enemy controlled area in order to instigate local people to uprise in the rural area.

Local forces must counter enemy operations, expand and protect the liberated area, and the life and properties of the people in these areas.

They must conduct armed activities in compliance with political requirements, lead the people to sabotage enemy strategic hamlets and local authority. . . .

It is necessary to coordinate with and guide our guerrillas in building combat hamlets, countering enemy operation, urging the people to participate in the construction of defense works, concealment of properties, escape and fight against the enemy to protect themselves.

Guerrillas form the people's paramilitary forces, the basic force of a people's war, and a source of manpower to replenish local forces and main forces.

Local forces are the closest forces to the guerrillas, therefore, a close cooperation between these two forces is very necessary, in combat as well as in daily activities. Local forces have the duty of assisting Guerrillas in the construction of combat hamlets and villages, drafting of combat plans and protecting liberated areas and bases. They must assign elements to directly support Guerrillas when need be.

Local forces must help the guerrillas conduct military and political

training of guerrilla cadre and Village or Hamlet unit for the area.

Local forces must have sufficient strength for their own activities and for replenishment of our Main force.

[Local Forces] have to protect their crops and that of the people.

When operating in the delta, local forces have either to assist local economic agencies in collecting contributions to the resistance from local people or in purchasing foods and supplies to be transported to the base area for storage.

If local force's efforts only aim at attacking the enemy and capturing his weapons and if the guerrilla warfare movement was not emphasized, our movement of struggle would decrease and military operations would be limited. Instead of waiting for the others to build up the movement, the Local Forces must do it themselves.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>192</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-3. According to this source, district local force companies operate with one platoon "concentrated" and two platoons dispersed among the villages, with squads in the hamlets, until the Viet Cong gain complete control of the area. At that time, the company is concentrated and operates as an integral unit in the area. Ibid., pp. 3-6. This may, perhaps, be a useful indicator of the stage of insurgency in an area. It should be noted that the construction of "combat hamlets and villages" is a basic concept of the "People's Guerrilla Warfare Movement." Such hamlets and villages are in fact the social matrix resulting from the interaction of the native peasant milieu and all the Viet Cong structures discussed in this chapter. The present Viet Cong policy calls for the widespread establishment of combat hamlets and villages, which are referred to as "basic units of the people's guerrilla warfare movement." "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," p. 6. It is interesting to note that the Viet Cong have established a "six-point criteria" which all combat hamlets and villages are required to meet. These are: (1) Close and resolute leadership of the party; (2) A strong political force (front associations, etc.) established; (3) Strong armed units organized and the people militarized; (4) Improvement made in the material and spiritual life of the people (land reform, etc.); (5) Fortifications constructed; and (6) "The enemy government authority is disintegrated, his paramilitary forces and henchmen no longer exist." "Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," pp. 3-4. The criteria for the construction of strategic hamlets under the Government's Chien Thang Plan (discussed in Chapter V) were also six, and four of them were almost identical to the last four listed above (hamlet defenses constructed, militia recruited, VC infrastructure eliminated, and social and economic progress begun). The only difference was that the Government substituted election of hamlet officials for control by the party, and also required that communications be available so that the hamlet could call for reinforcements. The similarity of these criteria demonstrates that insurgency is, indeed,

The foregoing excerpts make clear that local forces are intended to be the military backbone of the Viet Cong system of population control. Under the guidance of the district committee, they are expected to take the lead in training guerrillas, militarizing the population, destroying the Government's apparatus of population control, and preserving farm production and other resources for the use of the insurgency. While main forces and province mobile units operate over wide areas, local forces remain at home to constitute the principal fighting arm of the Viet Cong for the control and expansion of the "liberated areas."

(U) This completes the discussion of the Viet Cong system of population control. The party apparatus which guides and directs the system, the mass organizations which serve as levers for moving the masses, the administrative structure which is erected to free the party from routine administrative tasks, and the military organization which is the foundation of Viet Cong power and political rule, have been described and discussed in turn. During the course of the insurgency, each of these structures has undergone a process of growth and development, and no doubt each will continue to develop in the future.

(U) This section has shown that the Viet Cong organization was rather highly developed during the late 1964-early 1965 period. With respect to countermeasures that could have been taken to retard this growth, this section has raised a single question: Would increased

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a struggle for population control; and that both Communist Vietnamese and non-Communist Vietnamese view the struggle in much the same terms. A final point is that the Viet Cong have provided, by the construction of combat hamlets, a visible target that can be attacked and "torn down," with destructive effect on Viet Cong prestige. Further discussion of combat hamlets is beyond the scope of this paper. See also, "Experience Combat Villages Construction in Mountainous Area," passim; and Nguyen Van Uy, SIC Report No. 107/65 (DIA 6075 0304 65, 7 June 1965), 29 May 1965, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL).

Government intervention in the "liberated areas," with military force, have retarded significantly the growth and exploitative activities of the apparatus? This question will be reverted to in the last chapter.

Conclusion

(C) This chapter shows that the Viet Cong possessed an organizational structure that enabled the party to exercise a firm grip upon the population in the "liberated areas," estimated to be some two and one-half million people in June 1964.<sup>193</sup> It is also clear that the avowed purpose of the exercise of this control was to secure the human and material resources needed to strengthen and broaden the base of the insurgency. It should not come as any surprise, therefore, that the Viet Cong were able to rapidly build up their forces during late 1964 and early 1965. The essential resources--manpower and food--lay in their grasp.<sup>194</sup> All that was needed was a conscious decision to embark upon a force build-up. The purpose of the next chapter is to establish that the Viet Cong leadership did, indeed, take such a decision, and did so with the object of passing to the offensive during late 1964, and with the hope of achieving victory during 1965.

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<sup>193</sup> Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam, January 1966, p. 25.

<sup>194</sup> It is recognized that, additionally, troop leaders, weapons and ammunition were required for the expansion of Viet Cong forces. It is not possible to enter here into a discussion of how the Viet Cong were able to solve each of these problems. Needless to say, they did solve them. What is significant is that the Viet Cong were able to obtain a supply of raw manpower--an assured supply, which could be counted on to replenish their losses--and the food for their sustenance, which were indispensable if the expansion of their forces was to take place at all.

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## CHAPTER III

## VIET CONG STRATEGY DURING 1964-1965

In waging the Resistance War, we relied on the countryside to build our bases to launch guerrilla warfare in order to encircle the enemy in the towns and eventually arrive at liberating the towns.--General Vo Nguyen Giap

Introduction

(U) At the Second Congress of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam, held during the period 1-8 January 1964, Front Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho set the following objective for Viet Cong forces during the coming year:

Break the enemy plot of herding the people and establishing strategic hamlets under the new name of New Life Hamlets; consolidate the liberated area and materialize a safe and steady rear area.

Destroy the enemy forces, disintegrate the enemy elements one by one and disintegrate his armed forces; develop and expand the people's war to every area.<sup>1</sup>

Thus was the stage set for a major Viet Cong offensive, which would be prepared during the early months of 1964, launched with devastating impact during July and August, and reach a powerful climax during the Winter-Spring Campaign from December, 1964 to February, 1965.

(U) The Viet Cong began this campaign, according to their own estimate, from a position of relative military inferiority. The year 1963 had been a year of guerrilla warfare, of political and military

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in USMACV, J-2, Letter, Subject: "Viet Cong Strategy and Tactics During 1964," MAC J-231, 15 Mar 1965.

struggle to expand the network of party and mass organizations, defeat the Strategic Hamlet program, and gain control over larger segments of the rural population.

(U) A Viet Cong document, styled as an "official indoctrination training document for district and province committee members," and entitled "Political Lines of the Party in the Present Patriotic War," assessed the struggle during 1963 in the following terms:

Last year [1963], the Party and people's forces, particularly the armed forces were rapidly developed although the enemy were determined to annihilate the Revolution. That is a very important achievement which proves that we are able to measure ourselves with the enemy and to provide advantageous conditions in a critical situation.

Through political and armed struggles, we have gained great victories and annihilated the enemy's forces more than before. These victories together with the destruction of strategic hamlets, enable us to preserve and develop the revolutionary movement in our mountainous areas, and in the delta and increase the population in areas under our control.

After the coup [of 1 November 1963], the political, armed struggles, military proselyting and destruction of Strategic Hamlets were intensively and successfully stepped up.<sup>2</sup>

Characterizing guerrilla warfare as "the Party political line,"<sup>3</sup> the document goes on to present the Viet Cong view of the war in early 1964:

The war has come to a fierce seesaw phase. The enemy are making every effort to attack us, and we return the best we can. In some places they beat us, but in other places we beat them. The seesaw presents three principal aspects:

- The enemy group people into strategic hamlets while we break strategic hamlets.

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<sup>2</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Political Lines of the Party in the Present Patriotic War," Log No. 12-2, 10 Mar 1965, pp. 11-12. (FOUO). The document was captured in Dinh Tuong Province on 1 Oct 1964. It was classified by the Viet Cong as "Top Secret." Emphasis in the quotation is supplied.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

-The enemy execute raids and occupy while we counter raids and reoccupy.

-The enemy extend their control to our areas while we try to expand our liberated areas.<sup>4</sup>

(U) Viet Cong strengths and weaknesses are also summarized:

The armed forces are rapidly developed but in general they are still weak. . . . The people's movement of destroying the enemy's strategic hamlets has been stepped up vigorously, but in several places cadre did not stay close to the people, dared not motivate people living in strategic hamlets to rise up and destroy the hamlets, and did not fully exploit enemy's recent political crises. . . . Military proselytizing is still weak, it could not keep pace with the morale and ideology of the soldiers in the enemy army. . . . In short, we are stronger than the enemy in the political area, but we have not fully developed the political [sic] force. On the other hand, though we have made much progress in military area, we are still weak.<sup>5</sup>

The goals for 1964 are then asserted in a statement which contains the broad outlines of future strategy:

Based upon the basic and immediate mission of the SVN Revolution, upon the enemy situation and our own during last year, and upon the requirement to win future great victory, the immediate mission of the Party Hq in SVN is: To motivate the whole Party and the people to overcome all obstacles, develop political knowledge of the people, use every effort to build up armed political forces [sic] with emphasis on armed forces in order to change the difference between our forces and the enemy. Aggressively build and enlarge bases, particularly strategic bases, and organic mobile [units] of the main force, move forward to annihilate the enemy one by one, destroy strategic hamlets, gain operational initiative in villages, in rural areas and in mountainous area, foster movements in cities and towns . . . provide conditions to win greater victories.

In performing the above task, the following two fundamental objectives must be attained at all costs:

1. Smash plot of grouping people into strategic hamlets, and move forward to occupy rural and mountainous areas.

2. Annihilate the enemy, wipe away the enemy's elements one by one, provide conditions to destroy their bases.<sup>6</sup>

(U) Thus, the two primary aims of the Viet Cong are the expansion of population control and the achievement of military superiority. In

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13.

order that there should be no doubt as to the main task, the document concludes: "It is necessary to direct the whole Party and the people to urgently and positively build our forces, particularly the armed forces, at the same time attack the enemy more strongly."<sup>7</sup>

(U) Interestingly enough, in its introductory assessment of the international situation, the document ties the possibility of success to the extent of the United States commitment: "If the present unconventional war remains in the same conditions as it is at present or if the Americans slightly increase their strength, we will also be able to score large achievements if we make efforts to accelerate the strengthening of our force."<sup>8</sup>

(U) Discounting the obviously hortatory character of the document it is nevertheless a revealing statement of the essential ingredients of Viet Cong strategy for 1964. Emphasis on a military build-up is unmistakeable, and stress is laid on the destruction of strategic hamlets, the Government of Vietnam's prime instrument of population control in the rural areas. The call for a build-up of main force units, the regiments and battalions that bear the brunt of engagements with the Army of Vietnam, is a portent of larger-scale actions. Even so, a considerable effort would be required if these goals were to be achieved. The significance of the document lies in the fact that much of what it called for would be realized during the coming year.

(C) The main themes of this document recur in other captured documents, and in the prisoner and rallier interrogation reports of the period. According to Nguyen Van Uy, who was a cadre of the Viet Cong Western Region and a party member since 1946, the Viet Cong were stronger

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

than the Government of Vietnam in the political field, but weaker in troop strength, weapons, and facilities. The policy of the region committee was, therefore, to develop the armed forces, including main force, local force, and guerrillas; and to oppose sweep-operations by Government forces, especially those designed to expand the Government's population control.<sup>9</sup> Concerning strategic hamlets, the policy was that:

All military units must counter the concentration of people to build New Life Hamlets to gain personnel and properties from the [Viet Cong]. The destruction of the New Life Hamlet system will serve as a base for smashing enemy intention of separating the Party and armed forces from the people.<sup>10</sup>

(U) Another Viet Cong secret document, a report of a Guerrilla Warfare Conference held in December 1963 by the Fifth Military Region (Central Vietnam), likewise estimates the balance of forces in terms of the formula: "Although we are now weaker than the enemy in the military field, we are politically stronger than he is."<sup>11</sup> The document goes on to state:

For two years, faced with our ever increasing revolutionary movement in the rural areas, the American Imperialists and their henchmen have been striving to herd the people into Strategic Hamlets, in an attempt to gain manpower and material resources and to block the Guerrilla Warfare Movement of our people. They consider their Strategic Hamlet Program as a "National Policy" and a last solution for the survival of their regime. . . .

To deal with their cunning and cruel tricks, the Party has set forth the destruction of Strategic Hamlets as the most important mission of all Party Members, soldiers and people at present and in the future.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 1-92-65, 27 Jan 1965, pp. 13-14. (CONFIDENTIAL). Nguyen Van Uy was captured on 17 Oct 1964. For the location of the Western Region, see Appendix 1.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>11</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," Log No. 11-158, 23 Jan 1965, p. 5. (FOUO). See Appendix 1 for the location of the Fifth Region, or MR 5 as it is called.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 1. Emphasis supplied.

(U) In typical fashion, the destruction of strategic hamlets is linked to the construction of combat hamlets and villages, which secure the population and resources for exploitation by the Viet Cong:

Parallel to the destruction of enemy Strategic Hamlets we must, strive to develop Guerrilla Warfare and construct Combat Hamlets and Villages. . . .

Although our military forces are not stronger than those of the enemy, our political preponderance enables us to establish and develop combat hamlets and villages with the application of both military and political formulas . . .

Combat Hamlets and Villages are . . . places where our forces are developed in all aspects, where our manpower, financial and material resources are protected to pursue a patriotic war.<sup>13</sup>

(U) In two ways, these statements of the Viet Cong strategic purpose reveal the crucial importance, in their technique of insurgency, of the concept of population control. First of all, there can be no significant build-up of military forces without mobilization of the manpower and material resources of the population already under Viet Cong political control. Secondly, one of the prime strategic objectives of the Viet Cong is the further expansion of population control, by defeating the Strategic Hamlet program, thereby broadening the resource base of the insurgency and narrowing that at the disposal of the Government.

(C) In their own words, the Viet Cong testify to the role of population control in their strategy. A former secretary of a village party chapter in Binh Dinh, who was captured on 15 December 1963, states that "The immediate objective [of the Viet Cong] is to liberate the rural areas step by step which constitutes a resource of man-power and material

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-2. Emphasis supplied.

for the Revolutionary base."<sup>14</sup> Similarly, a Viet Cong document on plans for the Central Vietnam Highlands for 1964, states:

Attention must be given to the following three tasks: preventing the enemy from moving people into strategic hamlets, destroying strategic hamlets, and strengthening our controlled areas to get a firmer hold on the people.

Our present requirements are to destroy a series of strategic hamlets and to make good use of the manpower and natural resources which are available for the salvation of the country.<sup>15</sup>

(U) A Viet Cong directive of 25 June 1964, which orders an increase in military and political activity throughout a district, contains the following mission statement:

Strive to initiate a mass movement against Strategic Hamlets and New Rural Life Hamlets, break the enemy grip, seize the manpower financial and material resources . . . at the same time, agitate the villages and hamlets still under enemy control in and along the railroad to transform this area into a safe stepping stone for our forces.<sup>16</sup>

It can be seen from this example that population control serves not only to augment resources, but also to facilitate control over a strategic line of communications, and to establish a secure springboard for further operations.

(U) Still another Viet Cong document, which discusses the mission of district and province local forces, states that: "All the activities conducted by local forces aim presently at recovering those material

<sup>14</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Do Khoi, Log No. 11-13, 3 Dec 1964, p. 14. (CONFIDENTIAL). Emphasis supplied.

<sup>15</sup>U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "Viet Cong Document on Plans for the Highlands for 1964", FVS-10, 967, 10 Nov 1964, pp. 5-6. (CONFIDENTIAL). This document was issued on 15 January 1964, and classified by the Viet Cong as "top secret". Emphasis supplied.

<sup>16</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Order Nr 1," Log No. 9-107, 10 September 1964, p. 2. (FOUO). The document was classified "top secret" by the Viet Cong.

resources and manpower necessary for a protracted guerrilla warfare.<sup>17</sup>

(U) It is clear from these statements, and others,<sup>18</sup> that the lodestar of the combat party in the insurgency, its constant goal, and the guiding principle of its strategy, is the expansion of population control to broaden the material foundation of the insurgency and narrow the Government's base of support. The "liberated areas" provide the replacements for battlefield casualties, the recruits for new fighting units, and the food for the sustenance of the fighting men. Consequently, the Viet Cong go to great lengths to consolidate their hold on the population and its production. Plans are prepared to secure the crops at harvest,<sup>19</sup> and to evacuate entire hamlets and conceal the youth, foodstuffs, and other "people's properties" upon the approach of Government troops.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Mission and Guide-line for District and Province Local Units," Log No. 11-43, 11 Nov 1964, p. 1. (FOUO). This is another document of the Fifth Military Region Guerrilla Warfare Conference held in December, 1963. It was classified "top secret" by the Viet Cong.

<sup>18</sup>See also USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Quoc Thai, Log No. 10-234, 8 Dec 1964, p. 42. (CONFIDENTIAL); USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Directive," issued by the Long An Province Unit Command Committee on 25 Nov 1964, Log No. 2-189-65, 27 Feb 1965, pp. 3-7 (FOUO); and Captured Document entitled "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," Log No. 6-294-65, 21 July 1965, pp. 1-2. (FOUO).

<sup>19</sup>RVN, DOD, CIO, NIC Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Van Uy, SIC Report No. 107/65, 29 May 1965, pp. 2-3. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his capture on 17 Oct 1964, Source was Deputy of the Propaganda and Training Section of Western Nam-Bo Region, and had the opportunity to observe village defenses. RVN, DOD, CIO, NIC Report of Interrogation of Doan Lot, SIC Report No. 31/65, 27 Feb 1965, p. 8. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his capture on 28 April 1964, Source was attached to a unit of the Rear Services Section, 5th Military Region.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Experience Combat Villages Construction in Mountainous Areas," Log No. 11-157, 10 Mar 1965, pp. 6-7. (FOUO). Also, Log No. 11-158, 23 Jan 1965, pp. 6, 9-10 (FOUO); and Log No. 11-43, 11 Nov 1964, pp. 2-3 (FOUO).

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(C) The exodus of large numbers of people from the "liberated areas" is viewed by the Viet Cong with grave concern. Because of the difficulty of physically controlling this movement, they have shaped their major social policy--the land program--to provide an inducement to absentee owners to return. Under this policy, lands belonging to absentee owners will be kept in production and maintained in good condition by temporarily granting them to other families until the original owners return to claim them.<sup>21</sup>

(U) Similarly, when large numbers of people began to leave the Viet Cong areas due to the step-up in the air war in February 1965, a directive was issued by the Central Office of South Vietnam listing practical steps to be taken to halt this movement. These measures included construction of air-raid shelters, relocation of shops from central markets to the countryside, and discussion with the people of "the disadvantages caused by the evacuation into a city."<sup>22</sup>

(C) The drive for expansion of population control serves to focus the energies and unify all the disparate activities of the party apparatus. It is clear, however, that the end is not control for its own sake, but to obtain the resources that are strategic to the prosecution of the struggle. This, in turn, is the insurgents' basic means of changing the balance of power to the detriment of the Government. This

<sup>21</sup> USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Le Ban Hai, Log No. 6-6-65, 22 Jun 1965, p. 34. (CONFIDENTIAL). Source is a party member, captured 5 Apr 1965. USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled "Provisional Rural Procedure Guide," Log No. 8-408-65, 4 Oct 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); document is dated July 1965. "Circular" dated 11 May 1965, issued by front committee of Phuoc Long Province, Log No. 6-94-65, 5 June 1965, p. 2. (FOUO). Interrogation Report of Nguyen Huynh, Log No. 3-24-65, 6 Apr 1965, p. 59. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>22</sup> USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Directive," dated 3 Mar 1965, Log No. 4-107-65, 12 May 1965, p. 4. (FOUO).

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is the core of the Viet Cong's strategic conception. It is stated most succinctly in the following excerpt from a relatively low-level document, a report of the plans and operations of a sub-district of Kontum Province, illustrating that the basic strategic concept permeates all levels of the Viet Cong structure:

At present, we have to exert our efforts to dismiss the enemy potential and drive their military forces to a total disintegration and weakness. Consequently, our base and liberated areas have to be safeguarded and expanded. We must be resolute in leveling up all Strategic Hamlets, and dismissing any new aspect of control; gaining at all costs man-power and equipment resources in the enemy controlled area, and employ them to support the revolution; consequently, the balance of forces between friendly forces and that of the enemy will be changed rapidly.

Our unit is determined to stay close to the enemy and the people, appealing to them to stand up and destroy Strategic Hamlets, break the enemy's grip, re-establish contact to set up agent networks, gather the people to our side, and gain man-power and equipment resources in the enemy controlled areas to support the revolution and the Resistance.<sup>23</sup>

(U) It is apparent that the military strategy of the Viet Cong will be shaped by the strategic concept outlined above. For this reason, a military strategy in the conventional sense, that is, a concept for the employment of military means to destroy opposing forces, simply does not exist at the "struggle for population control" stage of the conflict. As will be shown in the succeeding portions of this paper, the plans of each of the six regions for 1964-65 were a composite of political, military, economic, social, and psychological measures for the control and exploitation of the population and resources of the country. The missions of the Viet Cong military forces were geared to the protection and expansion of the "liberated areas," and the attrition of opposing forces was

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<sup>23</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Report on Indoctrination Status and Plan of Operations of the 7th Unit in the 3 Coming Months," Log No. 9-195, 31 October 1964, p. 3. (CONFIDENTIAL). Deals with the period April, May, June, 1964; captured 16 Jun 1964.

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viewed as a prime means to this end. Only at a later stage after sufficient strength had been acquired, could the destruction of the opposing army per se be undertaken.

(C) Some of the basic ingredients of the Viet Cong strategy for 1964, like the attack of strategic hamlets and the expansion of guerrilla warfare, were carried over from 1962 and 1963. The build-up of armed forces during 1964, however, reflected a major decision by the Viet Cong to expand their military arm at a rapid rate, and was, consequently, a major new factor in the war. This troop build-up is discussed in detail below.

(U) Another new element in Viet Cong strategy is the emphasis given to sabotage and attack of lines of communications. This was undertaken for two main reasons, first, to raise an economic blockade against the cities, and second, to isolate entire villages, districts, and provinces from sources of military reinforcement, supply, and administrative direction.

(U) For a strategy aimed at expanding population control in the face of Government military superiority, the technique of blockade and isolation was particularly well-chosen. Government authority was centered in the large villages and towns, which were in most cases linked by a single road to the larger district, towns and province capitals. On a larger scale, the provinces themselves were linked by a few main inter-provincial routes and the single coastal railroad. To the extent that Viet Cong interdiction of the roads and the railroad was successful, the consequences were the strangulation of commerce between urban and rural areas, resulting in shortages of commodities in many places, lengthy delays in moving military forces and supplies, a requirement for major operations to open up lines of communication, and, above all, a demoralizing

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sense of isolation among Government officials and those who relied upon the Government for support.

(C) In July 1964, the Western Region Committee's instructions for the second half of 1964 included the mission to "sabotage communication axes from province to districts, [and] hinder RVNAF liaison and movement."<sup>24</sup> At the same time, the Resolution of the Sixth Region for the second half of 1964 directed the interdiction of specific communications axes, to include the destruction of strategically-situated posts among such axes.<sup>25</sup> A captured document of the Western Region, "Guidelines Introducing the [1965] Military Resolution of Region to All Combatants," contained instructions to "Step up attacks on water and land routes. . . . Emphasis must be placed on the development of units assuming land and water communication warfare."<sup>26</sup> According to a report of an official Government of Vietnam security service, it was announced at a meeting of four hundred Viet Cong cadres, held at a secret base in Pleiku Province on 24 August 1964, that the Viet Cong would establish an economic blockade by severing communication routes and taking control of transportation means.<sup>27</sup>

(c) On 5 September 1964, a Viet Cong platoon broke into a New

<sup>24</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Preliminary Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Uy, Log No. 11-83, 19 Nov 1964, p. 8. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>25</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Quoc Ba, Log No. 10-394, 20 Nov 1964, p. 32/I. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>26</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Guidelines," Log No. 7-174-65, 4 Aug 1965, pp. 3, 6. (FOUO). Document was captured on 3 Jun 1965.

<sup>27</sup>U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "Viet Cong Country-wide Campaign to Step Up Attacks, Expand their Territory, Create an Economic Blockade and Prepare for a General Uprising," FVS-10, 892, 16 Oct 1964, p. 1. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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Rural Life Hamlet in Phu Bon Province and informed the people that they must aid in the attack of communications routes in order to isolate Phu Bon Province and its districts and then launch attacks against Government posts in the province. The tactics to be employed included stopping civilian automobiles and commercial vehicles, as well as ambushing Government convoys to confiscate food and other materials, and obstructing traffic generally.<sup>28</sup>

(C) On 19 September, the Vinh Binh Provincial Committee decided to increase activities on all fronts, to include the sabotaging of bridges and roads.<sup>29</sup>

(C) During a 20 September meeting of the Military Section of the Quan Long District Committee, An Xuyen Province, cadres were told to be prepared for an order for a general attack throughout the province. In the meantime, their immediate tasks included the destruction of land and water communication axes and informing all owners of transportation firms that these axes were to be destroyed.<sup>30</sup>

(C) On 23 September a meeting was held in Thanh Duc District, Long An Province, at which a decision by the Thanh Duc District Committee was read prohibiting the transportation of rice to Saigon effective immediately. It was announced that those disobeying this order would be severely punished, perhaps even by death.<sup>31</sup>

(C) An advantage of the strategy of blockade and isolation was that it could be applied at the lowest echelon as well as the highest. On 5 October 1964 the Viet Cong Bien Hoa Provincial Committee, in an effort to expand its controlled area by taking over additional New Rural

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

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Life Hamlets, directed guerrillas to sabotage transportation axes and forbid circulation in order to isolate the hamlets. The hamlets would then be kept under continuous pressure by harassment, attack, and propaganda, until the people themselves went over to the Viet Cong and destroyed the hamlet fortifications.<sup>32</sup>

(U) The following excerpts from documents captured in Binh Dinh Province illustrate Viet Cong interdiction operations at district level:

There are indications that the enemy is trying to re-establish the communication on road section Phu Cat, Phu My, repair the road in Phu My District for the movement of troops and supplies and to rush into liberated villages.

For this reason, F.35 urgently directs local areas, to take the following actions:

-Villages along national road such as K 15, 9, 12, 11, 19, 8  
[Viet Cong designations for villages along National Route 17, must be determined to stay close to the enemy when . . . engineers and people . . . are repairing the road.

-When the enemy is stationed at any location, cling to him, execute raids, harass him, snipe on him, drive him into confusion and force him to withdraw- KA 4 should contact KA 15 to lead the masses to destroy the road section from Phu Ly bridge to Binh Tan - KA 6 should contact KA 9 to lead the people to destroy the road section from Nhong slope to KA 9 limit.

-KA 12, KA 11, KA 10 must make efforts for a prompt destruction of the railroad lying through their own area.<sup>33</sup>

A second document:

The enemy has concentrated 9 battalions west of Phu My and Bong Son to conduct sweep operations within this area, aimed at clearing highway #1 which was cut off by our force on the night of 2d February.

If we do not have a careful plan to counter his sweep operation, the enemy will cause uncountable damage to our people.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>33</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "F.35/ No. 19/CT TO: Local Areas," Log No. 5-400-65, 6 Jun 1965, p. 1. (FOUO). This is a Flash message, dated 15 Mar 1965, and signed by the Commander of F.35.

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-To accomplish those missions KA 15, KA 8, KA 9, KA 11, and KA 12 have tried to step up their sabotage activities to deny the enemy the use of highways and railroads and cause difficulties to the movement of his infantry and armored units. We have to destroy and level long portions of highways, railroads and bridges.<sup>34</sup>

(C) The Viet Cong closure of strategic National Highway 1, and the parallel railroad, which links the coastal provinces and the northern and southern parts of the country, was a major element of their campaign during late 1964 and early 1965. This result was accomplished by duplicating, at numerous points along the route, such actions as the above.<sup>35</sup>

(C) By late 1964 it became apparent that the Viet Cong were making a major effort against lines of communication. This was driven home most forcefully by the Viet Cong interdiction of National Highway 13 in northern Binh Duong Province, which became serious in August 1964 and continued throughout the period of this study. As a result, commerce was interrupted between Saigon and Binh Long Province, a scant fifty kilometers away. The six major rubber plantations in the province could neither export rubber, nor import sufficient rice to feed some forty thousand plantation workers. In the urban areas, rice rationing had to be imposed, prices rose, and the morale of Government officials and the general public was seriously affected. By mid-August, the rice reserves of the plantations had declined to fifteen days supply. The French plantation owners, unable to obtain a satisfactory answer to their pleas from the Government, requested the United States Embassy to intervene. Finally, a plan was arrived at whereby the road would be opened by Government forces twice a month, to allow convoys to bring in rice and fuel,

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<sup>34</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled, "Directive," issued by Current Affairs of K100, Binh Dinh Province, on 14 Feb 1965, Log No. 5-399-65, 6 Jun 1965, p. 1. (FOUO).

<sup>35</sup>See USMACV, Military Reports, July 1964-April 1965, passim. See Map 2, Appendix 1, for the location of Highway 1 and the railroad.

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and take out rubber. This action, together with the construction of additional rice-storage facilities in the province, alleviated the Viet Cong stranglehold on Binh Long to some extent. On the other hand, the six Government battalions employed on road-clearing operations for seven to ten days out of a month could not easily be spared from other missions.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup>USMACV, J-3, Disposition Form, Subject: "Viet Cong Closure of Highway 13 in Binh Duong," 25 Aug 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, Binh Long Advisory Detachment, Letter 24 Sept 1964, Subject: "Feeder Information of Monthly Evaluation." USMACV, J-3, Memorandum, Subject: "Situation in Vicinity of Ben Cat," 5 Oct 1964. (FOUO). The latter reference was prepared by the author, who was detailed to investigate and report on Viet Cong interdiction of Route 13. The report, which began "It is now accepted as an everyday fact of life by U.S. Advisors at III Corps, 5th Division, and Binh Duong Sector Headquarters that the VC have the capability of interdicting civilian traffic at will along route 13 from a few kilometers north of Thu Da Mot to Binh Long Province," was made personally to COMUSMACV. For the location of Highway 13 and Binh Long Province, see Appendix 1. It should be made clear that the Viet Cong success along Highway 13 can only be understood against the background of the terrain in the area of northern Binh Duong, which provides a natural corridor for the movement of VC units between War Zone C in northern Tay Ninh Province and War Zone D in Phuoc Thanh Province. As a result, Viet Cong Main Force units are continually crossing Highway 13, and in each year of the war vicious meeting engagements have taken place in the vicinity of Ben Cat (on the highway, in northern Binh Duong). As an example on 16 October 1964, just eleven days after the author's report on the situation in that area, a sharp engagement took place between a Viet Cong battalion and a Government force of one battalion (2/7 Infantry), a tank platoon, and an M-113 troop. Government forces were supported by a platoon of 105mm Howitzers and a platoon of 155mm Howitzers in Ben Cat, and by air strikes. The engagement began in broad daylight, at 0825 hours, about three kilometers south of Ben Cat. The Viet Cong broke contact about 1230 hours. In this action, one tank was destroyed and two were heavily damaged by VC 57mm rifle fire. The Viet Cong captured two caliber 50 machine guns by removing them from the tanks, but suffered heavy losses when one of their positions was overrun. Friendly losses in this action were: 14 KIA, 25 WIA, 23 MIA, 1 M-24 tank destroyed, 2 M-24 tanks severely damaged, 2 caliber 30 machine guns, 2 caliber 50 machine guns, 31 individual weapons. VC losses were: 70 KIA, 1 POW, 2 BAR, 9 individual weapons, and a quantity of mines, grenades, ammunition, equipment and documents. Needless to say, in this kind of operational environment, guerrillas can afford to be bold in setting up their roadblocks, for there is always the possibility that behind them is a main force unit. For the same reason, Government troops had to operate in strength, even though only a few guerrillas were visibly halting traffic. USMACV, J-3 (JOC), After Action Report, Binh Duong Province, 16 October 1964, (FOUO).

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(U) The Viet Cong strategy of interdicting lines of communication continued into 1965. A captured "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965" of the Vinh Long Province Committee called for "emphasis on attack on communication axes, . . . cut off the enemy communication."<sup>37</sup> The same resolution designated specific roads to be completely destroyed, and certain ones to be partially damaged. In addition, "when the situation is favorable, and when the forces are well organized, a 5-man sabotage command committee will be set up with the militia and guerrillas as backbone."<sup>38</sup> The sabotage command committee was established at province level, and district and village committees were to be formed as the situation permitted.<sup>39</sup>

(C) In March 1965, following an inspection trip to the I Corps area, a Government intelligence official reported that the Viet Cong plan seemed to be to "cut up" each I Corps province, isolate the mountainous regions from the coastal regions, and build up their local and guerrilla forces in order to eliminate Government of Vietnam local forces and enlarge VC-controlled areas.<sup>40</sup> In the Saigon area, a captured cadre of Central Nam-Bo Region reported that one of the purposes of the Viet Cong campaign during the coming rainy season (beginning in mid-May), would be to cut off communications between the capital and the Mekong Delta region.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," Log No. 6-294-65, 21 July 1965 p. 4. (FOUO). The document was captured on 4 Jun 1965.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> U. S., Field Information Report, FVS-11-601, 27 Mar 1965, p. 3. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>41</sup> USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Vo Hoang Nhac, Log No. 6-45-65, 23 Jun 1965, p. 1. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his

(U) Perhaps only aerial photography can convey an accurate impression of the magnitude of Viet Cong devastation of the rural road network during late 1964 and early 1965. In some provinces, such as Long An, Hau Nghia, Dinh Tuong, Kien Hoa, and Vinh Binh, virtually all of the feeder roads linking the rural areas and the main highways were dug up, heaped with mounds of dirt, or literally carted away. As an example, when the Government sent a battalion to Luong Hoa, in northwest Long An Province, the Viet Cong cratered the road behind it. As another example, the road linking the Phuoc Chau valley, in western Quang Tin Province, with the coast was completely destroyed by digging.<sup>42</sup>

(C) Such depredations were not without their economic consequences. The valuable cinnamon crop of the Phuoc Chau Valley could not be exported. Bus service was disrupted in many areas. Some people were forced to migrate to continue their livelihood.<sup>43</sup> In the main, the Viet

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capture on 26 May 1965, Source was a Viet Cong doctor (Captain), Chief of Medical Section of the Dong Thap 2 Regiment. He had been briefed during a "reorientation study" (a common procedure when new policy lines are announced) on the general policy of the Central Nam-Bo Region Committee. The Viet Cong divide "Nam-Bo" or the southern part of South Vietnam (formerly known as Cochinchina), into three regions: Western Nam-Bo, which is the lower Mekong Delta region; Central Nam-Bo, which consists of the Delta Province between the Mekong and Saigon; and Eastern Nam-Bo, which consists of the provinces north of Saigon. See Appendix I to this Chapter.

<sup>42</sup>The author is personally familiar with the cases mentioned in this paragraph, by virtue of visits to the provinces, helicopter reconnaissance, and interviews with U. S. advisors.

<sup>43</sup>Information on the Phuoc Chau Valley was obtained by interview with U. S. advisors at Second (ARVN) Division Headquarters, Danang. Information on migration was supplied by U. S. District Advisors in Long An Province. Of course, there is no difficulty in proving migration. Figures furnished by the Government of Vietnam to the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees, place the number of refugees in South Vietnam at 771,054, as of 9 Jan 1966. The difficulty is in proving the cause of migration. As the subcommittee pointed out, "it is difficult to attribute any accurate number of refugees to a specific cause." Among the causes of refugee movement (migration)

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Cong probably gained much of the surplus production of the food exporting regions, by taxing for the war effort what would otherwise have been marketed.<sup>44</sup>

(U) Thus, the Viet Cong interdiction campaign was not only a means of attacking the Government militarily, economically, and psychologically; it also reinforced their own population and resources control in the rural areas. Cutting the roads not only isolated the populace from the outside, but also rendered the peasant's food production more readily accessible to the Viet Cong.

(S) The impetus given by the Viet Cong to their interdiction campaign in 1964-65 is clearly revealed by the statistics of Viet Cong incidents. In the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam's terminology, virtually all of the incidents labeled "sabotage" are directed against lines of communication.<sup>45</sup> The data revealed that in 1963

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cited by the subcommittee are terrorism, confiscation of local food supplies and other material to support Viet Cong units, heavy taxation, impressment of young people into Viet Cong forces, and the increased application of firepower by U. S. and Government forces. United States Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees, Refugee Problems in South Vietnam, Senate Report No. 1058, 89th Congress, 2d Session, 4 March 1966.

<sup>44</sup>This is the conclusion, with respect to rice, of a report by the American Embassy, Saigon. The report states: "It is now generally agreed that the VC are responsible for withholding an undetermined but larger [Note: larger than in 1963] part of the marketable rice surplus." American Embassy, Saigon, Airgram, A-647, 25 Feb 1965, p. 7. (CONFIDENTIAL). This report, based on a field survey of Government officials and rice merchants in the surplus-producing areas of the Mekong delta, cited Viet Cong blocking of roads and canals as interfering with the rice trade. Viet Cong taxation of rice, and withholding of rice by prohibiting the peasant from marketing it without permission, is also cited. The Viet Cong, of course, have not halted the operations of the rice merchants, or attempted to halt completely the flow of rice to the cities. Since the Viet Cong control most of the rice-rich delta (see the population control maps in Chapter VII), this means that much of Saigon's rice is produced by peasants living under Viet Cong control. Ibid., passim.

<sup>45</sup>USMACV J-2 classifies sabotage incidents into road, canal,

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there were 1,396 incidents of sabotage reported. In 1964, the comparable figure was 3,178 and in 1965 the figure stood at 4,132. Thus, the annual data show more than a one hundred percent increase in the category of sabotage incidents between 1963 and 1964, and the monthly data reveal a particularly sharp increase beginning in July 1964, when the Viet Cong general offensive was launched.<sup>46</sup>

(U) July 1964 marks a decisive turn in the Viet Cong prosecution of the war. It was then that the decision to go over to a general offensive, in accordance with the strategic concepts just discussed, was made.

(C) According to Nguyen Van Uy, who had been a member of the propaganda and training section of the Western Nam-Bo Region, the Viet Cong began in June 1964 to conduct a general reorientation of their cadres on the policy lines for the second half of 1964. In accordance with the resolution of the region committee, the slogan for the coming period was to be "general attack, general uprising." Uy stated:

The advance of the Revolution is general attack, general uprising. We have, so far, chosen the direction of advance of the Revolution in a flexible manner, sometimes politics are emphasized, and sometimes military. But at present, we realize that, after considering the problem, it is impossible to wait for the negotiation, or political struggle to demand neutralism, we decide to win the enemy by general attacks and general uprising.<sup>47</sup>

(C) Another captured cadre likewise testifies that after July 1964, the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone Committee de-emphasized the "protracted war" theme and made every effort to promote the theme of "general

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railroad, telecommunications, bridge, and "other" sabotage. The number of incidents in the last category is insignificant. Source: USMACV, Daily Sitreps, 1 April 1964-30 April 1965.

<sup>46</sup>U. S., DOD, DIA, Special Intelligence Supplement, Military Fact-book on the War in South Vietnam, SIS 141-66, Jan 1966, p. 32. (SECRET).

<sup>47</sup>Nguyen Van Uy, p. 11.

offensive, general uprising."<sup>48</sup>

(C) The personal notebook, captured on 7 September, of a Viet Cong cadre, contains an entry that reveals that the new slogan intended to convey a combined political-military offensive: "Our policy is to apply both military and political measures . . . ; therefore, our slogan is 'a general offensive, a general uprising.'"<sup>49</sup>

Viet Cong Strategy in Western Nam-Bo.

(C) In July, 1964, reindoctrination classes were conducted by the training and propaganda section of the Western Nam-Bo Party Committee on the policies to be applied by region during the next phase of the war. At this time, the decision to go over to the general offensive was announced, together with the tasks for the coming six months. These included first, the rapid build-up of armed forces, according to the slogan "filling while running;" second, the sabotage of communications axes from provinces to districts; and third, the waging of "annihilation" in addition to "attrition" warfare against Government troops.<sup>50</sup>

(C) To implement this last requirement, criteria were established whereby main force units would seek to annihilate enemy companies and battalions, province local force units would annihilate enemy companies, district local force units would annihilate enemy platoons, and village concentrated guerrilla units would annihilate enemy squads.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> RVN, DOD, CIO, NIC Rpt 248/65, 14 Sept 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>49</sup> U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "Excerpts from a Viet Cong Cadre's Notebook," FVS-10-898, 16 Oct 1964, p. 4. (CONFIDENTIAL). On the strategy of the general offensive, see also USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Anh Dung, Log No. 12-82, 23 Dec 1964, pp. 12-13. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>50</sup> Nguyen Van Uy, Interrogation Report, pp. 11-14. Preliminary Interrogation Report, pp. 8-9.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

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The idea was for a battalion to destroy a company, a company to destroy a platoon, and so on. At the same time, guerrilla forces would be expanded and would continue the war of attrition against Government troops.

(C) The Viet Cong recognized that the new "attack and destroy" tactics would require their units to remain concentrated for longer periods than when "hit and run" tactics were employed. They therefore took the first step toward the use of their forces to hold ground. Guidelines were established whereby region main force units were to remain in an area from five to seven days after an engagement; province local force units would remain from three to five days; and district local force units would hold for twenty-four hours after an engagement.<sup>52</sup>

(U) The effect of these military innovations was to move the Viet Cong into the arena of "mobile" warfare. For the first time, as a matter of strategy, mobile warfare was combined with guerrilla warfare to effect the destruction of Government forces in battle. The Government's entire military establishment--not just segments of it--now became a principal target of Viet Cong military forces.

(U) The foregoing policies of Western Nam-Bo Region for the second half of 1964 are confirmed by an important captured document, entitled "Guidelines Introducing the . . . Military Resolution of Region to All Combatants." An analysis of this document indicates that it was probably intended to apply to the second half of 1964, or the year 1965.<sup>53</sup> Concerning the build up of military forces, the document reveals that

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Internal statements referring to "early 1964" and "missions for the coming year," and the close correlation of the document and others of the late 1964-early 1965 period, reasonably establish the date.

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"the main point is to build up the main force.<sup>54</sup> Also, "parallel with the increase of combat forces, the leadership machinery must be specially developed to assume command of various levels to make military, political, and rear service organizations strong enough to assume the combat mission and the development of forces."<sup>55</sup>

(U) Concerning operational guidelines for Viet Cong forces the document is very revealing:

Enemy annihilation criteria prescribed for three types of forces. "Three types of forces" is the Viet Cong expression for main force, local force, and guerrillas.

The village guerrillas are required to exterminate the enemy one by one and capturing his individual weapons, then destroy him cell by cell and squad by squad.

The District local forces annihilate every enemy squad and platoon outside the fortifications.

The Province local forces usually exterminate every enemy platoon or company outside the fortifications and conduct successive and widespread attacks on enemy company size units outside the fortifications.

The Main force units usually conduct annihilating attacks against every enemy company and battalion outside the fortifications and engage the enemy battalion outside the fortifications.

Combat and annihilation targets of the three types of forces.

It was quite right for us to direct attacks on Civil Guard, SDC and Special forces a few years ago because, at that time, our strength was rather weak, in addition, they exercised control, attacked our people, constructed and protected strategic hamlets. However, now, the enemy regional forces are not capable of providing security for strategic hamlets and occupied areas. Therefore, the defense of his remaining strategic hamlets and occupied areas is to be assumed by regular troops while our armed forces have grown up. As a result, we have to affirm our combat and annihilation target to suit the situation. This means a great deal to the [Liberation] Movement. The following points should be taken into account:

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The guerrilla and local forces continue to conduct annihilating

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<sup>54</sup>"Guidelines," Document captured 3 Jun 1965, p. 5. (FOUO).

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

attacks on Civil-Guard, Self-Defense and Special Forces and disintegrate the enemy combat youths.

The province local forces, in addition to the above mission, are required to struggle for favorable conditions to annihilate the enemy main forces, element by element.

Our main force units create conditions for the extermination of the enemy main force troops.<sup>56</sup>

(U) This is evidence of a major decision of the Viet Cong to escalate the level of the war, both in numbers of troops and intensity of military struggle. The emphasis on the "tactic of annihilation," together with the objective of annihilating the "regular" or "main force" troops of the Government, is a clear portent of battles characterized by conventional fire and maneuver.

(U) The Viet Cong leave little doubt that they are imparting a new character to the war. The terms "attack of attrition" and "attack of annihilation" are used to differentiate between guerrilla and mobile warfare.<sup>57</sup> "Attacks of attrition and annihilation" are described as, "attack with concentrated forces to annihilate the entire enemy strength, and employ guerrillas to wear down the enemy everywhere."<sup>58</sup> Lower echelons are enjoined to "develop three types of troops, especially the concentrated force," and they are told that the basic concept is "Guerrilla warfare is of primary consideration but gradually advance to mobile warfare and attack strongholds when conditions insure success."<sup>59</sup> Thus,

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>57</sup>"Guidelines," p. 1. (FOUO). This document juxtaposes the categories, "attack of attrition" and "attack by concentrated forces," and "guerrilla warfare" and "concentrated warfare." The use of such categories is indicative of a clear differentiation between guerrilla warfare, with its object of attrition, and mobile warfare by concentrated units, which has the objective of destroying the enemy. Ibid., pp. 1, 9.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 3. Emphasis supplied.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

guerrilla warfare will not abate; instead, mobile warfare will be superimposed upon it.

(U) According to the Military Resolution of Western Nam-Bo Region, the "four general missions" for late 1964-early 1965 are:

1. Increase attacks of attrition and raise annihilation level.
2. Attack and destroy strategic hamlets and motivate the people to construct combat villages, counter clear and hold operations and advance to control the rural areas throughout the Region.
3. Actively develop the armed forces.
4. Coordinate three front attacks in every mission. "Three front attacks" is standard Viet Cong terminology for their military, political, and troop proselyting missions.<sup>60</sup>

(U) Another valuable document on the plans of Western Nam-Bo Region for this period is the Joint Resolution of the Military Region Party Committee and the Vinh Long Province Party Committee on the military mission for Vinh Long Province in 1965. This document begins with an "estimate on the theater of operations and enemy schemes." It describes Vinh Long Province as "the most populous area in the region, with abundant resources," and states that:

It is the area where we are determined to dispute manpower and material resources with the enemy to supply the revolutionary war. If we succeed in expanding, consolidating the liberated rural area, and holding Vinh Long area, we would split up Nam Bo and connect our delta area with the mountainous area. Being very rich in manpower as in resources Vinh Long area will furnish many good conditions to develop our forces as well as to supply other areas with manpower (especially the mountainous area) and to connect T3 with T2 [read: Western Nam-Bo Region with Central Nam-Bo Region], thus facilitating our movements.<sup>61</sup>

However, the document continues, the Government of Vietnam's grip on Vinh Long Province is still strong. The Government's objectives are:

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," pp. 1-2. (FOUO). See Appendix 1 for the location of Vinh Long Province.

To carry out its pacification plan with priority areas, [and] to control the areas along the upper and lower Mekong Rivers, along land and water routes, in the adjacent areas of towns and cities, . . . and most particularly in the religious areas and weak areas. He conducts large-scale sweep operations, bombardments and strafings in the deep areas, regroups population from the interior area to the area bordering the axes of communication. . . . disputes with us the manpower and material resources and attempts to control . . . our liberated area.<sup>62</sup>

(U) Based on the foregoing estimate, the following missions for 1965 are assigned to province forces:

a. Increase the destruction of enemy forces from 1 to 2 platoons, and in some cases one complete company.

Intensively step up continuous attacks of various scales deep into enemy war area . . .

-Prepare to attack the enemy every month (one battle by Main Forces of U [Province], two battles by H. [District] local forces, and as many battles as possible by guerrillas . . .

-Prepare the opportunity to attack cities and towns, ferry-boats, major bridges, POL dumps, ammunition dumps, power plants, airfields . . .

b. Intensively destroy strategic hamlets: completely destroy strategic hamlets in rural areas, and sabotage remaining hamlets around the towns, especially around Vinh Long City . . .

c. Strive to develop the armed forces . . . stress the assignment of recruits to reinforce Region and Province main forces, sapper units, branches in charge of important missions and at the same time, emphasize building and development of hamlet and village guerrilla units as well as district local forces. . . .

e. sic Strive to consolidate and expand the liberated rural area in order to ensure the stability in the rear, to heighten the revolutionary movement and at the same time to participate in the implementation of the Party's rural policy as well as in the mobilization of manpower and material resources for the Resistance.<sup>63</sup>

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62 Ibid., p. 2. The reference to "religious area" is explained thus: Along the lower Mekong River, our revolutionary installations are still weak because of the presence of many Hoa Hao (some of them are Cambodians), Caodai and Catholics. This is the area where the enemy is determined to seize manpower and material resources in order to carry out their policy of employing Vietnamese against Vietnamese, employing war to feed war. He is presently employing all schemes and plots to bribe, attract and divide various religions and ethnic minorities and to use them as . . . political tools. Ibid., p. 1.

63 Ibid., pp. 2-3, (FOUO). Emphasis added.

(U) Further instructions in the document call for province forces to train on "movement warfare," while district forces train on raids and attack of posts;<sup>64</sup> and for province forces to "continue to attack the enemy Civil Guard and partially annihilate the enemy regular forces especially those dispersed," while "District Local forces and village guerrilla units will attack all types of enemy troops operating in the area."<sup>65</sup> Operational objectives are prescribed as follows:

- Requirements of province main forces: destroy from 1 to 2 complete platoons, and if feasible destroy one enemy company.
- Requirements of District local forces:
  - Under normal circumstances, destroy one complete platoon.
  - In favorable situation, destroy 2 platoons.
  - Attack triangular posts and District regional forces . . .
- Tactics employed
  - Emphasize attack on communication axes (destruction) . . .
  - Attack on enemy forces operating in the field.
  - Ambush enemy reinforcements.
  - Increase attacks on enemy rear areas: attack on depots, airfields, docks, American Command Posts.
- Build-up of backbone forces  
Emphasize on reinforcement of personnel and cadre to Main force Units.<sup>66</sup>

(U) In addition, guerrilla forces are to be expanded, and combat villages employed more widely as "basic units of the people's guerrilla warfare movement . . . to mobilize all the capabilities and intelligence of the masses in the attrition and destruction of enemy potential."<sup>67</sup> Guerrilla forces are to be expanded to the maximum extent, for guerrillas

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Emphasis supplied in last sentence.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 6. It is stated as a requirement that: "This year, we must build up and consolidate combat villages everywhere . . ." Ibid.

"are the strategic reserves for the build-up of the regular forces."<sup>68</sup> In addition to their normal functions, guerrillas are directed to sabotage communications axes, to "completely destroy the roads in a number of districts," and to set up sabotage command committees when conditions are favorable.<sup>69</sup>

(U) The Vinh Long document states that "being very rich in manpower as in resources Vinh Long area will furnish many good conditions to develop our forces as well as to supply other areas with manpower."<sup>70</sup> The Viet Cong clearly recognized the strategic importance of the fertile and densely-populated Mekong delta region if sufficient resources were to be mobilized to sustain their general offensive. The bulk of the manpower and food would have to be acquired in the delta, where such resources were in plentiful supply.<sup>71</sup>

(C) An example of the supply of manpower to other regions was the transfer of the Viet Cong T.70 Battalion (formerly, U Minh 7 Battalion) from the Western Region to the Eastern Region in August 1964. This battalion consisted mainly of soldiers from the Viet Cong Rach Gia and Can Tho Provinces (Western Region), and on its way to the Eastern Region the battalion recruited additional soldiers in Vinh Binh and sent

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid. "It is necessary to recruit the mature men and women to self defense militia and militia guerrillas of which the strength is not limited. These organizations . . . are the strategic reserves for the build-up of the regular forces." Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 6, 9.

<sup>70</sup>"Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," pp. 1-2.

<sup>71</sup>The relative population density of the delta provinces, compared to other provinces, is shown in Map 3, Appendix 1. The importance of the delta in rice-growing is depicted in Map 4, Appendix 1. It should be noted that Central Vietnam, as a whole, is a rice-deficit area, requiring the importation of approximately 300,000 tons of rice annually from the Mekong delta. American Embassy, Saigon, Airgram A-647, 25 Feb 1965.

them on ahead for training in Tay Ninh.<sup>72</sup>

(C) In early 1964, the Viet Cong began a conscription program in the delta provinces. The political cadres assembled healthy youths for a lecture on "the duties of the youth in the present stage," after which the names of those who were to fulfill military service were announced and the conscripts led off to a collecting point for assignment. The Viet Cong policy was for young men from the ages of 16 to 35 to fulfill compulsory military service of from one to three years depending upon their state of health.<sup>73</sup>

(C) The Viet Cong utilized locally recruited and conscripted manpower for the build-up of their forces. In several cases, a local force unit was up-graded to main force to provide the core of a new battalion, and new recruits furnished the remainder of the strength. In this way, the U Minh Battalion grew three-fold with the addition of the U Minh II Battalion in February 1964, and the U Minh III Battalion in October 1964.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, the Cuu Long Battalion of Vinh Binh Province grew to regimental size with the addition of the Cuu Long Battalion in April 1964 and the Cuu Long III Battalion in November 1964. In this case also, the new units were formed from district local forces, recruits

<sup>72</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Tan Si, Log No. 2-197-65, 4 Mar 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); and Interrogation Report of Le Van Bai, Log No. 11-172, 28 Dec 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>73</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Ngo Van Muon, Log No. 9-270, 3 Oct 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL); and Interrogation Report of Ho Ngoc Lang, Log No. 4-173-65, 22 Apr 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). Other sources which indicate a Viet Cong policy of extensive recruitment in the Western Region in late 1964 are: USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Anh Dung, Log No. 12-82, 23 Dec 1964, p. 13. (CONFIDENTIAL); and Interrogation Report of Le Van Dat, Log No. 3-42-65, 28 Apr 1965, p. 13. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>74</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Le Van Hai, Log No. 2-150-65, 24 Feb 1965, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL). For the location of the U Minh Forest Region, see Map 1, Appendix 1.

and conscripts.<sup>75</sup>

(U) While their own conscription program went forward, the Viet Cong launched an all-out campaign against the Government draft, particularly after the Government's announcement in March 1964 that an additional 50,000 troops would be mobilized to support the pacification plan. A document captured in Chuong Thien Province (Western Region) provides an indication of the extent and timeliness of the Viet Cong reaction to Government conscription. The document is a directive "to accelerate activities against the conscription and to defeat the plan of development of the enemy force."<sup>76</sup> It is dated 10 April 1964, and it states in part:

After achieving the plan of increasing 50,000 soldiers, the enemy has been widely carrying out his plan of conscription and development of force. He has openly and boldly drafted youths everywhere, especially in his controlled areas such as towns, cities, religious areas, strategic hamlets . . .

We should immediately motivate and lead the people to struggle against the conscription in an aggressive manner in order to break up the enemy plan of development of forces, and to secure men and resources for the development of our own armed and militia forces. . . .

1) Speed up the indoctrination of the people and youth, point out that the enemy conspiracy is to draft youths to replenish their units strength . . . lead the youth to resolutely protest against conscription and refuse to accept weapons. . . . In tandem with the propaganda and education against conscription, encourage youths to enlist in our army in liberated and disputed areas. . .

<sup>75</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Special Intelligence Report, Log No. 1-322-65, 21 Jan 1965; (CONFIDENTIAL); Special Interrogation Report of Le Van Nghiem, Log No. 1-407-65, 29 Jan 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL); and Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Tong, Log No. 12-31, 23 Dec 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL). The USMACV J-2 cover letter to the last reference states that: "From other reports it is apparent that the Viet Cong have conducted an all-out military proselyting conscription program throughout the delta region during 1964. In doing so, the Viet Cong have probably formed provisional units, some of which have been transferred to the Tay Ninh area, while others have been incorporated into existing main and local forces battalions." USMACV, J-2, Letter 12 Jan 1965, Subject: "Rallier Nguyen Van Tong." (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>76</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Directives," Log No. 1-195-65, 15 Feb 1965, p. 1. (FOUO).

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- 2) Use every aspect of propaganda to protest against conscription widely, and continuously concentrate the above activities in areas where the enemy conscription is intensive (towns, religious areas, strategic hamlets, disputed areas). Leaflets, slogans, megaphones, loudspeakers, armed and assault propaganda teams, and all forms of press and entertainment . . . should be utilized. People from liberated areas should be sent to cities or enemy controlled areas to propagandize, denounce the enemy conspiracy, his crimes and incite youths to join liberated areas.
- 3) All branches and people associations should plan to motivate people to positively resist against the conscription. . . . [People's Revolutionary Youth] Group should have a concrete, immediate and concentrated plan for this mission.
- 4) To counter conscription activities in the enemy controlled area, violent struggles should be conducted, with particular attention to motivate youths to join the liberated area. . . .
- 5) While executing the counter conscription plan introduce our agents into the enemy ranks in accordance with the military proselytizing mission, and take care not to hinder the counter-conscription movement which is our main job.
- 6) In tandem with the counter-conscription mission, attention should be paid to protest against . . . development of the enemy para-military forces.
- 7) As for leadership, pay attention to the following matters: Protest against conscription, against development of [Government] forces, motivate people to enlist in our army. These three activities must be closely coordinated in order to foil the enemy plan of strengthening and developing their forces and insure achievement of our own plan.<sup>77</sup>

Thus, a mere thirty-three days after the Government's announcement of conscription, the Viet Cong produced a plan to frustrate the Government program and obtain manpower for their own purposes.

(c) Viet Cong counter-conscription activities intensified in August 1964, when the Government declared a state of national emergency and issued a new mobilization decree.<sup>78</sup> The heavy-handed and inept methods of Government officials aroused considerable popular opposition

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-2.

<sup>78</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "To C.50," Log No. 1-192-65, 1 Feb 1965. (FOUO). Document is dated 13 Sept 1964.

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to the draft, and provided the Viet Cong with numerous instances of "people's struggles" to celebrate in their anti-conscription propaganda.<sup>79</sup> The Viet Cong's preclusive manpower policies, and the Government's lack of an effective apparatus of population control, rendered the Government draft almost totally ineffective during 1964 and early 1965.<sup>80</sup> The lost battle for manpower was one of the most far-reaching of all the lost battles of the period.

(U) Next to manpower, the most important resource of the Mekong delta is rice. In 1963, the total production of rice in South Vietnam was 5,306,000 tons. Of this, 4,302,000 tons, or 81%, was produced in Nam-Bo proper (Western, Central, and Eastern Regions--see Map 1, Appendix 1), 931,000 tons were produced in the Central Vietnam lowlands, and the remaining 73,000 tons were produced in the Central Vietnam highlands. The provinces of the Viet Cong Western Region produced 2,757,000 tons, or 52% of the national production, and 64% of the production of

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<sup>79</sup>Examples of popular demonstrations in Rach Gia, Kien Giang Province, wherein old people denounced the Government for taking away their sons, others lay in the streets to prevent the movement of trucks with recruits, and the recruits themselves escaped in the melee, are cited in USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "To: C.50," Log No. 1-193-65, 20 Feb 1965, (FOUO). Similar examples are cited in USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Anti-Conscription Situation in Districts," Log No. 1-194-65, 20 Feb 1965. (FOUO). The first document is dated 9 Sept 1964, and the second 13 Sept 1964. Although these documents are clearly in the propaganda category, it should be noted that they reveal the Viet Cong to be quite satisfied with the progress of the anti-conscription program.

<sup>80</sup>Interviews with the U.S. Advisor to the 50th ARVN Regiment in Long An, and with the G-3 Advisor, 21st ARVN Infantry Division (whose area of responsibility was in the territory of the Viet Cong Western Region), reveal that conscripts had to be brought in at gun-point, and kept in guarded compounds until their transfer to training centers. Even so, large numbers escaped from trucks en route to the training camps. Sufficient data is not yet available to portray the full dimensions of the disastrous miscarriage of the Government's conscription program in 1964. However, a preliminary attempt is made in Chapter VI.

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Nam-Bo.<sup>81</sup> Central Vietnam as a whole is a rice-deficit area, requiring in 1963 the shipment of 327,000 tons of rice from the Nam-Bo region.<sup>82</sup> A major component of the Viet Cong strategy was the mobilization of this vital resource to support the war effort.

(U) The Viet Cong employed their control over rice in two basic ways. First, by receiving "contributions" of rice in kind they were able to supply their own forces and build-up reserves for the future. Second, by accepting money payments of taxes in lieu of rice, or by selling the rice acquired by taxation, they were able to obtain the financial resources needed for the purchase of clothing, medicine, and other necessary items, and for the payment of troop allowances and cadre expenses.<sup>83</sup>

(U) In practice, the Viet Cong usually gave the peasant the choice of whether to pay his "liberation contribution" in kind or in money form.<sup>84</sup> At harvest, the rice received in kind is in the form of unhusked or paddy rice which required milling prior to use; a portion of this rice is sold to merchants, and this eliminates the need for the Viet Cong to store and mill the rice themselves.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, purchasing agents of Finance and Economy Sections purchase rice to meet

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<sup>81</sup>USOM, Economic and Financial Planning Division, Annual Statistical Bulletin No. 7, Data Through 1963, July 1964, pp. 66-67.

<sup>82</sup>American Embassy, Saigon, Airgram A-647, 25 Feb 1965, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., passim. Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report 43/65, passim. USMACV, J-2, Viet Cong Financial Policy in South Vietnam, 13 April 1964. (SECRET).

<sup>84</sup>Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report 43/65, passim. U.S., Field Information Report, Subject: "Vietnamese Study on Viet Cong Financial Activities," FVS-10,952, 30 Oct 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL). This reference is a summary of a study prepared in October 1964 by the office of the Kien Hoa Province Chief, the redoubtable Col. Chau.

<sup>85</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Phuoc, Log No. 2-30-65, 12 Feb 1965, p. 2. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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Viet Cong requirements.<sup>86</sup>

(C) Since rice is a vital resource, the Viet Cong undertake certain measures, over and above taxation, to preclude its falling into Government hands. One such measure is preclusive purchasing. To prevent rice from being shipped to Government-held areas, the Viet Cong will purchase it themselves. There have been cases where payment has been made in bonds, or in Ho Chi Minh notes (that is, non-interest-bearing bonds). The Viet Cong then promise to redeem these bonds the following year, after taxes have been paid.<sup>87</sup>

(C) Another measure is to limit or impose taxes upon rice sold in markets in Government-held areas. The Viet Cong have not attempted to disrupt the rice trade completely, which they might do by forbidding the ramasseur to country buyer from entering their territory to collect paddy.<sup>88</sup> Instead, they have urged the peasant to withhold rice from market, and have reinforced this appeal by limiting the amount that may

<sup>86</sup> RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Do Khoi, SIC Report No. 61/65, 10 Apr 1965, pp. 20-21. (CONFIDENTIAL). "The VC purchase rice at the end of the harvest season in areas which were completely or partially under their control. The rice was purchased to provide food for units not capable of producing rice or as a precautionary measure against loss of the rice harvest because of attacks by the ARVN units." Ibid., p. 20. RVN, CIO, NIC, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Tan, SIC Report No. 89/65, 13 May 1965, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL). Until his capture on 14 April 1964, Nguyen Tan was the Purchasing and Contracting Agent, Economic and Finance Section, Inter-Province 3. His cell purchased mainly milled rice (not paddy), including 30 tons for the Inter-Province Rear Services Section between January and April 1964. From April to June 1964, he was ordered to purchase 600 kilograms of rice daily, in order to keep Rear Services supplied. Ibid., pp. 4-5. See also USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Tan, Log No. 10-346, 30 Oct 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>87</sup> Do Khoi, p. 21. U.S. Field Information Report, FVS-11-573, 25 Mar 1965, p. 2. (CONFIDENTIAL). Airgram A-647, passim. Nguyen Tan, Log No. 10-346, p. 29.

<sup>88</sup> Airgram A-647, p. 7.

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be marketed, or by taxing the amount marketed.<sup>89</sup> In addition, the blocking of roads and canals, which makes it more difficult for buyer and seller to meet, serves to limit the export of rice from Viet Cong-controlled areas.<sup>90</sup>

(C) The combination of Viet Cong taxation, preclusive purchasing, and marketing restrictions served to limit collection of the 1964 crop (which began in November 1964), thereby creating a shortage of paddy in Cholon and the rice centers of the delta. In February 1965, a survey of the rice trade was conducted by the American Embassy, Saigon. The principal rice centers of Rach Gia, Soc Trang, and Can Tho--all located in the Viet Cong Western Region--were visited and inquiries made of traders and officials concerning collection of the new crop. This investigation disclosed that the Viet Cong were now taxing up to an unparalleled forty percent of the crop. They had also introduced a six percent turnover tax on sales by peasants to ramasseurs, and were enforcing this by blocking

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., passim. A tax on a commodity to be marketed in Government areas is called by the Viet Cong an export tax. Both export and import taxes are used to control trade between Viet Cong and Government-controlled areas. Examples of such taxes, for various commodities, are contained in FVS-11,573, p. 3. Tran Van Hung states that the purpose of export taxes was to limit trade with the cities, thereby causing goods to be cheaper and more plentiful in the countryside. USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Van Hung, Log No. 6-268-65, 30 Jun 1965, p. 41. (CONFIDENTIAL). Thus, the "liberation tax" was a tax on income, production, and real estate. Export and import taxes were taxes on commerce with Government-held areas. A third major tax was the trade duty, which was a sales or turnover tax on market transactions. See USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Ngoc Tung, Log No. 2-137-65, 28 Feb 1965, p. 6. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his capture on 19 Dec 1964, Tung was Assistant Chief, Economy and Finance Section, Hong Nhu District, Kien Phong Province.

<sup>90</sup>Airgram A-647, passim. "Quite a number of ramasseurs had been put out of business by the war; this happened whenever their sampans, their only capital, were sunk." Ibid., Enclosure 5. Viet Cong mining of canals thus contributed to the lesser number of ramasseurs available to collect paddy from the peasants.

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canals and channeling traffic through areas they controlled.<sup>91</sup>

(C) Concerning the role of the Viet Cong in the delta rice trade, the survey stated:

It is now generally agreed that the VC are responsible for withholding an undetermined but larger part of the marketable rice surplus. Their main force or regular troops have increased in numbers, and their need to stockpile also reflects their responsibility to the people in their areas. Thus, the VC are reportedly taxing the peasant up to 40% of the crop. This rate seems high, but there are other indications that the VC are paying less attention to the possibility that their actions might alienate the peasant.<sup>92</sup>

(C) The consequences of the Viet Cong's withholding of rice were low collections in the delta centers, declining deliveries to Cholon, and rising wholesale prices. The normal pattern is for rates of delivery to be large during the first quarter of the year, immediately following the harvest, and for prices to fall. Deliveries of the 1963 crop, during the first quarter of 1964, had dropped to their lowest level in seven years and had plunged exports to a record low of 49,175 tons in 1964 (compared to 323,000 tons in 1963). Now, in the first two months of 1965, deliveries were even lower than during the same period in 1964.<sup>93</sup>

(C) The Viet Cong exploited the rice trade not only by the six percent turnover tax upon the ramasseur (passed on to the peasant in the form of lower prices, or to the mill in the form of higher costs), but also by taxing the transportation of rice to Cholon. According to one disclosure, even shipments escorted by the Vietnamese Navy were taxed,

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91 Ibid.

92 Ibid., p. 7.

93 Ibid., pp. 2-5. It should be noted that the Viet Cong practice of withholding rice was one factor contributing to the decline in deliveries to Cholon. Another factor was the size of the crop, which was considered to be below normal in 1963, and only slightly better in 1964. It is not possible to assess the relative weight of these two factors. The people in the trade stressed the role of the Viet Cong. Given the magnitude of Viet Cong tax collections, their role must be considered significant. Ibid., p. 3.

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because the barges returned alone and the merchants were in other ways vulnerable to the Viet Cong.<sup>94</sup>

(C) No doubt also, the rising price of rice afforded the Viet Cong lucrative opportunities to release some of their stocks at a profit, thereby assisting in the finance of their war effort.<sup>95</sup> In addition, rice was sent from the Western Region to Viet Cong forces in Central Vietnam.<sup>96</sup>

(C) To support their military build-up, the Viet Cong increased taxes generally during 1964 and 1965.<sup>97</sup> If this action had any appreciable effect on the population, it was not evident during the time frame of this

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Enclosure 18.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 8. It should be noted that one of the causes of the rice was the Government's own program of preclusive buying and stockpiling, which, under the circumstances, served to further reduce the supply. The program, which was begun in December 1961, was designed to feed Saigon and rice-deficit Central Vietnam in an emergency, to stabilize the internal market, to assure minimum sale prices to farmers, and to deny rice to the VC. Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> U. S., Field Information Report, FVS-11,731, 4 May 1965, pp. 1-2. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>97</sup> According to Tran Van Hung, the Viet Cong in Kien Hoa Province collected an annual liberation tax ranging from 7 to 25 percent in 1964, the tax being graduated according to the income of the family. In 1965, this tax was raised to 10-30 percent. Tran Van Hung, p. 41. A forty percent tax rate is cited for An Giang Province by Le Van Dat, pp. 12-13. A gradual tax rate, ranging from 5 to 30 percent, is cited for the 1964 harvest in Vinh Long Province, in U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "Viet Cong Financial and Logistic Activities, Including Taxation, Food Storage, and Loans," FVS-11,031, 2 Dec 1964, p. 2. (CONFIDENTIAL). In Vinh Binh Province, the tax rate was increased forty percent over 1964 in 1965, and commercial, industrial, and sales taxes were increased approximately ten percent over 1964. U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "Viet Cong Tax Rates for 1965," FVS-11,489, 8 Mar 1965, p. 2. (CONFIDENTIAL). Examples of more stringent controls upon rice also exist. In late March 1964, the Viet Cong in Tay Ninh Province lifted a prohibition on the sale of rice in Government-held areas, but substituted an export tax instead. Then, in late November 1964, the Viet Cong required the people to sell them rice, which they paid for in bonds. In Vinh Binh Province, the Viet Cong made a determination that each person consumed an average of 20 gia (one gia is 40 liters) of rice annually; therefore every gia over and above twenty was to be sold to the VC at a predetermined

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study. Such taxation attests, once again, to the effectiveness of the Viet Cong control apparatus. It enabled the Viet Cong to harness the material, as well as the manpower resources of the Western Region as an effective component of their strategy.

Viet Cong Strategy in Central Nam-Bo.

(C) While not as many documents are available to reveal Viet Cong plans and strategy for Central Nam-Bo, the evidence tends to confirm the existence of policies similar to those of the Western Region. This conclusion is strengthened by testimony that the major Viet Cong offensive of the period under consideration, the "Winter-Spring Campaign" of December 1964-February 1965, was planned as a coordinated effort throughout South Vietnam.<sup>98</sup>

(C) Two separate sources reveal that in Kien Hoa Province, Central Nam-Bo Region, the main programs of 1965 were the "mandatory military service movement," the "solidarity movement to increase farm production," and the "finance movement" to support the "ever-increasing military requirements."<sup>99</sup> The mandatory military service movement again

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rate. In April 1964, the VC in Kien Hoa Province issued an order forbidding the shipment of over ten gia of rice outside VC-controlled areas. These measures, and other examples of increased tax rates, are reported in Field Information Reports, FVS-10,776, 17 Sept 1964, (CONFIDENTIAL); FVS-11,126, 31 Dec 1964, (CONFIDENTIAL); and FVS-11,711, 1 May 1965, (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>98</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Le Van Dat, Log No. 3-42-65, 28 April 1965, p. 8, (CONFIDENTIAL); and, Interrogation Report of Tran Tri, Log No. 12-301, 6 Jan 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>99</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Thai Hoa, Log No. 5-309-65, 9 Jun 1965, pp. 5, 11. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his capture on 5 April 1965, Source was a district party committee member, Mo Cay District, Kien Hoa Province, in charge of the Farmer's Association and concurrently a militia member. USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Van Hung, Log No. 6-268-65, 30 Jun 1965, p. 6. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his capture on 5 April 1965, Source was a district party committee member, Binh Dai District, Kien Hoa Province, in charge of Civilian Proselyting. Emphasis supplied.

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reveals that the demand for recruits was great enough to require conscription. The production and finance movements are in line with Viet Cong policy of mobilizing the resources to meet the growing requirements of their forces.

(C) Some light is also shed on the policies of Central Nam-Bo Region by testimony that the Region Committee's plans for the 1965 rainy season (May-October) were to defeat the Government plan of relieving pressure on the provinces adjacent to the capital, to cut off communication between the capital and the western area (Mekong Delta), and to support the present battleground of the Fifth Region (Central Vietnam), which is "considered as essential to the VC."<sup>100</sup> Clearly, such a campaign could best be waged after having taken the preparatory steps, such as build-up of forces and supplies, which are indicated during the previous period.

Viet Cong Strategy in Eastern Nam-Bo.

(C) For the Eastern Nam-Bo Region, little evidence is available as to plans and strategy. However, a captured district-level cadre confirms that region policy during the last half of 1964 was to "accelerate development of military forces in strength, quality and equipment."<sup>101</sup> The requirement was for each district to organize one company, and for each village to organize from two squads to one platoon of armed forces.<sup>102</sup>

(C) In addition to the usual instructions to destroy strategic

<sup>100</sup> USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Vo Hoang Nhac, Log No. 6-45-65, 23 Jun 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL). See also, "Directive," Log No. 4-107-65, p. 3. This region-level directive dated 26 Feb 1965 cites as a "specific requirement" the need to "launch uninterrupted attacks to wear down and eliminate the enemy and expand our zones."

<sup>101</sup> USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Thi Muon, Log No. 12-331, 13 Jan 1965, p. 11. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

hamlets, expand guerrilla warfare, and enlarge the liberated areas, there was also a requirement to "spread activities deep into the areas adjacent to towns to support political struggles."<sup>103</sup> References such as this indicate how closely the Viet Cong were approaching their ultimate goal of surrounding the cities from the countryside. In the Vinh Long document, quoted above, one is struck by the fact that one of the missions is to destroy "the remaining hamlets around the towns, especially around Vinh-Long City."<sup>104</sup> By early 1965, the Viet Cong were literally at the gates of district towns and province capitals in many crucial areas of the country.<sup>105</sup>

Viet Cong Strategy in the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone.

(U) Besides dividing Nam-Bo into Western, Central, and Eastern Regions, the Viet Cong have also formed the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone, which is directly subordinate to the Central Office of South Vietnam. Since the Special Zone includes the rural environs of Saigon-Cholon, it is possible to obtain region-level intelligence of Viet Cong plans and strategy in the rural areas from sources associated with the Special Zone.

(C) According to Nguyen Van Tron, in July 1964 the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone Committee convened a seven-day meeting of the

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103 Tbid.

104 "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," p. 3. (FOUO). Vinh Long City is the province capital. Emphasis supplied.

105 This applies to the major provinces of Long An, Hau Nghia, Kien Hoa, Vinh Binh in the Mekong delta; and Quang Nam, Quang Tum, and Phu Yen in Central Vietnam--with all of which the author is personally familiar, having visited them and discussed the situation with Province authorities and U. S. advisors during this period. See also the status maps contained as inclosures to USMACV, J-3, Monthly Reports of Pacification Progress and Population and Area Control, Jun 1964-April 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL). For additional details, see Chapter VI.

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representatives of its subordinate branches to re-orient the leading cadre on the current situation and policies to be applied in the future. At this meeting it was announced that the Viet Cong:

should promote and strengthen the armed and political struggles so that the war could be expanded into a general offensive. . . . These struggles would result in negotiations between the RVN and DRVN Governments in order to establish a coalition government in South Vietnam to settle the problems in the South.<sup>106</sup>

However, Tron adds that "during numerous meetings that were held following the 13 September 1964 coup d' etat, none of the party leaders discussed peaceful negotiation as a solution to the war, but instead they talked about 'expanding the struggle in order to achieve final victory.'<sup>107</sup>

(C) One of the policies that emerged from this meeting was to accelerate the development of armed units. Each village in the "liberated areas" was required to have one platoon of guerrillas, and this was set as the goal for villages in the contested areas. In addition, each district in the Special Zone would organize one local force company, with the exception of two districts which would organize a battalion apiece. "Consequently, the party members were instructed to make every effort to urge the youth to join the VC troops."<sup>108</sup>

(C) To facilitate recruitment, the Viet Cong established a detailed plan for propagandizing the youth in the rural areas.

The mission is to educate the youth so that they will recognize the weakness of the ARVN and be cognizant of the development of the VC armed forces since the coup d'etat; to make the youth familiar with

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<sup>106</sup>RVN, DOD, CIO, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 54/65, 30 Mar 1965, p. 6. (CONFIDENTIAL). Nguyen Van Tron was Chief of the Youth Proselyting Department of the Special Zone Committee until his capture on 19 Nov 1964. Emphasis supplied.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

<sup>108</sup>RVN, DOD, CIO, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, 28 May 1965, pp. 8-9. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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their tasks so that they will be able to lead the armed struggle, the anti-draft struggle, and the VC recruitment movement; and to consolidate and expand the Labor Youth Group [same as People's Revolutionary Youth Group discussed in Chapter 27 and Liberation Youth Association to promote the growth of the youth proselyting movement.<sup>109</sup>

(C) Subsequently, a directive was sent out by the Special Zone Committee to its subordinate units concerning the campaign to recruit youth. According to this directive,

The purpose of this campaign is to make all youth (both male and female) . . . conscious of their duties during the war, and to mobilize all youth (including party members) and to enlist them in the army in order to fill the quota established by the Special Zone Committee for each district.

In general all cadre should do their best to recruit as many youths as possible; moreover, their main effort should be directed towards the youths residing in the RVN-controlled strategic hamlets, who are subject to RVN draft.

Youths between the ages of 18 and 40 who are in good health, will be selected; husky youths between the ages of 15 and 16 may also be drafted.

One-third of those drafted will be female.<sup>110</sup>

The Viet Cong designated November and December, 1964, as the period of mobilization, and assigned quotas to the six districts of the Special Zone totalling 6500 youths.<sup>111</sup>

(C) It is a measure of the confidence of the Viet Cong in their control apparatus that they should endeavor to recruit this many people at one time.<sup>112</sup> While efforts were made to "motivate" young people to

<sup>109</sup> Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 54/65, p. 7.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 8. Emphasis supplied.      <sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>112</sup> At about this same time, in neighboring Long An Province, Government district chiefs were estimating their recruiting potential in terms of 100 men per district. The author personally interviewed each Sub-Sector Advisor at the time in order to estimate recruiting potential for COMUSMACV. An indication of the success of the Viet Cong recruiting program in the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone is the confirmed presence of a new regiment of two battalions in that area in December 1965. As the

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join the Viet Cong, the contents of the directive make clear that the recruiting program amounted, in many cases, to outright conscription.

(U) The policy of recruiting mainly in Government-held areas is also indicative of a design to preclude Government use of the available manpower. This preclusive manpower policy is of major significance. It struck at the heart of Government population control programs, and had a seriously detrimental effect upon the Government's pacification plan.<sup>113</sup>

(C) By late 1964, the Viet Cong were making a determined effort to mobilize the manpower required to support the accelerated build-up of their forces. The Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone Committee directed that in the liberated areas meetings be held with the older people to acquaint them with the recruitment policy of the party in order to enlist their support in the recruitment effort. After this, meetings of the youth would be held, and a village recruitment center would be set up to coincide with a large meeting of the youth in the village. In the strategic hamlet areas, young people would be recruited by means of letters, and inducement by relatives. In addition, when the Viet Cong troops operated near a strategic hamlet, the youth would be assembled and taken to the liberated area where a meeting would be held to urge them to join the Viet Cong.<sup>114</sup>

(C) After their names had been recorded, the new recruits would be given a reporting date. On the date of their departure, their village would organize a farewell party to show appreciation and present gifts

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next Chapter makes clear, such forces were probably recruited and trained in early 1965. See Chapter IV.

<sup>113</sup>This is discussed further in Chapter VI.

<sup>114</sup>Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 54/65, p. 9.

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to the new recruits.<sup>115</sup>

(C) During the mobilization period, families of Viet Cong troops were to be treated favorably by the local party committee. Committee members were required to visit the families of wounded or deceased troops to offer these families aid and employment. Such steps were designed to raise Viet Cong prestige in the eyes of the youth and of the families of the new recruits.<sup>116</sup>

(C) In late 1964, the Central Office of South Vietnam began preparations for a Youth Congress of South Vietnam, to be held in March and April of 1965. The Congress would consist of a Youth Proselyting Conference, attended by members of the Youth Proselyting Sections of all Provincial Committees; a People's Revolutionary Youth-Group Convention; and a United Liberation Youth Conference.<sup>117</sup> When asked to explain the purpose of the Congress, Nguyen Van Tron replied as follows:

In the current war in South Vietnam, the VC is fully aware of the vital role the youth play in the rural areas and in the cities; the VC is aware also of the youth as the source of manpower for the regular troops and village guerrillas. Consequently, during the past years the VC has been exalting and encouraging the youth to gain their support.

The war has in late 1964 reached a critical phase. Militarily, the VC is revising its organization to switch from guerrilla warfare to concerted large-scale conventional warfare. In the rural areas every effort is being made to accelerate all political and military activities. . . .

In view of the aforementioned factors, . . . COSVN convoked the Youth Congress to extol and bolster the youth's spirit with the aim of utilizing their capabilities in the present phase of the war.<sup>118</sup>

In this statement, the inter-connection between the various strands of Viet Cong strategy becomes clear. In order to launch a general offensive,

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 48/65, pp. 1-5.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

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additional forces were required; and, in order to obtain the raw manpower for such forces, the efforts of the entire apparatus of the Viet Cong had to be bent to an intensive recruitment effort. At the same time, the Government's mobilization and conscription programs had to be vigorously opposed by propaganda, terror, and preclusive recruiting. In effect, the Viet Cong had launched a manpower war.<sup>119</sup>

(C) In addition to manpower mobilization and military build-up, the same elements of Viet Cong strategy previously encountered are also applicable to the Siagon/Gia Dinh Special Zone. These are, destruction of strategic hamlets, construction of combat hamlets, sabotage of communication lines, and expansion of guerrilla warfare.<sup>120</sup>

Viet Cong Strategy in the Fifth Region.

(C) The Viet Cong Fifth Region (or Military Region 5) comprises

<sup>119</sup>For additional information on Viet Cong recruitment procedures, on their recruitment campaign from April 1964 to April 1965, and on their campaign against the Government draft and mobilization orders, see RVN, CIO, Report of Interrogation of Le Van Con, SIC Report No. 62/65, 7 April 1965, (CONFIDENTIAL); USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Bui Van Dai, Log No. 8-326, 22 Sept 1964, (CONFIDENTIAL); USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Le Van Bai, Log No. 2-192-65, 10 Mar 1965, (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Special Interrogation Report of Le Van Nghiem, Log No. 1-407-65, 29 Jan 1965, (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Special Intelligence Report, Log No. 1-322-65, 21 Jan 1965, (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Le Van Hai, Log No. 2-150-65, 24 Feb 1965, (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Tong, Log No. 12-31, 23 Dec 1964, (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Le Van Bai, Log No. 11-172, 28 Dec 1964, (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Tan Si, Log No. 2-197-65, 4 Mar 1965, (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Ho Ngoc Lang, Log No. 4-173-65, 22 Apr 1965, (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Ngo Van Muon, Log No. 9-270, 3 Oct 1964, (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "70 C.50," Subject: "Anti-Conscription Program," Log No. 1-192-65, 1 Feb 1965. (FOUO).

<sup>120</sup>Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report No. 103/65, pp. 8-9. On Viet Cong taxation and food mobilization policies in the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone, see Nguyen Van Tron, SIC Report 43/65, passim.

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the highlands and coastal lowlands of Central Vietnam, as far south as the provinces of Khanh Hoa and Darlac.<sup>121</sup> Captured documents and prisoner interrogation reports provide an insight into Viet Cong strategy for this area, which was to become the primary battleground of 1965.

(U) At the outset of 1964, the Viet Cong had established secure bases in the mountains and jungles of the highlands, and here their strategy called for actively resisting Government incursions. According to one of the documents of the Fifth Region's Guerrilla Warfare Conference of December, 1963, "the struggle formula in the mountainous areas mainly consists of armed struggle."<sup>122</sup> This formula was derived as follows:

In high mountains and dense jungle the terrain is favorable, the mass political organizations are solid, we are master of the area, our people can overtly set up a defense of build up the forces. The entire population can be militarized. There exists conditions to wear down and annihilate the enemy while bare fields and empty houses tactics are applied in the illegal struggle against the enemy.<sup>123</sup>

(U) An exception to the above formula was made for those parts of the highlands "located near the posts and strategic roads, [and] concentration areas formed by the enemy and strategic hamlets."<sup>124</sup> In such areas the political and military struggles were given equal emphasis.<sup>125</sup>

(U) However, in the coastal lowlands, which the Viet Cong of this region call "the delta," the situation was quite different. Here Enemy posts still exist, forming a 'comb teeth' arrangement between friendly and enemy forces. . . . The enemy is still strong and he destroys our Combat Hamlets and Villages; when we

121 See Appendix 1 to this Chapter.

122 "Experience Combat Villages Construction in Mountainous Area," p. 2.

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

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re-construct them, the enemy destroys them again.<sup>126</sup>

(U) Another document of the Guerrilla Warfare Conference in 1963 stated that:

At present the Guerrilla movement is not uniformly developed [in the delta]. Liberated zones and enemy controlled areas by means of strategic hamlets [sic] still lay adjacent to each other. None of the districts in the delta is completely liberated. Critical position and communication axes are still under enemy control while the activities of our District Local Companies within the whole district are still impeded.<sup>127</sup>

This Viet Cong estimate was held as late as July 1964. From a captured document, we know that the Resolution of the Plenary Conference of the Region Current Affairs Committee, which was passed during a meeting which lasted from 10 to 25 June 1964, held that:

The delta area under our control is still limited . . . ; human and material resources dedicated to the resistance are still restricted and the political struggle movement is still weak. All these problems hamper the development of the revolutionary forces.<sup>128</sup>

(C) The limited Viet Cong control in the delta, where the bulk of the rice of Central Vietnam is produced, seriously aggravated the food shortage which was a chronic problem in the Fifth Region. A former cadre of the Viet Cong Gia Lai Province (Pleiku) described the situation as follows:

At present the VC operating in mountainous and forested areas are encountering an insurmountable problem: the problem of food. . . .

The shortage of food does not permit the VC Province Committee to activate strong units. Therefore, if the compatriots want to rapidly liberate SVN (South Vietnam), they must strive to increase

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<sup>126</sup>"Experience Regarding the Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta," p. 3.

<sup>127</sup>"Mission and Guide-line for District and Province Local Units," p. 5.

<sup>128</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Guide for the Study of the Resolution by the Plenary Conference of the Current Affairs Committee, Region (Party) Committee from 10 to 25 June 1964," Log No. 11-152, 1 Dec 1964, p. 3. (FOUO). Document is dated 24 Aug 1964.

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production. The situation requires each individual to plant 3000 manioc plants and 12 Kg of rice in 1964. Only such a production is enough to feed VC troops for a long range war aimed at overthrowing the . . . Government.

Although the people living in VC controlled area are very poor, they cannot help but strive in the production task to contribute to feeding the VC troops. The VC production plan drafted for 1964 encountered many difficulties: apart from the RVNAF (Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces) operational forces who destroyed ricefields and crops, there were wild animals who came and ate the crops day and night.<sup>129</sup>

(C) In order to obtain food supplies, the Viet Cong imposed a severe tax on the Montagnard population of the highlands, the tax amounting to thirty percent of a family's production. When the hardship created by this policy led to widespread evasion in 1964, the Viet Cong were forced to implement a "trade" policy, consisting of medicine, cloth, and salt exchanges for food.<sup>130</sup>

(C) Other sources confirm the difficulty of obtaining food, and the importance of food production in Viet Cong plans. A Viet Cong document on plans for the highlands for 1964 stated:

A minimum subsistence level should be guaranteed for the people . . . To accomplish this, the Zone's Economic and Highlands Sections set up a three-year program in August 1962. Leaders at all levels have tried to implement this program, but the results have been very poor and the lives of the people are still threatened. The people still need more food, starvation is prevalent, and no progress has been made . . .

In order to increase food supplies, crops should be protected and stored carefully to save them from destruction by the enemy and the people given orientation courses in production methods. All this should be done for the purpose of guaranteeing that there will be enough food to keep the troops and people from starving. Man-power for production should also be well managed and assignments

<sup>129</sup> USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen The Ky, Log No. 1-263-65, 4 Feb 1965, pp. 22-23. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to rallying on 13 Aug 1964, Source was a party member and cadre of Region (district) 7, Gia Lai Province, specializing in propaganda and training.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

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Downgraded at 3 year intervals  
Declassified after 12 years

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studied carefully and distributed according to established programs. Measures to prevent starvation should be undertaken: in townships and districts where starvation is prevalent, committees must be established to eliminate it, and elsewhere projects undertaken to prevent it. Salt must be stored for rationing, with each person in the Highland to receive two cans a year and each person in the lowlands three or four cans a year. The lowland provinces and districts are responsible for assisting in the supply of food, especially salt, to the mountainous regions.<sup>131</sup>

(C) The Viet Cong concern for starvation did not prevent them from building up large reserves for the provisioning of their forces during operations. All Viet Cong organizations, military and political, engaged in production under a "self-sufficiency" program, by which reserves of food were accumulated in the present in order to support operations in the future. For example, a unit was given a requirement to be self-sufficient for eight months, which meant that its production had to suffice not only for present needs but also to build up a food reserve capable of sustaining the unit for eight months without outside assistance. A planning quota for the food reserve, based on a standard allotment of so many cans of rice (and supplemental foods) per man per day, was established to guide the production and saving of the unit. Thus, when the requisite food reserve was achieved, the unit would be in a position to conduct operations for eight months without support from outside sources of supply and without diverting any of its effort to food procurement activities. Further, it could be supplied by the Economy and Finance Section of the responsible party committee for the remaining four months of the year. In practice, the typical unit lived off its own production for a certain number of months, and was supplied by higher headquarters for the remaining months.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup>"Viet Cong Document on Plans for the Highlands for 1964," pp. 3-4. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>132</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Huynh,

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(c) The shortage of food in the highlands was a spur to Viet Cong plans to launch an offensive against the bountiful coastal lowlands, which became their strategy in late 1964 and early 1965. According to Nguyen The Ky, the Viet Cong realized the limitations of continued reliance upon the Montagnard population for a major portion of their food supply. They also considered the dispersion of forces resulting from the need for armed units to engage in food production to be undesirable. "Therefore, at the end of 1964, they [the Viet Cong] intended to go down to the delta area to try to gain manpower and material resources likely to supply their leading agencies hiding in mountainous and forested areas."<sup>133</sup>

(C) Another source, Doan Lot, who had been with a transportation company attached to the Rear Services Section, Fifth Military Region, disclosed that:

The VC were strong enough to launch attacks on ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam] bases but . . . they did not do so because their plan of stockpiling food had not yet been completed. In addition, the VC had [stockpiled] a large quantity of modern weapons and explosives . . . The VC planned to take control of the plains, gain influence over the population, and liberate South Vietnam from late 1964 to early 1965.<sup>134</sup>

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Log No. 3-24-65, 6 April 1965, pp. 59-65. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his capture on 9 August 1964, Source was a member of Binh Dinh Province Committee Civilian Proselyting Section. RVN, DOD, CIO, Report of Interrogation of Do Khoi, SIC Report No. 61-65, 10 April 1965, pp. 18-21. Prior to his capture on 15 December 1963, Source was an Armed propaganda team leader in Binh Dinh Province. (CONFIDENTIAL). Nguyen The Ky, passim. USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Van Theu, Log No. 9-345, 5 January 1965, pp. 14-15, (CONFIDENTIAL); Interrogation Report of Nguyen Huu Boa, Log No. 11-286, 5 January 1965, pp. 8-9, (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>133</sup>Nguyen The Ky, p. 24.

<sup>134</sup>RVN, DOD, CIO, Report of Interrogation of Doan Lot, SIC Report No. 31/65, 27 Feb 1965, p. 8. (CONFIDENTIAL). Lot was captured on 28 April 1964.

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(C) The requirement for adequate food reserves to support the offensive against the lowlands was met by the Viet Cong during 1964. Between March 1963 and October 1964, the Fifth Region succeeded in raising the daily individual ration from one-half can of rice to two and one-half cans. The plan for 1964 called for combat units to be self-sufficient for six months, instead of eight months as in 1963. Other Viet Cong organizations were to be one hundred percent self-sufficient. By the end of 1963, the Transportation Company of Doan Lot had realized a supply sufficient for eight months at a daily ration of two and one-half cans of rice, and production was expected to increase a great deal more by the end of 1964 if Vietnamese aircraft did not destroy the crops.<sup>135</sup>

(C) Nguyen Huynh, who had worked closely with the Binh Dinh Province Party Committee, likewise agreed that the Viet Cong had achieved most of their production goals during 1963 and 1964.<sup>136</sup> He added, that, "starting from 1965, with the development of VC forces, the Economy and Finance mission has been considered as the most important one."<sup>137</sup> The stockpiling of rice and other food supplies to support Viet Cong operations in the Fifth Region continued during 1965.<sup>138</sup>

(C) During the early part of 1964, the Viet Cong deployed many cadres to the lowlands, where the struggle for control of the population was in its initial stages. According to a Viet Cong document:

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<sup>135</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-9. Nguyen Huu Boa, p. 8. See also Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Tan, SIC Report No. 89/65, 13 May 1965, pp. 3-5. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>136</sup>Nguyen Huynh, pp. 60-62.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>138</sup>U. S., Field Information Report, Subject: "Viet Cong Stockpiling of Rice and Other Food Supplies, Efforts at Self-Production, and Stealing of Food," FVS-11,711, 1 May 1965, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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Since the struggle movement began in the lowlands, the workload there has been voluminous. Leaders at provincial level have been busy with their operations in the lowlands and a large vacuum has been left in the Highlands.<sup>139</sup>

(C) In addition, there was a shortage of guerrilla forces in the highlands, and the consequences of this are disclosed by Nguyen The Ky:

A serious weak point of the VC is that to this date, their Region Main Force Units must also assume the function of guerrilla units, protect the base area and the crops. Therefore these units do not keep [sic] their role of Main Force Units. If this situation still lasts, in the future VC mountainous area will be easily invaded and VC units easily annihilated by the RVNAF.

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In order to cope with the above-mentioned deficiency, the VC must build up and consolidate the local guerrilla forces, and initiate the 'People's Guerrilla War' movement. . . .

Once that movement is initiated, the VC will entrust the local mission to the people who will replace the main force units so that they have the opportunity to deeply penetrate in and invade the delta area to gain the manpower and material resources for the requirements of the battlefield throughout the territory.<sup>140</sup>

(U) In order to consolidate the rear areas, and give an impetus to the struggle in the lowlands, the Fifth Region's Guerrilla Warfare Conference of December 1963 adopted policies of expanding the guerrilla forces and cadres, and building Combat Villages and Hamlets in both the mountainous areas and the delta.<sup>141</sup>

(U) Another captured document gives a clear picture of the Fifth Region's plan for the march to the delta during the second half of

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<sup>139</sup>"Document on Plans for the Highlands for 1964," p. 7.

<sup>140</sup>Nguyen The Ky, p. 6.

<sup>141</sup>Three major documents of this Conference, all previously cited, were captured on 18 Sept 1964. They deal with "Combat Villages Construction in Mountainous Areas" (Log No. 11-157, 10 Mar 1965); "Construction of Combat Hamlets and Villages in the Delta" (Log No. 11-158, 23 Jan 1965); and "Mission and Guide-Line for District and Province Local Units" (Log No. 11-43, 11 Nov 1964).

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1964. This document is a study guide which summarizes the main points of the Resolution of the Plenary Conference of the Current Affairs Committee, Fifth Region Party Committee, which met from 10 to 25 June 1964.

The following mission statement is extracted from this document:

Place emphasis on missions 1, 3, 9, (Units operating in base and mountainous areas will emphasize mission 2) of the 10 missions.

Mission #1: Destroy Strategic Hamlets, break the enemy grip, gain and control the rural delta area, and build up the liberated area.

Stress on the critical character of this mission which is the principle mission of the entire Party, people and MR 5 units.

Between the mission of attacking the enemy to gain people and expand the controlled area and that of building up the liberated area, the former is more important, but we should not neglect the build up of the liberated area.

Mission #2: Build up and expansion of mountainous bases.

Mission #3: Strive to annihilate the enemy vital forces, intensively develop the people's movement /of/ guerrilla warfare, build up strong local and Main Force Units.

-Expand [the level] of attrition and raise the rate of destruction.

However, . . . in the build-up of three types of troops, the most urgent requirement is development of guerrilla [sic] and the construction of combat villages. For the Main Forces and local forces, the present task is to build the ideology of cadre, increase . . . the spirit of continuously and aggressively attacking the enemy.

Mission #4: Speed up political struggle.

Mission #5: Civilian Proselyting and Front.

Mission #6: Cities. [Sic]

Mission #7: Finance and Economy.

Place emphasis on production, storage of food, improvement of rear services activities, preservation and saving, prevention of luxury and corruption.

Mission #8: Anti-espionage and security mission.

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Mission #9: Strengthen the Party leadership.Mission #10: Speed up the Ap Bac Emulation Movement.<sup>142</sup>

(U) By July 1964, the Fifth Region had achieved such success in its all-out effort to gain control of the population of the lowlands, that it decided to escalate the level of conflict by deep penetrations into the strategic area along National Highway 1 and the coastal railroad. (See Map 2 in Appendix 1.) At the same time, it superimposed upon the strategy of guerrilla warfare the policy of attack and annihilation of Government forces. The following evidence makes this clear.

(C) According to two ralliers in Quang Ngai Province, the Viet Cong policy in the first half of 1964 was one of "developing expansively the delta, attacking New Rural Life Hamlets and developing the guerrilla force."<sup>143</sup> The main objective of this phase was the coastal area of Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh, with Quang Nam and Phu Yen as secondary objectives.<sup>144</sup> The policy during the second half of 1964 was "to open an overall uprising operation" by enlisting the masses in a widespread struggle against the remaining Strategic Hamlets and Government paramilitary forces defending the rural areas.<sup>145</sup> In parallel with this

<sup>142</sup>"Guide," Log No. 11-152, pp. 4-6. For the expansion of Guerrilla Warfare to the Delta after July 1964, see also USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Thien, Log No. 1-262-65, 26 Jan 1965, p. 16. (CONFIDENTIAL); Captured Document entitled: "X.120 Order #1," Log No. 1-142-65, 6 Jun 1965, pp. 2-3. (FOUO); Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Thai, Log No. 1-482-65, 11 Feb 1965, p. 21. (CONFIDENTIAL); Interrogation Report of Vo Van Ngoc, Log No. 6-549, 9 Jul 1964, p. 9. (CONFIDENTIAL); RVN, DOD, CIO, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Thanh Sach, SIC Report No. 88/65, 11 May 1965, p. 5. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>143</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Supplemental Interrogation Report of Nguyen Thanh Sach and Nguyen Van Sac, Log No. 10-184, 6 Jan 1965, pp. 33-34. (CONFIDENTIAL). Sources were medical cadre of the 52nd Battalion, Quang Ngai Province Local Force; they rallied on 2 Aug 1964.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid.

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activity,

The Region main force will attack posts, camps, reinforcements and will apply communication attack, mobile attack [with the purpose of] creating influential effect and imposing intense annihilation on purpose of changing the balance of force, causing a pressure which might lead to a Neutrality solution or might create a confusion among the ranks of the National Government internal organization which would result in another coup d'etat.<sup>146</sup>

(C) The military policy of Quang Ngai Province after July 1964 was "to raise high the level of annihilation warfare," which meant that "in 6 months a VC unit must annihilate a RVNAF unit . . . for example, a Battalion must eliminate a company."<sup>147</sup> The province and district forces had the mission of "attacking New Rural Life Hamlets . . . conducting repeated attacks on [Government] semi-armed forces."<sup>148</sup> The province's plan was "to send its main force units to deep areas between [National Highway 1 and the coast] for digging secret trenches in various villages and hamlets or they will rely upon the mountains of these areas to organize sabotaging [against the highway and railroad]."<sup>149</sup>

(C) Province units were to operate continuously against Government forces as part of a coordinated effort throughout South Vietnam to put pressure on the Government for neutralization. Units were to be reinforced with new recruits, and two-thirds of each force were to be available for operations at all times. Province units were to be employed on operations with region main force regiments to attack Vietnamese Army posts, larger units, and bases. In these attacks the "scorched earth" tactics of total annihilation was to be applied.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> RVN, DOD, CIO, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Thanh Sach, SIC Report No. 99/65, 21 May 1965, p. 3. (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Dit, Log No. 8-255-65, 2 Oct 1965, p. 35/II. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his capture on 18 Feb 1965,

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(C) The Viet Cong forces were specifically to avoid giving the impression that these were seasonal operations against the lowlands, instead, they were to remain in the delta, dispersed among the combat villages and hamlets where they would fortify and conceal themselves in trenches and underground tunnels. Units were to repel Vietnamese Army mopping-up operations against these bases with such loss to Government forces that these operations would have to be terminated. Once an area was thus freed from attack, it could be developed as a liberated area. In pursuit of this mission, units were required to master the tactics of rapid dispersion in the face of a superior Government force or air attack, and rapid concentration when they outnumbered the enemy.<sup>151</sup>

(C) According to the Viet Cong blueprint, during early 1965 province and main force units would isolate Quang Ngai City from the local airfield, which was an important means of supply and communication. Other main force units would attack district capitals. An economic blockade of the cities would also be instituted by forbidding the transport of rice. Finally, the armed struggle would be coordinated with propaganda to stir the population into a general uprising, resulting in the complete takeover of the province.<sup>152</sup>

(C) By June 1964, the guidelines for the foregoing operations had been promulgated and sent to the units for study. Reorientation

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Nguyen Dit was Political Officer of 261st Plt X20, Tu Nghia District, Quang Ngai Province. See also RVN, DOD, CIO, Report of Interrogation of Doan Duoc, SIC Report No. 63/65, 23 Apr 1965, pp. 7-9. (CONFIDENTIAL); Report of Interrogation of Dang Minh, SIC Report No. 102/65, 25 May 1965, pp. 5-7. (CONFIDENTIAL) and SIC Report No. 79/65, 5 May 1965, pp. 7-8. (CONFIDENTIAL); and USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Vuong Thi Manh, Log No. 1-338-65, 6 Feb 1965, p. 14. (CONFIDENTIAL). These Sources provide further information of the plans for 1964-1965 of the Quang Ngai Province Committee and the Tu Nghia and Mo Duc District Committees, Quang Ngai Province.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid.

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training on the new policy was conducted for the 52d Province Local Force Battalion. During a battalion party conference held in June, the political officer explained a joint resolution of the Fifth Region and Quang Ngai Province Committees. This resolution called for the 52d Battalion to occupy a base near the Ca Ty mountain, which borders on the plains area. This base was to be secured and used as a springboard for the penetration of the lowlands. Since Ca Ty Mountain is in the vicinity of National Highway 1 and the railroad, its occupation would also allow Viet Cong forces to interdict traffic and communications between Quang Ngai and the coastal provinces to the north.<sup>153</sup>

(C) The first stage of this plan was to be carried out in August 1964, at which time the 102d Independent Company of Quang Ngai Province was to move to the Ca Ty Mountain area to destroy Government posts in the vicinity, initiate guerrilla activities, and construct fortifications. Once these preparatory tasks were completed, the 52d Battalion would occupy and hold the mountain regardless of difficulties or costs.<sup>154</sup>

(C) Quang Ngai Province illustrates the methodical manner in which the Viet Cong planned to take over the coastal lowlands. The overall concept was to extend Viet Cong control from the mountains to the plains west of the railroad, and then to expand beyond the railroad to

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<sup>153</sup> RVN, DOD, CIO, Report of Interrogation of Nguyen Thanh Sach, SIC Report No. 57/65, 3 Apr 1965, p. 5. (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Supplemental Interrogation Report of Nguyen Thanh Sach and Nguyen Van Sac, Log No. 10-184, 6 Jan 1965, p. 16. (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Bay, Log No. 3-27-65, 7 Mar 1965, p. 4. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his capture on 2 Nov 1964, Tran Bay was a member of the 102d Quang Ngai Province Independent Company.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

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the coast.<sup>155</sup> As the military plans make clear, this campaign would come as near to the outright military conquest of an area as had thus far been seen in the war in South Vietnam.

(C) Binh Dinh Province, to the south of Quang Ngai, was a second major objective of the Fifth Region's march to the delta. Here, is a result of widespread operations against strategic hamlets after 1 November 1963, the Viet Cong had already obtained a firm foothold in the lowlands.<sup>156</sup> As a result, when in July 1964 the "dong khoi" or general uprising phase of operations commenced, the province committee emphasized expansion in "deep areas" east of National Highway 1.<sup>157</sup>

(C) Other aspects of this campaign were similar to those in Quang Ngai. In particular, "communication warfare" on highways was widely employed--convoys were attacked, bridges were blown, and stretches of road were destroyed. The tactic of blockade and isolation was employed to cut off and absorb entire geographical areas, such as the An Lao Valley, which fell in December 1964.<sup>158</sup>

(C) Groups of villages, and later entire districts, were targeted for takeover by the method of interdiction followed by attack.<sup>159</sup> The following excerpt from a Viet Cong operation order for July and August, 1964, illustrates the application of the concept:

Strive to motivate the people to destroy Strategic Hamlets, break

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<sup>155</sup> Nguyen Dit, p. 35/II.

<sup>156</sup> Nguyen Huynh, pp. 13-15.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-14.

<sup>158</sup> USMACV, Military Reports, December 1964.

<sup>159</sup> USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "Directive," Log No. 1-143-65, 8 Jun 1965. Document is dated 2 Jun 1964. (FOUO). For related organizational techniques, by which ad hoc Committees were placed in charge of each targeted area, see Nguyen Huynh, pp. 21-25.

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the enemy grip and seize manpower and material resources. In G, consolidate positive efforts to expand our area of activities to break the enemy grip in deep and weak areas and motivate the people to stand up in 'South and South East of the An Lao River' in order to link up the stepstones in 'West of An Lao River, Kim Son' and connect every net of hamlets belonging to villages located 'South-east and East of An Lao River' in order to safeguard our forces.<sup>160</sup>

In this way the entire province was to be cut up, and absorbed piecemeal.

Viet Cong Strategy in the Sixth Region.

(C) A comment is in order on the policies of the Viet Cong Sixth Region, which comprises the group of provinces between the Fifth Region and Eastern Nam-Bo Region. (See Map 1, Appendix 1.) According to the testimony of the only competent witness thus far available, the general policy lines of the region during the last half of 1964 were to step up attacks against strategic hamlets and routes of communication. Particular attention was given to interdicting the axes of communication in Quang Duc Province.<sup>161</sup> Relatively speaking, the area of the Sixth Region had probably the least strategic significance for the Viet Cong, due to the limited availability of manpower and resources.<sup>162</sup>

Conclusion

(U) Viet Cong strategy during the second half of 1964 and early 1965 was dominated by the concept of a general offensive to change

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<sup>160</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document entitled: "X.120 Order #1," Log No. 1-142-65, 6 Jun 1965, p. 1. (FOUO).

<sup>161</sup>USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Tran Quoc Ba, Log No. 10-394, 20 Nov 1964, p. 32/I. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his defection from the VC on 29 Jun 1964, Ba was a member of Quang Duc Province Party Committee.

<sup>161</sup>See Maps 3 and 4, Appendix 1. The entire area produced approximately 90,000 tons of rice in 1963, of which 58,000 tons were produced in the two provinces of Binh Thuan and Ninh Thuan. USOM, Annual Statistical Bulletin, p. 67.

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the balance of power with the Government and bring victory--by negotiation or outright conquest--in 1965.<sup>163</sup> In order to accomplish this, the Viet Cong embarked upon an expansion of their forces, particularly their main forces, and initiated mobile warfare to bring about the collapse of the military establishment of the Government. The Viet Cong did not terminate guerrilla warfare; rather, they expanded the force which was primarily concerned with mobile warfare--the main force--and added mobile warfare to the spectrum of conflict. Also, for the first time in the war, they directed their forces to attack and destroy the regular military units of the Government.

(U) The Viet Cong were able to embark upon this course because of their ability to fulfill the resulting manpower requirements. Manpower was needed, first, to fill the new units that were being organized. More significantly, a continuous flow of manpower was needed to provide the replacements that would enable unit strengths to be maintained throughout the period of heavy fighting that lay ahead. The Viet Cong solved this problem by the introduction of conscription,<sup>164</sup> which their apparatus

163 Several sources attest to the Viet Cong view that they might win the war in 1965. The Vinh Long Province Committee's "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965" states: "This is our strategic opportunity . . . The initiative in the overall picture is now in our hands. . . . The general situation is very favorable . . . We have the sympathy and support in the country as well as in the world." "Resolution on Military Mission in 1965," pp. 12-13. Another document states: "Now, before the incessant development of the SVN revolution, the enemy becomes gradually passive and weak; meanwhile we are in the offensive." "Guidelines Introducing the 1965 Military Resolution of T to All Combatants," p. 9. In September 1964 a Viet Cong cadre in the Western Region discussed the general offensive with other cadre and told them: "Comrades, be energetic in your thought and standpoint. If permitted by the situation, the party will take over the Government of South VN in 1965." Tran Anh Dung, pp. 12-13. See also Nguyen Van Tron, *passim*.

164 The Viet Cong also engaged in recruiting, but with the introduction of the "mandatory military service movement" the motivation of a youth who enlisted probably involved both elements of consent and coercion. Since the Viet Cong were intent on acquiring the manpower in

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of population control effectively implemented.

(U) The Viet Cong manpower mobilization coincided with conscription efforts by the Government. Thus, a battle for manpower was joined, the outcome of which was bound to significantly influence the future course of the war. Incitement of opposition to the Government draft, and preclusive recruiting in Government-held areas, were major elements of the manpower war which the Viet Cong launched to withhold this vital resource from the Government and secure its use for their own purposes. At the same time, the manpower struggle was of crucial significance to the Government, whose manpower needs were multiplied with each addition to the Viet Cong forces.

(U) In order to feed the additional forces that were being raised, and to finance their operations, the Viet Cong mobilized the rice resources of the Mekong delta. While this was not as serious a threat to the Government as was the loss of manpower, since the United States could and did supply rice to South Vietnam,<sup>165</sup> it is testimony of the extent to which the war-making potential of the Viet Cong depended upon mobilization of the resources of the country. If these operations could have been interfered with, or disrupted, a serious blow could have been dealt to the Viet Cong war effort.

(C) The Viet Cong insurgency was by no means an indigenous rebellion. Large quantities of weapons, ammunition, and other war materiel were supplied by North Vietnam. These supplies were shipped by sea, and through a transportation corridor operated by North Vietnamese

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any event, conscription probably played the main role in the manpower mobilization.

<sup>165</sup> Airgram A-647, passim.

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troops.<sup>166</sup> In particular, the standardization of weapons for main force units permitted the standardization of training and the simplification of logistic support. With the introduction of a modern family of weapons for their main force troops, and the establishment of the necessary lines of supply to North Vietnam (since Chinese Communist and American 7.62mm ammunition are not interchangeable), the Viet Cong military organization increasingly took on the characteristics of a modern army.<sup>167</sup>

(U) Thus, the indigenous war-making capacity of the Viet Cong was enhanced by a decisive increment of resources provided by North

<sup>166</sup> USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Phan Van Tan, Log No. 11-280, 8 Jan 1965, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to his capture on 13 Aug 1964, Phan Van Tan was a political cadre, concurrently Adjutant, responsible for Rear Services of the L.07 Company subordinate to MR 5. He provides information on quantities of equipment furnished to MR 5 by North Vietnam. USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Interrogation Report of Nguyen Van Do, Log No. 10-342, 20 Oct 1964, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL). Prior to rallying to RVN on 16 July 1964, Nguyen Van Do was a Senior Sergeant, member of Nam-Son Transportation Group, which operated transportation routes for MR 5. He furnishes detailed information of the activities of transportation units in moving infiltrated supplies, and lists the quantities handled during 1963-64. Another source is Van Theu, p. 8. He furnishes information of a North Vietnamese Transportation Regiment assigned to operate the infiltration route into South Vietnam during 1964. A captured document describes the movement of supplies along a transportation corridor in Kien Hoa province, where supplies arrive by sea. See USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Document, no title, Log No. 5-9-65, 7 May 1965, passim. (FOUO). This document applies to the 1964-65 time period. See also USMACV, J-2, Logistical Study, Viet Cong Forces, Republic of Vietnam, 12 Dec 1964, (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>167</sup> U. S., Army Special Warfare Center, The Viet Cong, 1965. (SECRET). The new family of weapons consisted of Chinese Communist copies of the Soviet Assault Rifle, Semi-automatic carbine, RPD light machine gun, and other weapons firing a Chinese Communist manufactured 7.62mm cartridge of Soviet design. They are described in USMACV, J-2, War Material Used by Viet Cong in South Vietnam (no date; unclassified). The new weapons were first captured on 11 December 1964, in Ba Xuyen Province. Concerning the introduction of weapons which fired a round that was not interchangeable with U. S. ammunition, a USMACV, J-2 study said: "This cartridge was unlike any other 7.62mm round previously in use in the RVN and introduction of a family of weapons which requires this round indicated a high degree of confidence in their [the Viet Cong] logistical support system." USMACV, J-2, Viet Cong Strategy and Tactics During 1964, 15 Mar 1965, pp. 24-25. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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Vietnam. Taken together, the Viet Cong build-up of their forces in the South, and the supply of modern weapons and their essential logistic support from the North, constituted a major escalation of the war.

(U) A major objective of the Viet Cong campaign in 1964-65 was the conquest of the Central Vietnam lowlands. This they hoped to achieve by a combination of guerrilla warfare, interdiction of communications, establishment of combat hamlets in the plains, and military operations by their main forces. The primary objectives were the provinces of Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh. From what is known of the their plans for military operations in Quang Ngai, the Viet Cong contemplated a campaign that bore many features of a conventional military offensive to seize and hold territory.

(C) The Viet Cong mobilization and general offensive established the operational environment within which the Government's pacification plan had to be conducted. Viet Cong operations invalidated certain assumptions of the plan, and significantly influenced its execution. Whereas the plan envisioned a continuation of guerrilla warfare, the Viet Cong advanced to the stage of mobile warfare. The plan was not designed to cope with a rapid build-up of enemy forces. One of its major concepts, the recruiting of local paramilitary forces, was not effectively implemented due in part to the preclusive manpower policies of the Viet Cong.<sup>168</sup>

(S) As this chapter has shown, the Viet Cong war-making potential is based upon the capacity to mobilize resources. During 1964-65, the Viet Cong were able to mobilize the resources needed to launch a major offensive, in spite of the operations of Government forces numbering

<sup>169</sup>See Chapters V and VI.

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over a half million.<sup>169</sup> Consequently, the question arises as to how this development could have been prevented.

(U) Before suggesting an answer to this question, it is necessary to clarify the central issue. What was at stake was whether the insurgency would be contained at the guerrilla warfare level, or whether the enemy would be allowed to augment his forces and escalate the level of conflict to a point that threatened ultimate collapse. To do nothing to interfere with Viet Cong mobilization activities was tantamount to accepting major increases<sup>170</sup> in enemy strength, and all the consequent difficulties and dangers, without compensating gains to justify such a course of action.

(U) Clearly, it was in the Government's interest to prevent or oppose the increase in Viet Cong strength, in order to keep the insurgency from growing beyond manageable bounds. It was not in the Government's interest to pursue a course that would allow the Viet Cong to alter the balance of power in their own favor.

(U) In order for the Government to prevent or limit the increase in Viet Cong strength it was necessary to contest effectively the mobilization of manpower and rice by the Viet Cong. Furthermore, the accomplishment of this mission required the projection of forces into the Viet Cong-controlled areas, to inflict maximum disruption upon the mobilization activities of the enemy apparatus. This mission could not be accomplished by employing the available forces to secure the areas that still remained under Government control. Nor could it be accomplished by any strategy

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<sup>169</sup>Government armed forces of all types, including National Police and militia forces, are placed at 611,700 for 1964. Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam, Jan 1966, p. 27.

<sup>170</sup>See Chapter IV for quantitative data on the extend of Viet Cong force increases between 31 March 1964 and 31 March 1965.

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that restricted the Government's mobile forces--principally the regular army--to limited operational areas.<sup>171</sup>

(U) Clearly, the alternative of not operating in areas of Viet Cong control or influence, to forestall or impede their mobilization of resources, was simply to allow the Viet Cong to obtain the resources they required at will. Such a course would give the enemy a free hand to increase his forces and alter the balance of power to the disadvantage of the Government.

(U) Furthermore, once the insurgency has advanced to the stage where the enemy has acquired a significant war-making potential, it is

171 It may be objected that the employment of forces on forays into enemy-controlled areas deprives a segment of the population of the security such forces could otherwise afford, and security is necessary to insure the loyalty of the people. To this the rejoinder is that once the evidence of mounting Viet Cong strength becomes known, the loyalty of much of the population cannot be assured--even by the presence of Government troops--because of the tendency of people to hedge against the possibility of eventual Viet Cong success. In the guerrilla stage of the insurgency, provision of security was essential to enlisting popular support in the conflict with the insurgents. In the mobile warfare stage, after Government troops had been defeated in battle, the presence of troops could not by itself produce tangible manifestations of popular support against the insurgents. The psychological situation was, of course, changed by the appearance of the Viet Cong army as a capable protagonist of the regular army. In such circumstances, only the consistent winning of battles could favorably influence public attitudes and secure popular cooperation against the insurgents. The distinction between the two different psychological situations is missed by those who argue that, in an advanced stage of insurgency, the use of troops to "provide security" is essential "to win the support of the people." The presence of troops, and even the good works they perform, does not suffice to convince the peasant that the Government will win in the end. Besides, he has seen these protectors come and go, while the Viet Cong he has always with him. It is therefore, in an advanced stage of insurgency, a misconception to expect people to commit themselves to the Government side, except after the longest time in which a change in popular psychology takes place. It is equally misguided to send troops to "protect the people" and "win their support." The troops are wasting their time, and are better employed in other ways that are more likely to convince the peasant that the Government will triumph. It is equally erroneous to argue that when the Government goes into an area, takes the peasant's surplus rice, and recruits his youth, it is necessary to remain to provide the peasant security. The peasant can plead force majeur to the Viet Cong equally as effectively as he does to the Government; and if an individual peasant cannot, the mass of the peasantry certainly can.

both necessary and desirable to impair his war effort by measures that strike directly at his capacity to mobilize the resources required by his military machine.

(U) In South Vietnam during 1964-65, there was a requirement for military operations conducted for the primary purpose of contesting the Viet Cong's mobilization of manpower and material resources. For example, a program of preclusive buying was needed to provide an incentive for the farmer to deliver his rice to the Government. Military operations could have been conducted during the harvest to support such a program by procuring a maximum amount of the marketable surplus for the Government stockpile and commercial needs. The essential requirement was to compete with the Viet Cong tax collectors for the crop.

(U) Obviously, the place to conduct such operations was in the Mekong delta during the harvest period. By taking advantage of the helicopter mobility of the forces, it should have been possible to deploy troops over a wide area to facilitate the collection effort. Government buyers could have accompanied the troops, and the paddy could have been flown out by helicopter. Thus, the Viet Cong would no longer possess undisputed control of this vital resource.<sup>172</sup>

(U) In addition, it was necessary for the Government to participate more effectively in the struggle for manpower. This struggle was too important to wait for the establishment of strategic hamlets to implement a population control program. A program was needed which provided a wide variety of inducements to young men to remain at home, or to accept

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<sup>172</sup>It is not possible to present all the details by which military operations conducted for resource control purposes could be implemented. The author believes it is possible to work out a comprehensive civil-military plan for rice control in the Mekong delta. If such a plan cannot be worked out, the resources will be left largely to the Viet Cong.

Government employment or refuge. After a youth joined the Viet Cong, he became the target of the Government's Chieu Hoi or amnesty program. However, there was no major program that sought to keep him from joining in the first place. Here again, the essential requirement was to compete with the Viet Cong for manpower, and not to write it off as lost.<sup>173</sup> *hur !*

(U) The succeeding chapters will show that the Government's pacification plan employed the available military forces--including the mobile forces of the regular army--primarily to facilitate the gradual expansion of Government control from secure areas to insecure areas. The consequence of this plan was that large forces were committed to operations on the periphery of secure areas, and operations into Viet Cong-controlled areas were relatively infrequent. As a result, the Viet Cong must have had a relatively free hand in the mobilization of resources to support the build-up of their forces. They were thus able to lay their plans for a general offensive, secure in the knowledge that their hold on the "liberated areas"--the source of their food and manpower was firm.

(U) Before proceeding to the Government's pacification plan, however, it is necessary to consider the quantitative dimensions of the Viet Cong build-up. The next chapter considers the extent to which the Viet Cong were successful in implementing the strategy of rapidly developing their forces during 1964-65.

<sup>173</sup> The author believes it is possible to work out a comprehensive civil-military plan that will not only satisfy the Government's manpower requirements but will assist in narrowing the manpower pool available to the Viet Cong. Obviously, such a program would be exceedingly complex and require considerable financing. However, the commitment of considerable resources would be justified, for every Viet Cong soldier must be offset by a multiplied number of Government soldiers, and every youth precluded from joining the Viet Cong is a gain whether he joins the Government or not.

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APPENDIX 1

MAP 1--Republic of Vietnam, showing Government of Vietnam Provinces and Viet Cong Military Regions and major war zones, as of 31 March 1965.

TABLE 1--Viet Cong Military Regions and Provinces.

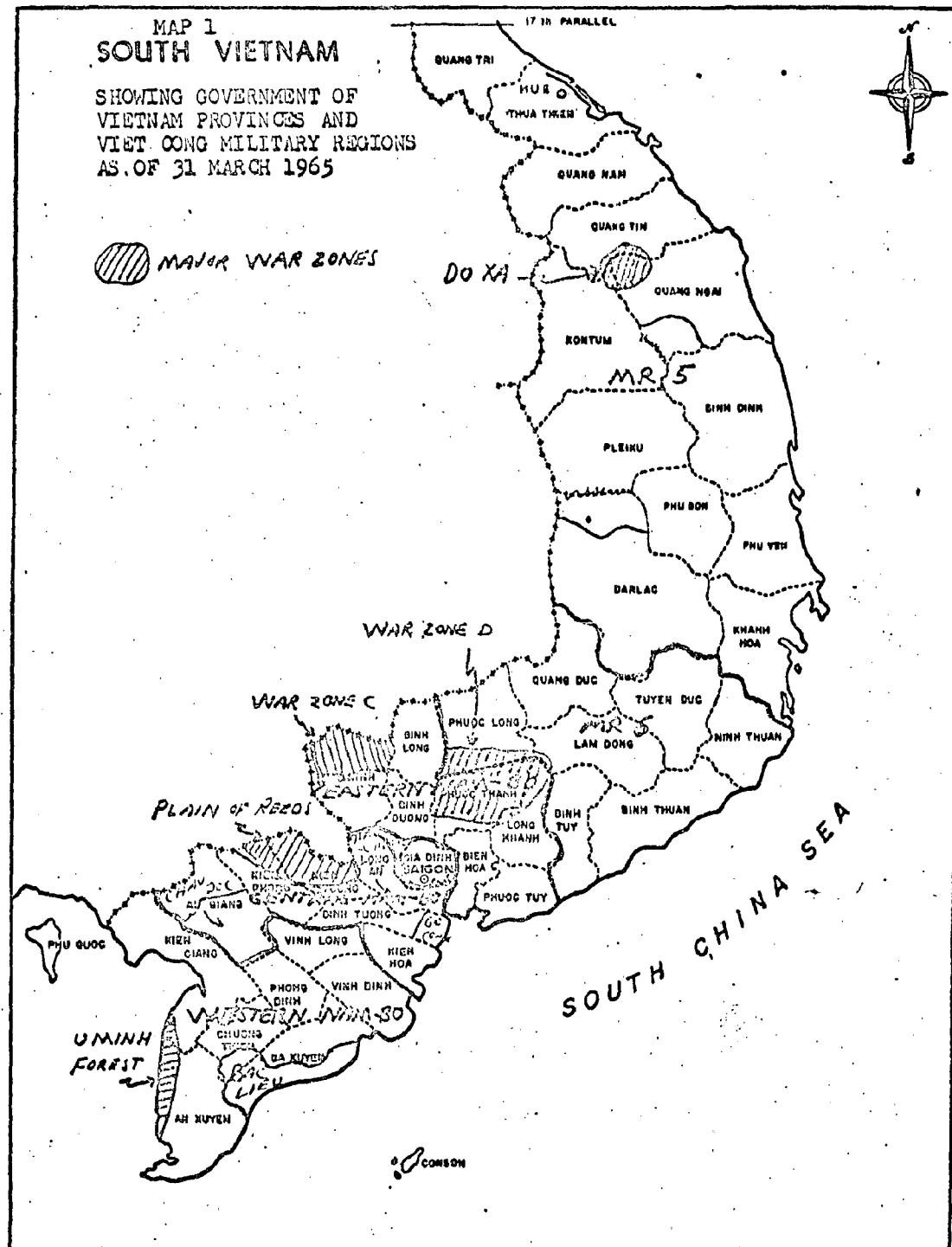
MAP 2--Republic of Vietnam, showing principal terrain features and routes of communication.

MAP 3--Republic of Vietnam, Population densities by province.

MAP 4--Republic of Vietnam, Showing areas of rice production.

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TABLE 1

VIET CONG MILITARY REGIONS AND PROVINCESREGION 5

<u>Viet Cong Province</u>	<u>GVN Province</u>
Quang Tri	Quang Tri
Thua Thien	Thua Thien
Quang Da	Quang Nam
Quang Nam	Quang Tin
Quang Ngai	Quang Ngai
Binh Dinh	Binh Dinh
Kontum	Kontum
Gia Lai	Pleiku

## Inter-Province III

Phu Yen	Phu Yen
Khanh Hoa	Khanh Hoa
B3	Phu Bon-Darlac
B5	Darlac

REGION 6

B4	Quang Duc
Lam Dong	Lam Dong
Tuyen Duc	Tuyen Duc
Ninh Thuan	Ninh Thuan
Binh Thuan	Binh Thuan-Binh Tuy
Phuoc Long	Phuoc Long

REGION 7 (Eastern Nam-Bo)

Tay Ninh	Tay Ninh
Binh Duong	Binh Duong
Binh Long	Binh Long
Phuoc Thanh	Phuoc Thanh
Bien Hoa	Bien Hoa
Ba Ria	Phuoc Tuy
Long Khanh	Long Khanh

REGION 8 (Central Nam-Bo)

<u>Viet Cong Province</u>	<u>GVN Province</u>
Long An	Long An-Hau Nghia
Kien Phong	Kien Phong
Kien Tuong	Kien Tuong
My Tho	Dinh Tuong-Go Cong
Ben Tre	Kien Hoa
An Giang	An Giang-Chau Doc

REGION 9 (Western Nam-Bo)

Vinh Long	Vinh Long
Tra Vinh	Vinh Binh
Can Tho	Phong Dinh
Rach Gia	Kien Giang
Ca Mau	An Xuyen
Soc Trang	Ba Xuyen, Bac Lieu and Chuong Thien

SAIGON/GIA DINH SPECIAL ZONE

Cu Chi District	Parts of Hau
Binh Tay District	Nghia, Gia Dinh, and Bien Hoa
Go Mon District	Provinces
Thu Duc District	
Di An District	
Nha Be District	

NOTE: Boundaries between VC and GVN Provinces are approximate.

SOURCE: RVN, Ministry of Armed Forces, J-2 High Command, and USMACV, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence (Joint Publication), Viet-Cong Military Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel (as of 31 March 1965), USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Log No. 3-283-65, 9 Apr 1965, 1, 4. (CONFIDENTIAL).

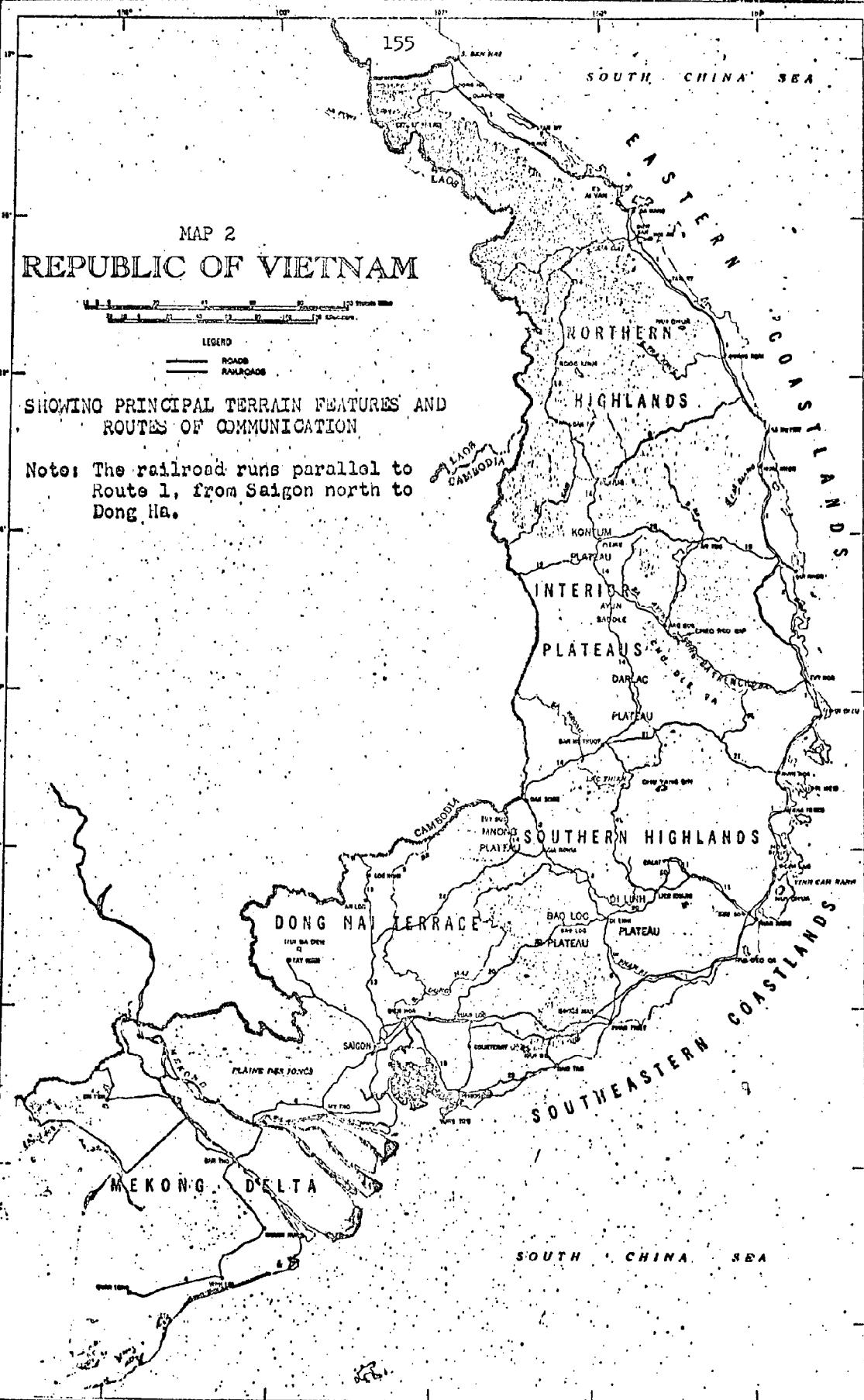
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MAP 2  
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

## LEGEND

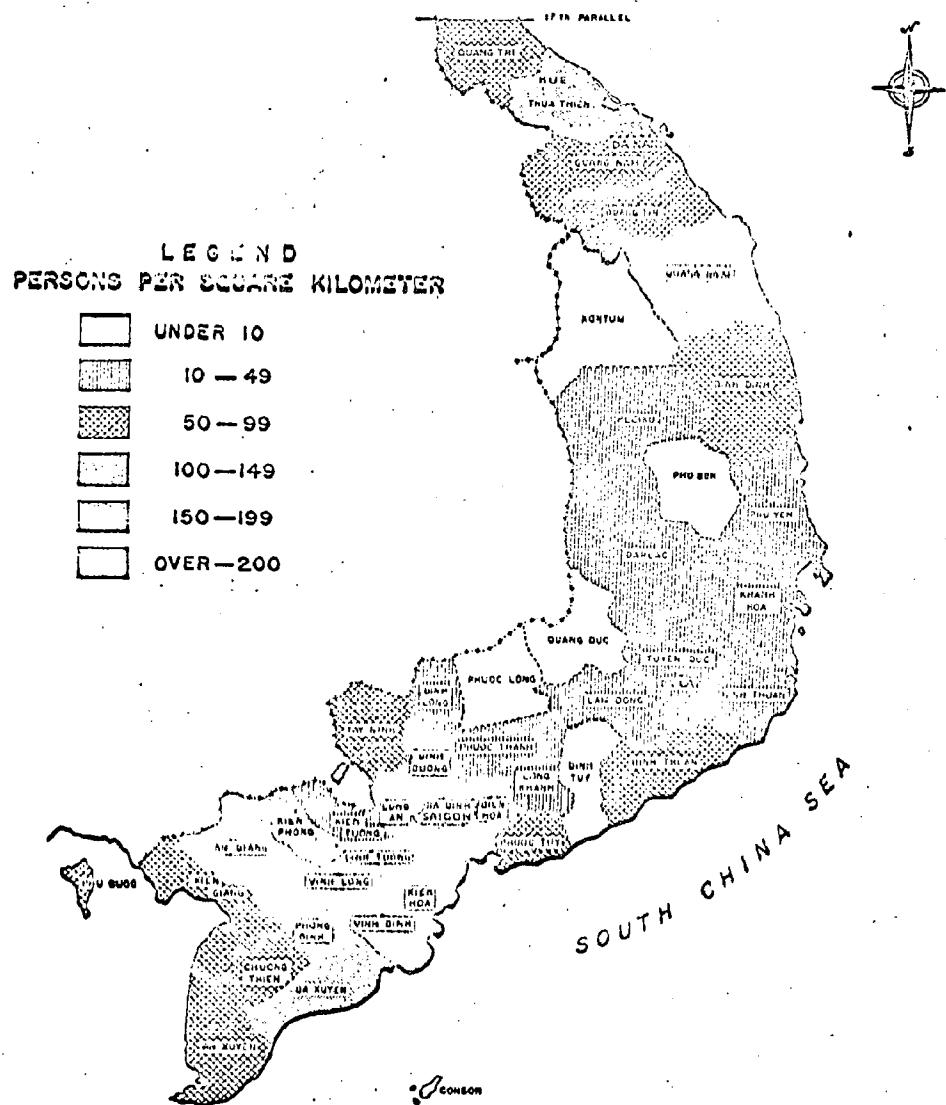
ROADS  
RAILROADSSHOWING PRINCIPAL TERRAIN FEATURES AND  
ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION

Note: The railroad runs parallel to  
Route 1, from Saigon north to  
Dong Ha.



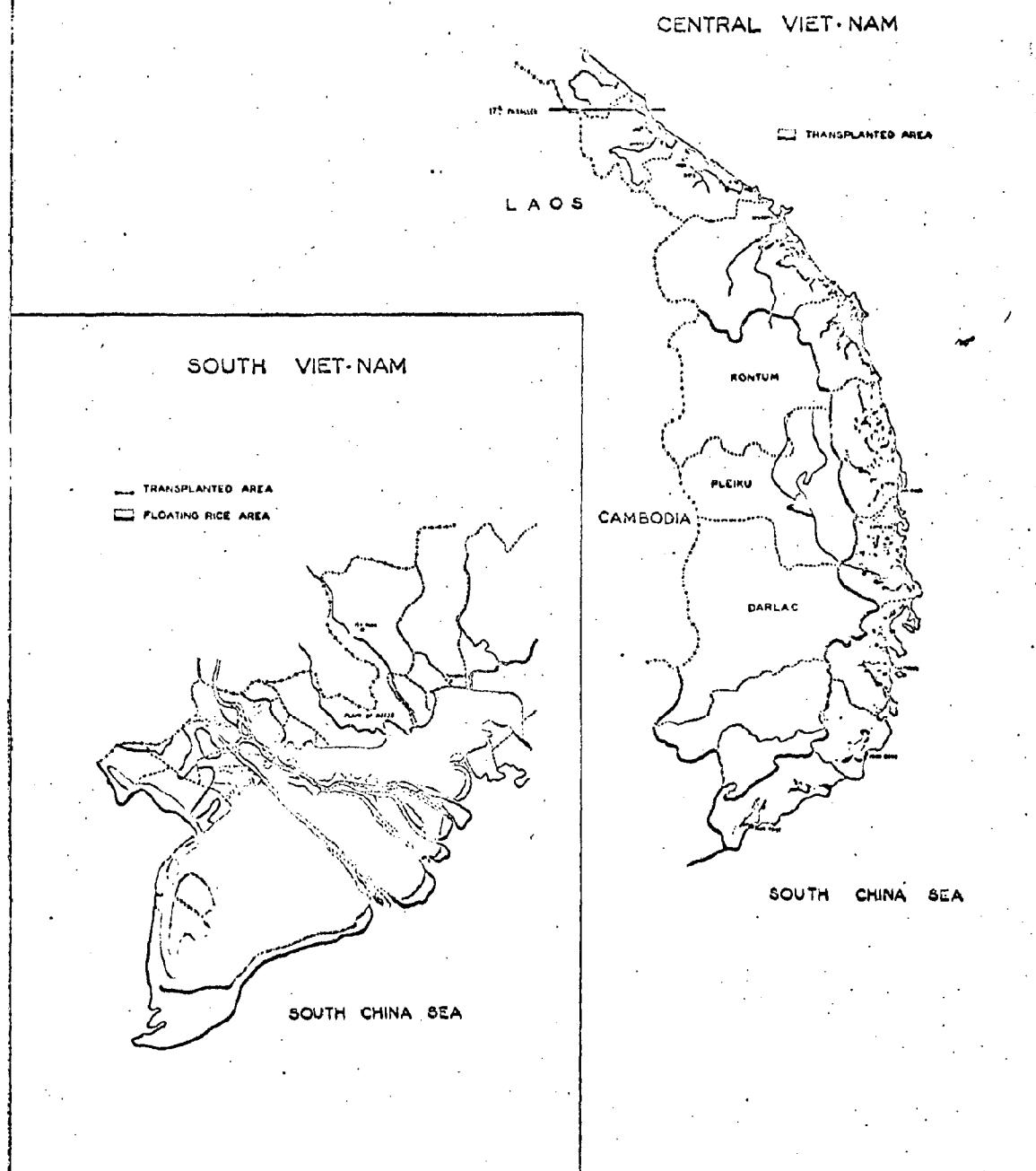
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MAP 3  
POPULATION DENSITIES BY PROVINCES  
JULY 1960<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup>Adjusted for new provinces.

## MAP 4 - RICE: AREAS OF PRODUCTION



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## CHAPTER IV

## THE VIET CONG MILITARY BUILD-UP

Our struggle against the enemy is in a very harshly disputed stage in this guerrilla war. We must have a large para-military force, a relatively strong local force and a well trained main force. A weak guerrilla force will impede the development of the local force and a weak local force will hinder the development of the main force. We are in need of a well trained main force to bring a change in the balance of forces between ourselves and the enemy.

--Viet Cong document

(U) The extent to which the Viet Cong were successful in carrying out their aim of building up their armed forces, especially their main force units, between 1964 and the middle of 1965, is reflected in the published Order of Battle data of the period. This chapter will present a time comparison of Viet Cong force structures and strengths derived from Republic of Vietnam High Command and United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Order of Battle (OB) documents.

(C) Until 31 March 1965, the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam and the High Command of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) published separate Order of Battle reports. A comparison of these reports reveals that United States figures of Viet Cong combat strength were invariably more conservative than Vietnamese data, although by June 1964 the gap had been narrowed to a Vietnamese figure of 34,000 and an American figure of 31,000. Still, the difference represented a possible seven battalions, by no means an inconsiderable force.

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(c) The more conservative estimates of American intelligence sources stem from the application of more stringent criteria to the prisoner interrogations, captured documents, and agent reports which provide the basis for "acceptance" or confirmation of a Viet Cong unit. A strict accounting system is necessary because the Viet Cong continuously change unit designations and frequently re-group old units to form new units. This increases the possibility of double-counting the enemy forces unless great care is taken.<sup>1</sup>

(c) The consequence is not only a conservative bias in strength figures, but also a considerable time lag between the first "indications" of an enemy force and its ultimate confirmation. In the opinion of the Defense Intelligence Agency, "the nature of the war, with its lack of sustained contact with the enemy and the procedures by which OB information is collated, means that OB changes normally lag 4-6 months behind the initial indications of the existance [sic] of a new unit."<sup>2</sup>

(c) This lag is clearly evidenced by the recorded Order of Battle data for the period of the Viet Cong build-up. On 1 July 1964, the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam placed the combat strength of confirmed main and local force units at 31,000, with another 5,000-6,000 in the "unconfirmed but probable" category.<sup>3</sup> On

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the many pitfalls of Order of Battle collection in an insurgency, see USMACV, J-2, Order of Battle, Viet Cong Forces, Republic of Vietnam (U), 1 July 1964, pp. 6-8. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>2</sup>U. S., Department of Defense, Defense Intelligence Agency, Special Intelligence Supplement: Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam, SIS 141-66, Jan 1966, p. 12. (SECRET).

<sup>3</sup>USMACV, Order of Battle, Viet Cong Forces, Republic of Vietnam, 1 July 1964, with Change 1, 1 Jan 1965, pp. 2, 17. A ten percent margin-of-error factor was applied to the figure 31,000, yielding 28,000-34,000 as the official estimate of Viet Cong strength. Ibid., p. 2. Only the mean figures will be used in the text discussion.

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1 January 1965, the confirmed Viet Cong combat strength was 33,000, and the strength in the "unconfirmed but probable" category had increased to 8,500.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the total increase over the six-month period was approximately 5,000 (2,000 confirmed and 3,000 unconfirmed but probable).

(C) Thereafter, during the first three months of 1965, the accumulating evidence disclosed a Viet Cong upsurge far greater than had been realized. On 23 March 1965, the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam placed Viet Cong combat strength at 38,500, and the "unconfirmed but probable" figure was now 8,500-10,000.<sup>5</sup> This was an overall gain of approximately 6,500--5,500 confirmed and 1,000 unconfirmed but probable--over the three-month period since 1 January. This was thirty percent greater than the entire gain for the previous six months. It meant that the extent of the Viet Cong build-up during the last half of 1964 was fully appreciated only after 1 January 1965, when the rate of acceptance of new combat strength more than doubled.

(C) The High Command of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) also lagged in detecting the Viet Cong build-up during late 1964. On 31 March 1964, the High Command placed confirmed Viet Cong combat strength at 34,111, including 6 regimental headquarters, 46 battalions, and 150 companies.<sup>6</sup> On 1 January 1965, combat strength had increased to 39,870, and included 6 regimental headquarters, 59 battalions, and 161

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. See Appendix 1 for a summary of the data for 1 July 1964, 1 January 1965, and 23 March 1965.

<sup>5</sup>USMACV, Annex A (Intelligence Estimate) to Commander's Estimate of the Situation, 23 Mar 1965, p. A-9. (SECRET).

<sup>6</sup>Republic of Vietnam (hereafter RVN), Ministry of Defense, J-2 High Command, VC Order of Battle South of 17th Parallel, as of 31 March 1964, USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Log No. 4-38, 8 Aug 1964, pp. 256, 258. (CONFIDENTIAL). This publication does not list an "unconfirmed but probable" category.

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companies.<sup>7</sup> The total strength increase for the period was approximately 5,700.

<sup>7</sup>(C) On 31 March 1965, in an Order of Battle summary published jointly with the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, the High Command reported Viet Cong combat strength as 46,600.<sup>8</sup> This was a strength increase, for the three-month period, of 6,700--an increase greater than that for the nine-month period preceding 1 January 1965.

(C) However, it is interesting to note that the High Command did not lag nearly as much in its unit accounting as it did in its strength accounting. On 31 March 1965, the High Command Order of Battle included 9 regimental headquarters, 63 battalions, and 188 companies.<sup>9</sup> This was an increase of only 3 regimental headquarters, 4 battalions and 27 companies over the units carried on 1 January 1965. These units accounted for approximately 6,000 of the 6,700 strength increase between 1 January and 31 March 1965.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the High Command had accounted for the bulk of the new Viet Cong combat battalions, but not of the companies, by 1 January 1965.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Data furnished the author by War Room, Joint Operations Center, High Command, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces.

<sup>8</sup>RVN, Ministry of Armed Forces, J-2, High Command, and USMACV, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence (Joint Publication), Viet-Cong Military Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel as of 31 March 1965, USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Log No. 3-283-65, 9 Apr 1965, II, 379. (CONFIDENTIAL). This publication does not list an "unconfirmed but probable" category.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>The figure of 6000 is computed using 500 as the strength of a regimental headquarters (and support units), 450 as the strength of a battalion, and 100 as the strength of a company. These figures are based on average strengths of "typical" Viet Cong units, contained in Ibid., I, 22-23.

<sup>11</sup>Between 31 March 1964 and 31 March 1965 there was an increase of 17 battalions and 38 companies. Of these, 13 battalions and 11 companies had been confirmed by 1 January 1965. See also, Appendix 1.

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(U) The Order of Battle holdings as of 31 March 1965 do not account for all of the Viet Cong combat units in existence at that time. Because of the lag in the confirmation of units, the Order of Battle holdings six months later--as of 1 October 1965--provide a better indication of Viet Cong combat units existing during the early part of 1965. This data is presented later in this chapter.

(C) The strength figures discussed above apply only to Viet Cong main and local force units, and do not include the strength of political cadres,<sup>12</sup> guerrillas, or any other category of militia (such as secret guerrillas and village and hamlet self-defense forces). Only broad estimates were made of the strength of Viet Cong militia, which was jointly defined by the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, and the Vietnamese High Command to include "guerrillas, self-defense and secret self-defense elements subordinate to village and hamlet level Viet

<sup>12</sup>The term "political cadre" refers to members of region, province, district and village party committees, and subordinate specialized sections, who staff the Viet Cong political organization discussed in Chapter II. Political officers of Viet Cong military units are not included in this category except when they serve concurrently as members of a Military Affairs Committee subordinate to a party committee. The first estimate of the strength of the Viet Cong political organization was made on 15 July 1965 by J-2 High Command. An average strength of 25 persons was assigned to the village committees in each of the 299 villages then under Viet Cong control. An average strength of 10 persons was used for each of 1061 villages in the disputed area, and 5 persons for each of the 1214 villages in the RVN controlled area. (The average strength was based upon captured documents and prisoner interrogations.) The 136 districts in South Vietnam were estimated to have an average of 30 persons each on the district committees. The 95 districts in Central Vietnam were estimated to have 50 persons each. The 39 Viet Cong provinces were estimated to have 80 persons apiece belonging to province committees. Region Party Committees were estimated to have a strength of 750 each, and the strength of the Saigon/Gia Dinh Special Zone was placed at 200. For COSVN, 1200 of the 3000 members were estimated to be political cadre, the remainder being military cadre. The total strength calculated from this amounted to 38,300 political cadre. RVN, Ministry of Armed Forces, J-2, High Command, Viet-Cong Political Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel as of 15 July 1965, USMACV, J-2, Log No. 6-512-65, 15 July 1965, pp. 9-12. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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Cong organization.<sup>13</sup> The strength of militia was placed at 60,000-80,000 during 1964,<sup>14</sup> increased to 80,000-100,000 on 1 January 1965,<sup>15</sup> and increased again to 100,000-120,000 on 1 October 1965.<sup>16</sup> (The strength of the cadres who man the party organizations discussed in Chapter II was estimated for the first time on 15 July 1965, and set at approximately 40,000.)<sup>17</sup> It is clear that Viet Cong militia strength increased, in line with the strategy of expanding the "people's guerrilla warfare movement."

(U) Table 1 shows comparative Viet Cong strength and forces, based on Republic of Vietnam High Command data for 31 March 1964 and 31 March 1965. The Vietnamese method of classifying Viet Cong units is useful because it permits an estimate to be made of the relative growth of Viet Cong Main Forces as contrasted to local forces.

(U) Table 1 shows the number of battalions that are subordinate to region and province headquarters. In the official terminology, provincial battalions are considered as local forces.<sup>18</sup> However, since these are hard-core units that operate as mobile forces throughout the province, these battalions should realistically be treated as part of the

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<sup>13</sup>USMACV, Description of Viet Cong Forces, Directive No. 381-4, 20 Mar 1964, p. 1. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>14</sup>RVN, Ministry of Defense, J-2 High Command, VC Order of Battle South of 17th Parallel As of 31 March 1964, p. 3. Order of Battle, Viet Cong Forces, Republic of Vietnam, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup>Viet-Cong Military Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup>Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid. Viet-Cong Political Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup>USMACV, Description of Viet Cong Forces, p. 1.

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TABLE 1

VIET CONG FORCES BY VIET CONG REGION, 31 MARCH 1964 AND 31 MARCH 1965<sup>a</sup>

AREA	CONFIRMED FORCES					COMBAT STRENGTH			
	Regt. Hq.	Bn.	Mobile Co.	Local Co.	Local Plt.	Region	Province	District	Total
COSVN									
31 Mar 1964	2	6				3500			3500
31 Mar 1965	3	14				5950			5950
5TH REGION									
31 Mar 1964	4	18	11	26	38	3362	2768	3132	9262
31 Mar 1965 <sup>b</sup>	3	23	27	46	42	4520	5670	4760	14950
6TH REGION									
31 Mar 1964		4	17	14	25	998	1408	1868	4274
31 Mar 1965 <sup>b</sup>		3	12	4	27	1100	745	895	2740
EASTERN NAM-BO									
31 Mar 1964		3	9	13	25	850	965	1585	3400
31 Mar 1965		2	12	15	20	450	1365	1610	3425
CENTRAL NAM-BO									
31 Mar 1964		7	9	24	16	1040	2350	2720	6110
31 Mar 1965	1	9	2	32	7	1890	2945	3185	8020
WESTERN NAM-BO									
31 Mar 1964		8	1	23	19	1950	2070	3105	7125
31 Mar 1965	2	11	4	31	15	3750	3315	3920	10985
SPECIAL ZONE									
31 Mar 1964			1	2	3	180		260	440
31 Mar 1965		1		3	3	200		330	530
TOTALS									
31 Mar 1964	6	46	48	102	126	11,880	9,561	12,670	34,111
31 Mar 1965	9	63	57	131	114	17,860	14,040	14,700	46,600

<sup>a</sup>SOURCE: RVN, Ministry of Defense, J-2 High Command, VC Order of Battle South of 17th Parallel as of 31 March 1964, USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Log No. 4-38, 8 Aug 1964, p. 256. (CONFIDENTIAL). RVN, Ministry of Armed Forces, J-2 High Command, and USMACV, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence (Joint Publication), Viet-Cong Military Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel as of 31 March 1965, USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Log No. 3-283-65, 9 Apr 1965, II, 379. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>b</sup>Reflects transfer of Viet Cong Provinces B.3, B.5, and Khanh Hoa from 6th Region to 5th Region. Forces transferred were 7 Mobile Cos., 10 Local Companies, and 9 Local Plts., with strengths of 1325 (Province) 825 (District), total 2150.

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main force. The same applies to province companies.<sup>19</sup> In short, all forces subordinate to region and province will be considered in this discussion as main forces.

(U) In Table 1, "Mobile Companies" are provincial mobile units classified as main force, and local companies and local platoons are the local forces, subordinate to district. In the "Combat Strength" section, the "Region" figure includes the regimental headquarters and battalions subordinate to region, the "Province" figure includes the battalions and mobile companies subordinate to province, and the "District" figure includes the local companies and platoons subordinate to district.

(C) Table 1 makes clear that the Viet Cong increased their main forces much more than their local forces during the year under consideration. Over-all, the main force strength increased from 21,441 to 31,900, a gain of 10,459 or 49 percent; the local force strength increased from 12,670 to 14,700, a gain of 2,030 or 16 percent. Of the total Viet Cong strength increase during the year, 84 percent was in the main force.

(U) This pattern is reflected in each of the military regions except Eastern Nam-Bo, where the main force strength remained the same. (In considering the Sixth Region, adjustment must be made for the transfer of certain provinces to Fifth Region, as noted.) Very large gains in main force strength were made in Fifth Region (45 percent), Central Nam-Bo (43 percent), and Western Nam-Bo (76 percent).

(U) As was previously noted, most of this build-up was detected

<sup>19</sup>Ibid. Under the category of "Local Forces" the following definition is given: "Provincial Mobile Units: Those units of battalion or company size directly subordinate to the provincial Party Committee which operate throughout the province. These units may operate outside the province in conjunction with Main Force units." It appears to be more realistic to treat these units as Main Forces, however, High Command recognizes this by treating "Mobile Companies" and "Local Companies" separately.

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during the first three months of 1965. It is not the over-all increase, but the sharp increase in the Viet Cong main combat forces that is particularly striking and revealing. In guerrilla warfare, the insurgents are not likely to raise battalions until they are ready to push beyond the platoon-and-company scale of operations to a level at which they can begin to take on the strongest enemy targets.

(U) Table 2 presents comparative Viet Cong force and strength data over a longer period of time than Table 1. In this case, American sources are used and the data is arrayed by Republic of Vietnam territorial organization. In the system of presentation adopted by the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, companies are not separated into "mobile" and "local", and strength is not broken down into region, province, and district totals; consequently, it is not possible to estimate changes in the main force except by observing the trend in regimental headquarters and battalions.

(U) In Table 2, data is presented up to December 1965 because of the fact, already explained, that confirmed Order of Battle listings lag some four to six months behind initial indications of the existence of a unit. In other words, many units formed during the first half of 1965, a period of interest in this paper, would not be confirmed until the last half of 1965, and units confirmed in December should be attributed to June and earlier for their organization and training.

(C) A complication arises in the Third Quarter of 1965, when the first units of the People's Army of (North) Vietnam were confirmed and listed in the Order of Battle with Viet Cong units (although indications of North Vietnamese units had appeared some months earlier). Since our interest is primarily in the Viet Cong build-up, it is desirable to be able to exclude People's Army of Vietnam units from any comparison.

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TABLE 2

VIET CONG FORCES BY RVN TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION, JUNE 1963-31 DECEMBER 1965<sup>a</sup>

AREA	CONFIRMED FORCES				TOTAL CONFIRMED STRENGTH	ESTIMATED MILITIA STRENGTH
	Regt. Hq.	Bn.	Sep. Co.	Sep. Plt.		
1st CORPS AREA						
Jun 1963		3	12	3	2,440	
1 Jul 1964	1	5	16	6	3,025	
31 Dec 1964 <sup>b</sup>	2	14	37	8	7,900	3,000
Jun 1965	2	17	31	15	9,082	14,719
Oct 1965	1	14	36	10	8,500	17,000+
31 Dec 1965 <sup>c</sup>	3	24	32	10	12,630	17,000+
2d CORPS AREA						
Jun 1963		8	48	18	8,010	
1 Jul 1964	2	13	59	12	8,980	
31 Dec 1964 <sup>b</sup>	1	5	44	10	5,700	8,000
Jun 1965	1	11	57	50	8,858	24,187
Oct 1965 <sup>d</sup>	5	23	56	48	16,100	27,000+
31 Dec 1965 <sup>e</sup>	7	28	56	48	18,370	27,000+
3d CORPS AREA						
Jun 1963		8	58	41	9,345	
1 Jul 1964	2	18	43	5	13,235	
31 Dec 1964	2	13	24	5	9,200	30,000
Jun 1965	3	17	36	26	11,815	20,438
Oct 1965	3	23	30	26	15,490	22,000+
31 Dec 1965	5	30	30	26	19,890	22,000+
4th CORPS AREA						
Jun 1963		9	17	47	5,125	
1 Jul 1964		10	11	3	6,190	
31 Dec 1964		15	27	3	9,760	30,000
Jun 1965	3	18	62	21	17,785	32,411
Oct 1965	3	22	65	15	18,200	34,000+
31 Dec 1965	3	22	65	15	18,200	34,000
CAPITAL MIL DIST						
Jun 1963			3	1	245	
1 Jul 1964			3	3	520	
31 Dec 1964			3	3	520	1,000
Jun 1965			2	2	210	
Oct 1965			2	2	210	
31 Dec 1965 <sup>f</sup>	1	3	2	2	1,010	
TOTALS						
Jun 1963		28	138	110	25,165	
1 Jul 1964	5	46	132	29	31,000	

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TABLE 2--Continued

31 Dec 1964	5	47	135	29	33,000	91,800
Jun 1965	9	63	188	114	47,750	91,755
1 Oct 1965 <sup>d</sup>	12	82	189	101	58,500 <sup>g</sup>	100-120,000 <sup>h</sup>
31 Dec 1965 <sup>ce</sup>	19	107	185	101	70,100 <sup>g</sup>	100-120,000 <sup>h</sup>

<sup>a</sup>SOURCE: U. S., Department of Defense, Defense Intelligence Agency, Special Intelligence Supplement: Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam, SIS 141-66, Jan 1966, pp. 15-16. (SECRET). USMACV, J-2, Order of Battle, Viet Cong Forces, Republic of Vietnam (U), 1 July 1964, with Change 1, 1 Jan 1965, pp. 16-21. (CONFIDENTIAL). Data for 1 July 1964 and 31 December 1964 are taken from this latter source.

<sup>b</sup>Reflects transfer of Quang Ngai Province from 2d Corps to 1st Corps, with 1 Regt., 6 Bns., 20 Cos., and 4 Plats., combat strength 3,630.

<sup>c</sup>Includes 1 PAVN Regt. and 4 PAVN Bns., strength approximately 2000.

<sup>d</sup>Includes 3 PAVN Regts. and 9 Bns., strength approximately 4,500.

<sup>e</sup>Includes 6 PAVN Regts. and 18 Bns., strength approximately 9,000.

<sup>f</sup>Includes one unlocated battalion, strength 300.

<sup>g</sup>Does not include approximately 18,000 headquarters, combat support, and combat service support personnel, engaged in staff activities and on guard, communications-liaison, transportation, corridor, and reconnaissance operations. According to J-2 High Command, such personnel numbered approximately 12,000 on 31 March 1964, and 17,625 on 31 March 1965.

<sup>h</sup>Does not include approximately 40,000 political cadres, estimated for the first time by J-2 High Command on 15 July 1965.

This is made possible by the footnotes to Table 2, which lists separately the forces and strength of the People's Army of Vietnam units in South Vietnam.

(C) A glance at the figures for June 1964 and June 1965 clearly reveals the extent of the Viet Cong build-up throughout South Vietnam. It should also be noted that the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, reported the same number of regiments and only one more battalion in December 1964 as in June 1964, and the total combat strength increase between these two dates was only 2,000. This confirms the lag

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in detecting the Viet Cong build-up that was underway at that time.

(C) By June 1965, Viet Cong regiments had increased from five to nine, battalions from 46 to 63, and companies from 135 to 188. Total Viet Cong strength increased from 34,200 to 47,750, a gain of 40 percent. What is even more striking is that this trend continued throughout 1965, so that by December the Viet Cong (not including People's Army of Vietnam) were fielding a confirmed combat force of 12 regimental headquarters and 85 regimental and separate battalions. The Viet Cong had even organized a regiment in the capital military district, which had been the scene of an intensive Government pacification campaign from October 1964 onwards.

(U) Table 2 also provides estimates of Viet Cong militia strength for periods when estimates were available. Of interest are the sharp changes between December 1964 and June 1965, particularly in the Fifth Region where, as we have seen, the expansion of the guerrilla warfare movement was a major component of Viet Cong strategy in the march to the coastal lowlands of Central Vietnam.

(U) A lesson that emerges from the foregoing discussion is that, during an insurgency, a significant part of the intelligence collection effort must focus on enemy recruitment potential and activity. Otherwise, the entire command may be surprised and placed in a serious predicament as a result of a sudden upsurge in enemy strength. It is fundamental that the enemy values manpower and resources, not for their own sake, but as a mobilization base for the build-up of his forces. Consequently, short-term and long-term projections must be made of the force levels the enemy is capable of achieving over specified periods of time. The size of the enemy manpower pool, and his ability to recruit, train, and arm additional forces must be considered. An appraisal must be made

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of his capability to introduce conscription, and plans must be prepared to disrupt his efforts by exploiting the widespread discontent that conscription measures arouse.

(C) The Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, was fully aware of the importance of projecting Viet Cong force goals. On 1 July 1964, such a projection was made in an intelligence estimate for the last six months of 1964.<sup>20</sup> This projection is contained in Appendix 2. It should be noted that, when compared to the Viet Cong strength as of 1 October 1965 (Table 2), the projection was remarkably accurate. However, the intelligence estimate gave the enemy the capability only of continuing to build up his forces, and stated that it would be unlikely that the enemy would escalate the level of the insurgency or achieve his force goals during the next six months.<sup>21</sup> The impact of the projection could have been enhanced by specifying the time frame during which the enemy had the capability of attaining the force level indicated.

(U) The first hypothesis to be tested in this paper was that there was a massive Viet Cong force build-up during the period of the Chien Thang plan from April 1964 to April 1965, a build-up made possible by exploiting the South Vietnamese population under Viet Cong control for two basic resources: manpower and food. Chapter II has established that the Viet Cong possessed an effective apparatus of population control, capable of mobilizing the resources needed to sustain the accelerated development of enemy forces. Chapter III established that the Viet Cong did, in fact, make the decision to accelerate the expansion of their

<sup>20</sup>USMACV, J-2, VC Strategy and Tactics, 1 July 1964. (SECRET).

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 5, 7, 17.

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forces beginning in July 1964. Chapter III also pointed out how the Viet Cong utilized the manpower and rice resources under their control to support their mobilization effort. Chapter IV has established the quantitative dimensions of the Viet Cong build-up between April 1964 and April 1965. It is believed that the rate and magnitude of this build-up fully justifies its being characterized as "massive."

(U) Consequently, it is concluded that the evidence presented in Chapters II, III, and IV has fully established the first hypothesis of this study, namely, that there was a massive Viet-Cong force build-up during the period of the Chien Thang plan from April 1964 to April 1965, a build-up made possible by exploiting the South Vietnamese population under Viet Cong control for two basic resources: manpower and food.

(U) It is now necessary to turn to the Chien Thang plan, which was the Government's plan for defeating the insurgency and restoring its authority over the rural population. The Viet Cong activities described in the preceding chapters established the environment within which the Chien Thang plan was executed. In its execution, the Chien Thang plan was influenced significantly by the availability of resources--especially manpower--for which both sides were contending. The Government's manpower requirements were in turn shaped by the concepts of the plan and by its estimate of Viet Cong capabilities. The next chapter will discuss the basic strategy, assumptions, and concepts of the Chien Thang plan.

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## APPENDIX 1

## USMACV HOLDINGS OF VIET CONG ORDER OF BATTLE

	Regt. Hqs.	Bn.	Sep. Co.	Sep. Plt.	Strength	Militia
1 Jul 1964 Confirmed Probable	5	46	132	29	31,430 5,000-6,000	60-80,000
1 Jan 1965 Confirmed Probable	5 1	47 20	135 18	29 5	33,000 8,500	80-100,000
1 Feb 1965 Confirmed Probable	5 1	50 18	139 18	30 5	34,900 7,110+	91,756
23 Mar 1965 Confirmed Probable	5 5	53 26	142 18	35 5	38,500 8,500-10,000	80-100,000

SOURCE: USMACV, Order of battle, Viet Cong Forces, Republic of Vietnam, 1 July 1964, with Change 1, 1 Jan 1965, pp. 2, 17. (CONFIDENTIAL). United States Pacific Command, Pacom Intelligence Digest, WID 7-65, February 1965, p. 11. (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, Annex A (Intelligence Estimate) to Commander's Estimate of the Situation, 23 Mar 1965, p. A-9. (SECRET).

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## APPENDIX 2

## USMACV ESTIMATE OF VIET CONG FORCE GOALS

	<u>MAIN AND LOCAL FORCES</u>	<u>GUERRILLA</u>
1 Division	10,000 - 12,000	
8-10 Regiments	12,000 - 20,000	
35 Sep. Bns.	17,500 - 21,000	
240-250 District Co.	19,000 - 30,000	4,800 - 7,000
2500 + Villages		50,000 - 62,000
15,000 + Hamlets		150,000 - 225,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	58,500 - 83,000	204,800 - 294,000

SOURCE: USMACV, J-2, VC Strategy and Tactics, 1 July 1964, Appendix 1.  
 (SECRET).

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## CHAPTER V

THE CHIEN THANG PACIFICATION PLAN

The success of a commander does not arise from following rules or models. It consists in an absolutely new comprehension of the dominant facts of the situation at the time, and all the forces at work. Every great operation of the war is unique. What is wanted is a profound appreciation of the actual event.--Winston Churchill

The "war" in Vietnam is not a tactical maneuver. It is rather a management problem calling for the time-phasing of events and assignment of resources that assure time-phased accomplishment of objectives. Objectives are projected week by week until all resources available to local commands are exhausted and then requests to higher command should be made for more.

--General William C. Westmoreland

Introduction

(U) On 7 March 1964, General Nguyen Khanh publicly announced that the Government of Vietnam had drawn up a blueprint for victory in the war with the Viet Cong. That blueprint was the Chieng Thang, or "Struggle for Victory," plan. Starting from the premise that a purely military solution to the conflict was impossible, the plan outlined a broad and comprehensive program of social, political and military measures to foster economic progress, social welfare, local self-government, and a climate of security in the rural areas. The combined effort represented by the integration and close coordination of civil and military programs was referred to as "pacification."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Pacification of an area is the restoration of public security and improvement of the living conditions of the inhabitants of that area

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(S) The Chien Thang plan was designed to stem the deteriorating security conditions in the countryside, and to arrest the sharp decline in the Government's control over the population that had occurred since the 1 November 1963 coup. The extent of this decline was stated in an official report as follows:

The latest GVN statistical reports as of 30 April [1964] indicate a deterioration of GVN control in hamlets constructed or under construction to 6,582 (constructed) and 782 (under construction) from a previous high in Nov 1963 of 8,544 (constructed) and 1,051 (under construction). Only 55% of the total population is now reported as being in hamlets constructed or under construction under GVN control; whereas, in Nov 63, the total was 85%.<sup>2</sup>

As the worsening security situation became generally well known, a decline in public morale and confidence could not help but follow. At least one of the aims of the Chien Thang plan was to restore public confidence and get the country moving again.

(U) As a matter of fact, the Khanh Government had already made a major policy decision that was to have a positive impact on the war effort during 1964. This action may very well have been the main reason for the survival of the Republic of Vietnam into 1965. That decision established the policy of making concessions, in terms of local autonomy, to the leaders of the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai religious sects, and enlisting the support of the sects in the war against the Viet Cong. A compromise

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in all fields, political, economic and social" From Annex E (Technique of Pacification Operations) to the Chien Thang Plan, 22 Feb 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). The actual plan is classified TOP SECRET, but individual sections have a lower level of classification.

2USMACV, Military Report 9-16 May 1964, p. 36. (SECRET). The Military Reports are the official USMACV reports through the military chain of command to the Department of Defense. They were issued weekly, beginning in March 1964. The terms "constructed" and "under construction" refer to the criteria by which a hamlet was considered to be under Government control. If the criteria were fully met the hamlet was "constructed;" if only partially met, the hamlet was "under construction." The subject of criteria is discussed further below.

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between national authority and local autonomy was achieved by appointing sect leaders to positions in the Vietnamese Army, and these leaders responded by using their authority and prestige to raise military forces to protect the sect areas from the Viet Cong.<sup>3</sup>

(S) The opinion of the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam on the Chien Thang plan was at first reserved, then more optimistic. In the Military Report of 11-21 March, it stated:

The Chien Thang Plan is sufficiently broad in concept to permit considerable latitude in implementation but is primarily oriented toward the military aspect of pacification. It alludes to civic action and socio-economic considerations but offers little specific guidance in these areas. . . . Many details and problems remain to be resolved.<sup>4</sup>

The subsequent Military Report, however, offered the following appraisal:

The GVN has produced a sound concept, the spreading oil stain, embodied in a comprehensive plan, CHTEN THANG, which aims at pacification in three phases: to clear and hold an area, to root out the VC infrastructure via police operations, and to establish a GVN infrastructure and intelligence net. The counterinsurgency effort has been unified by this plan which establishes a structure to provide policy formulation by a Central Pacification Committee under the Premier, but charging the CINC RVNAF with all aspects of execution. It links comprehensive political and military responsibility at the corps province levels (Corps Commanding General is the Regional Governor). However, although commendable in scope and definition, particularly regarding pacification techniques, it reflects the military nature of the Government and does not provide for certain basic political measures, including a realistic land reform. The means available may be adequate. However, in view of the regressions in the prosecution of the war caused by Government instability and the attendant reduced morale and effectiveness, additional personnel, funds, materiel, and US augmentation are required to vitalize the effort. . . . In the main, the plan represents a great improvement over previous concepts.<sup>5</sup>

(C) The Chien Thang plan was shaped largely by the experience of the late 1963 period of counterinsurgency operations, during which the

<sup>3</sup>USMACV, The Cao Dai of South Vietnam, 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL); and The Hoa Hao of South Vietnam, 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>4</sup> USMACV, Military Report, 11-21 March, 1964, pp. 3-5. (SECRET).

<sup>5</sup>USMACV, Military Report, 22-28 March, 1964, pp. 3-4. (SECRET).

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Viet Cong made great headway in expanding their population control in spite of mounting operations by Government forces.<sup>6</sup> In the opinion of many, especially among the United States military advisors, multiple-battalion operations were not as effective against the Viet Cong as were "area saturation"<sup>7</sup> techniques. Major General Charles J. Timmes, Chief, United States Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam, from March 1962 to May 1964, stated upon his reassignment that:

Conventional multiple-battalion formations seldom produced worthwhile results except in those rare instances when intelligence accurately pinpointed a sizeable Viet Cong troop concentration or base area. A much more successful tactic for both search-and-clear and clear-and-hold operations<sup>8</sup> was that of saturating an area with daylight patrols and night ambushes, usually of platoon size.<sup>9</sup>

According to this view, numerous small-unit operations not only provided increased security for an area, but also resulted in killing more Viet Cong.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>USMACV, J-3 Background Briefing, May 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>7</sup>USMACV, Lessons Learned Number 38: Area Saturation Operations, 12 Mar 1964. "Area Saturation" consists of small-unit actions (patrols and ambushes) to secure an area. It relies upon a relatively high density of troop elements to detect, harass, destroy, and deny enemy movement in an area.

<sup>8</sup>A search-and-clear operation has the mission of finding and destroying the Viet Cong; there is no intention to remain in the area of operation. A clear-and-hold operation includes the intention to remain in an area to provide security, construct strategic hamlets, restore public administration, and so forth. A clear-and-hold operation is a pacification operation, and the area of operation is known as the "pacification area."

<sup>9</sup>Letter, Headquarters, Department of Army, Subject: "Debriefing of Senior and Designated Key Officer Returning from Field Assignments," 22 July 1964, pp. 6-7, (File No. S-17263.163, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Library). (SECRET).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. General Timmes cites as evidence the results of 2d Division operations in Quang Tin Province (Operation Dan Chien 1), and the results of certain 9th Division operations in the Mekong delta. Considering his vast experience as the field commander of all U.S. military advisors, and his reputation for remaining in close personal contact with the situation in the field, his views must be considered representative of a large section of U.S. advisors.

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(c) But the major lesson of previous experience, echoed by General Timmes and others,<sup>11</sup> and destined to be re-echoed throughout 1964, was that the constant movement of Army<sup>12</sup> battalions from one locale to another prevented any real progress from being made in pacification and population control. Everywhere,<sup>13</sup> it was the standard opinion and common complaint of United States advisors concerned with pacification that the allegiance of the people could not be won unless security was provided, and that the removal of troops from areas that were being secured--whether to fight the Viet Cong or for any other reason--caused people to doubt the permanence of Government protection, and hence to withhold their support.

(c) An illustration of the extent to which the desire to provide

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid. See also, Letter Headquarters, Department of Army, 4 May 1965, Subject: "Debriefing of Senior and Designated Key Officers Returning from Field Assignments," Debriefing Report of Major General Delk M. Oden, Commanding General, United States Army Support Command, Vietnam, from June 1963 to April 1965 (File No. C-17263.163, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Library), p. 7. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>12</sup>The term "Army" will be used to refer to Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), the regular army of South Vietnam. The ARVN is a component of RVNAF, the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces. On 22 May 1964, the Prime Minister, Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh, decreed the merging of all armed forces into a single organization, the RVNAF, composed of the regular Army, Navy, and Air Force, the Regional Forces, and the militia (consisting of Popular Forces and Combat Youth). This force structure will be discussed at greater length below. United States Operations Mission to Vietnam (hereafter USOM), Public Administration Division (hereafter PAD), Public Administration Bulletin, No. 13, 25 May 1964, pp. 6-7. The USOM Public Administration Division publishes local, regional, and national government organization charts, lists of Government officials, translations of Government decrees, studies of public administration problems, and so forth.

<sup>13</sup>This is a deduction from the fact that status reports on each of the fourteen "critical provinces" reported on in the weekly Military Report during the period 11 March-30 May 1964, contained references to the necessity to stabilize troop deployments in order to make pacification progress. USMACV, Military Reports, 11 March-30 May 1964, passim. That the foregoing was a virtually unanimous opinion of U.S. advisors concerned with pacification is confirmed by the author's personal experience as well. See also, J-3 Background Briefing, May 1964, passim.

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security for the populace on a continuous basis permeated United States thinking, is provided by the following excerpt from the Military Report of 22-28 March 1964:

The population of the delta continued to withhold support for GVN. The reasons for this are many but appear closely associated with the inability of GVN to furnish permanent security. Large segments of population are reluctant or unwilling to support GVN because of fear of VC reprisal. This situation has been agitated by repeated failure of GVN to fulfill promises to provide security. This is especially true in clear/hold operations where troops are removed after the population has been relocated [to a secure area]. The An Nhon Tay operation in Binh Duong province is a typical example. Other recent examples have occurred in Long An, Phuoc Thanh and Dinh Tuong provinces. The indiscriminate removal of troops from clear/hold areas, even on a temporary basis, has serious effect on the population. VC have been quick to exploit this for propaganda purposes.<sup>14</sup>

An equally significant indicator of official concern with this problem is the note taken in the Military Reports of the impending relief of the 5th Division Commander, whose division had been one of the worst offenders in the matter of removing troops from pacification areas.<sup>15</sup>

(U) These two lessons of past experience--the efficacy of area saturation tactics, and the need to retain troops in pacification (clear-and-hold) areas--were to have a weighty influence upon the military execution of the Chien Thang plan. In principle, forces committed to a pacification area were to remain there to provide security through small-unit actions until locally-recruited forces could assume the security mission. On the other hand, forces were also required for operational missions, such as reaction to Viet Cong attacks, pursuit and destruction of enemy units, and road-clearing operations. An insoluble dilemma emerged when the same troops were assigned a pacification

<sup>14</sup>Military Report, 22-28 Mar 1964, p. 33. Emphasis supplied.

<sup>15</sup>Military Report, 9-16 May 1964, pp. 37, 39; 16-23 May 1964, pp. 35-39.

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mission which required their presence within the pacification area, and operational missions which frequently required their presence outside the pacification area.

(U) The military resources available for the support of the Chien Thang plan were limited. When United States advisors called for the employment of regular Army battalions in a pacification role, they were calling upon the only troops available to carry out mobile, operational missions. Consequently, either the regular battalions would have to be limited to a security role in the pacification area, or the situation would have to be faced that from time to time these battalions would be pulled out for operational missions.

(C) At the time, it did not appear as an objection to the plan that if every province were to receive two or three battalions with which to maintain security in its priority pacification areas, the total regular force of 123 infantry-type battalions (93 infantry, 20 ranger, 6 airborne, 4 Marine)<sup>16</sup> would soon be largely committed to security missions that are best performed by local forces. Admittedly, sufficient local forces were not available to provide the requisite degree of security. Even so, the decision to send regular troops to perform local force missions required careful consideration. The question was: Could the Vietnamese Armed Forces afford to employ regular troops on pacification missions while the Viet Cong retained a considerable main force?

(C) As we have seen, the Viet Cong not only retained a sizeable main force but were expanding it. Early in 1964, this was as yet unknown to Government of Vietnam and United States planners. The fact remains,

<sup>16</sup>USMACV, J-3, ARVN Order of Battle, June 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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however, that despite the desire to stabilize regular troops in pacification areas, the operational requirement for reaction, search and destroy, and road-clearing operations still existed and would increase.

(C) The lessons of experience that shaped the military execution of the Chien Thang plan--area saturation and stability of pacification forces--were derived from a particular stage of the insurgency. Viet Cong operations during that stage contained a large element of force preservation. When confronted by superior Government troops, the insurgents would disperse and avoid contact. Area saturation was designed to counter this enemy tactic. It was effective in countering guerrillas and Viet Cong platoons, but if the enemy massed his forces it was recognized that different tactics would be required.<sup>17</sup>

(C) The Chien Thang plan was implicitly based upon the assumption that the previous level of insurgency would continue. The corps pacification plans made no attempt to project future Viet Cong force levels, and pacification force requirements were consequently geared to the level of Viet Cong forces existing in early 1964.<sup>18</sup> The United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, considered that the Viet Cong were in the process of a gradual build-up and would continue to press guerrilla warfare.<sup>19</sup> The Viet Cong force build-up and initiation of

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<sup>17</sup> Area Saturation Operations, passim.

<sup>18</sup> Hq., III Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ), Appendix A (Intelligence) to Chien Thang Pacification of III CTZ, 31 Mar 1964. (SECRET). This pacification plan was prepared in considerable detail, and was 217 pages in length. At the time, III Corps included 19 provinces north and south of Saigon, and was the top priority area for pacification. Its pacification plan was probably the most significant of those developed at the higher level.

<sup>19</sup> USMACV, J-2, VC Strategy and Tactics, Jun 1964, p. 18. This study is an intelligence estimate for the last six months of 1964. Its stated purpose was "to provide an intelligence basis for planning military operations against the Viet Cong in support of the Pacification

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mobile warfare during late 1964 represented a new stage of insurgency, which the Chien Thang plan neither anticipated nor made provision for.<sup>20</sup>

(C) Another implicit assumption of the Chien Thang plan was that as pacification progressed sufficient local forces could be recruited to assume the security mission. This would enable the regular forces holding the pacification area either to widen the area or assume some other operational mission. The key to expanded pacification lay in active recruitment, manpower mobilization, and national service. As will be shown, one of the greatest failures of the Chien Thang plan lay in this field.

Basic Concepts of the Chien Thang Plan.

(C) The basic concept of the Chien Thang plan was that of

Plan." The estimate refers to the "gradual increase" in Viet Cong forces since early 1963, and makes a surprisingly good estimate of Viet Cong force goals, placing the main force and local force goals at between 58,500 and 83,000. (See Appendix 2 to Chapter IV.) However, it concludes that "it is not likely that their (VC) force goals can be reached in this period" (July-December 1964). Citing "recently acquired evidence," the study considers that Hanoi's fear of increased U.S. involvement will produce "a more cautious attitude toward prosecution of the insurgency campaign." It is also stated that: "although their (VC) strategic doctrine holds that all guerrilla wars must ultimately progress to mobile warfare and the counteroffensive stage, there is some reason to believe that they have reservations as to the complete applicability of the doctrine . . . to the situation in South Vietnam today." The conclusion is that "the military campaign will not regress into the background, but will continue at or slightly above its present level of activity. . . . Specific [tactics] will emphasize continued guerrilla warfare as the principle form of military activity with occasional use of main force units in battalion or larger strength. . . . The VC probably will (1) Continue to expand their military and paramilitary organization . . . (5) Intensify and increase their guerrilla type activities in essentially the same pattern as currently conducted." (Emphasis supplied.) Ibid., pp. 5, 7, 17.

<sup>20</sup>This statement is not intended as a criticism. All military plans are revised as evidence becomes available that the assumptions underlying them are no longer valid. The intent is to point out that since the assumption of the Chien Thang plan was that the existing (early 1964) level of insurgency would continue, this assumption was invalidated by the Viet Cong strategy and force build-up described in Chapters III and IV.

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expanding Government population control from secure areas to surrounding insecure areas, known as the "spreading oil spot." In the words of the plan itself:

"At first, the secure, populous areas in which the economy is prosperous must be consolidated to serve as springboards to pacify the areas which are insecure, sparsely populated and have poor economy. Security must be restored in one area prior to going to another."<sup>21</sup>

Implicit in this concept was the notion that successful pacification of the more densely populated areas would increasingly isolate the Viet Cong from the population and resources of the country, and cause their withdrawal to remote areas where they could be attacked and destroyed.<sup>22</sup>

(C) The concept of undertaking civil-military operations to regain control of the population living in insecure and Viet-Cong dominated areas was a key idea, for it oriented the pacification effort on the people as well as on the Viet Cong. This is indicated, for example, by the "Mission" paragraph of the III Corps pacification plan, which states:

Within the framework of the 'Chien Thang' Plan, III CTZ and III Corps HQs conduct a territorial pacification campaign aimed at destroying all VC agencies which are harassing rural areas, and replacing the present local authorities with strong local authorities qualified to restore order and secure the people's active support.<sup>23</sup>

In accordance with this concept, military resources would henceforth be utilized to create a climate of security in which civil agencies could accomplish the constructive tasks of winning popular support and restoring Government authority. This involved a decisive shift in emphasis from the previous employment of regular forces primarily for operations

<sup>21</sup> Annex E (Technique of Pacification Operations), p. 2-E.

<sup>22</sup> Chien Thang Pacification Plan of III CTZ, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

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against Viet Cong units and destruction of Viet Cong bases.<sup>24</sup>

(C) The process of pacification under the Chien Thang plan was conceived as developed through three phases. First, the regular military forces of the Government would operate on the periphery of the oil spots, clearing the area of organized Viet Cong resistance and screening the secure area from intrusions by Viet Cong main and local forces. This was the clearing phase. The regular forces would then be followed up by paramilitary forces which would secure the cleared areas and permit the operation of Government agencies. This was the securing phase. Once the Viet Cong infrastructure was eliminated, and a local administration responsive to the Government restored, the pace of economic and social development could be accelerated. Cadres representing Government agencies concerned with agricultural improvement, public health services, education, and the entire process of community development would operate in the area, bringing tangible benefits to the population and restoring the prestige of the Government. This was the development phase.<sup>25</sup>

(C) These were the phases of pacification envisioned in the Chien Thang plan.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the pacification phase, the plan

<sup>24</sup>USMACV, National Campaign Plan Briefing, 1963 (CONFIDENTIAL); and J-3 Background Briefing, May 1964.

<sup>25</sup>J-3 Background Briefing, May 1964. "The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures," March 1965.

<sup>26</sup>The actual phasing of pacification in the Chien Thang plan was as follows:

Preparation phase

Security Restoration phase

Military Mopping Up period (Clearing)

Real Pacification period (Securing)

New Life Development phase (Development)

During the preparation phase resources were to be mobilized, surveys made of the population control status, situation of friendly forces, enemy situation, and pacification plans drawn up at each headquarters. Annex E (Technique of Pacification Operations), p. 1.

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included a subsequent phase called "Annihilation of the VC" phase. This was in keeping with the concept that once pacification had succeeded in depriving the Viet Cong of their base of popular support, it would be possible to launch final, annihilating operations against them in the remote areas to which they were expected to withdraw.<sup>27</sup> The concept of operations portion of the III Corps pacification plan described the "annihilation of the VC" phase of the following manner:

2nd phase: After having transferred pacified areas to local forces . . . for security purposes, the regular forces will conduct operations to destroy the VC forces which have been forced into their combat zones or secret zones in order to bring back victories throughout the territory of III CTZ.<sup>28</sup>

It should be noted that placing the "annihilation of the VC" phase after the pacification phase served to emphasize the priority given to the employment of military forces for population control, rather than for operations directed against the Viet Cong in their base areas.

(C) The vehicle for exerting effective Government control, and for accomplishing the objectives of pacification, was the New Life Hamlet program.<sup>29</sup> The applicability of the concept of creating secure and

<sup>27</sup>The Viet Cong had several bases in the relatively inaccessible areas of South Vietnam, such as U Minh Forest, Plain of Reeds, War Zones C and D, Do Xa, and so forth. Besides these major areas, several minor base areas existed. For a list, see Annex I (Viet Cong Bases) to Appendix A (Intelligence) to Chien Thang Pacification Plan of III CTZ. See also Map 1, Appendix 1 to Chapter III.

<sup>28</sup>Chien Thang Pacification Plan of III CTZ, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup>The New Life Hamlet program was originally promulgated as Annex I to the Chien Thang Plan (CONFIDENTIAL), 22 Feb 1964. However, this document was objected to by USMACV, which stated that "this Annex is not consonant with the basic plan and techniques for pacification, representing regression to Diem regime approaches." Military Report, 22-28 Mar 1964, p. 4. The Annex lacked a set of criteria for pacified hamlets, and it also provided that obstacles for hamlet defense need not be installed "in the area where the people's morale is high, such as an area influenced by religion (Catholic, Buddhist, Caodaism, Hoa Hao)." The GVN subsequently issued a new document, Directive 0660, 5 April 1964, Subject: "Comment on New Life Hamlets." This remained the basic document on the New Life Hamlet program during the period 1964-early 1965.

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viable hamlet communities in the rural areas was reaffirmed by the Chien Thang plan, but lessons learned from experience with the former Strategic Hamlets were to be taken into account in implementing the New Life Hamlet program. According to the official Government of Vietnam directive promulgating the program, its motto was to be: "Attach more importance to quality than to quantity."<sup>30</sup> It also differed from the former strategic hamlet program by emphasizing respect for regional differences, the necessity for giving the people a real voice in local government, avoidance of relocation and excessive tax collections, and the necessity for advance planning before people were relocated or refugees resettled.<sup>31</sup>

(C) The New Life Hamlet program aimed at the elimination of Viet Cong population control, and the re-establishment of Government authority. Its objectives were said to be to:

/ Detach the people enemy influence;  
Destroy the enemy infrastructures;  
Build up our infrastructures to restore security and develop a new life for the people.<sup>32</sup>

(C) New Life Hamlets were to be built according to the spreading oil stain principle, starting with the consolidation of hamlets in secure areas before embarking upon the construction of hamlets in insecure areas.

<sup>30</sup> GVN Directive 0660, p. 2. After criticizing the execution of the former strategic hamlet program, the document goes on to state: However, separate consideration of each area shows that in some cases the strategic hamlet construction program has brought about satisfactory results as regards: restoration of security, construction of country infrastructures, application of freedom and democracy in the hamlets. Therefore, theoretically, the objective of the strategic hamlet construction program is somewhat efficient and suitable to the actual situation of our country. Everyone agrees that the people are the basic factor needed to win over the Communists. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> USMACV, J-3, Memorandum, Subject: "Definitions and Criteria Pertaining to Hamlets," 12 May 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>32</sup> GVN Directive 0060, p. 5.

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The New Life Hamlet directive stated that:

At the abandoned New Life Hamlets, new life development phases will not be carried out because they have not enough of the security conditions required to promote economic, cultural, and social development.

In the areas still under VC influence, we will not immediately activate New Life Hamlets, but will conduct military activities. New Life Hamlets will be built in these areas only when we have the inhabitants' sympathy and when the areas are within our support capabilities.<sup>33</sup>

Regarding the New Life Hamlets to be activated, according to the program planned, reinforcement of existing hamlets is required prior to progressive construction of other hamlets, as prescribed by the above-mentioned 'spreading oil stain' method to prevent construction of an excessively large number of New Life Hamlets without solid foundations.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the New Life Hamlet program was tailored to the availability of forces to provide security.

(C) Six criteria were prescribed for hamlets to meet before they would be considered "pacified." These criteria served as outlines of the tasks to be accomplished during pacification, and as standards to be met before pacification could be considered complete. They also provided an objective standard for measuring population control.<sup>35</sup> Population in hamlets which met the six criteria were considered to be under Government control; population in hamlets which only partially met the criteria were under a lesser degree of Government control. The six criteria had to be known by all concerned with pacification. They were

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 6. Emphasis supplied.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>35</sup>As will be made clear, reports of population control were prepared for each province. The population in pacified hamlets (all six criteria met), in hamlets undergoing pacification (some of the criteria met), in areas "under general military control," and in VC areas was estimated. See USMACV Directive 335-10, Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Population and Area Control, 15 July 1964. See Chapter VI for a detailed discussion.

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of vital importance in the Chien Thang plan.

(C) The six criteria for a pacified<sup>36</sup> New Life Hamlet were stated as follows:

- 1 (1) The hamlet residents have been screened and existing VC infrastructure discovered and eliminated.
- (2) Hamlet Combat Youth have been selected, trained and armed.
- (3) An obstacle system, as well as other fortifications, has been established for defense against VC guerrillas.
- (4) A system for communication and for requesting reinforcement has been set up.
- (5) Hamlet inhabitants have been organized into age-groups and assigned specific tasks for hamlet security and for new life improvement activities.
- (6) A hamlet committee has been elected by secret ballot in accordance with a democratic spirit. (Montagnard hamlets may waive this requirement if a committee has been appointed in lieu of the elected committee.)<sup>37</sup> n

(C) The criteria seem quite explicit, yet they were subject to differences of interpretation in practice. For example, what constituted an adequate "obstacle system" for defense of the hamlet? Additional guidance concerning the interpretation and application of the criteria had, therefore, to be promulgated.

(C) The guidance for New Life Hamlets called for the activation of "people's organizations" as the basis for a new Government infrastructure.<sup>38</sup> Foremost among these organizations was the Combat Youth, which consisted of all young men from the age of 20 to 45. From among the

<sup>36</sup> USMACV, Military Report, 2-9 May 1964, p. 35. This source uses the term "constructed" hamlet, the former term being "completed" hamlet. Later, the term was changed to "pacified" hamlet. (See USMACV and USOM, Criteria to Evaluate New Life Hamlets, Joint Directive Number 2-64, 8 Oct 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).)

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> GVN Directive 0660, p. 7.

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ranks of the Combat Youth, a number of the most qualified were armed with weapons for combat duties in defense of the hamlet, and hence called "armed Combat Youth." Their mission was "to proelude the separate infiltration of VC elements and units from the level of squad downwards, and assist the local authorities in eliminating under-cover communist agents and hostile guerrilla cells operating within the hamlets."<sup>39</sup>

(C) The Combat Youth were intended to be part of the national paramilitary structure that would assume the mission of local security and enable the regular forces to operate in a mobile role. The New Life Hamlet directive said:

"Our national defense policy is designed to build a guerrilla infrastructure, in which the combat youths of the New Life Hamlets are the backbone. . . .

When such a powerful infrastructure is established, the Regular forces will not be held back in the countryside and therefore will be restored to their primary and unique mission of a National main force . . .<sup>40</sup>

Thus, the Combat Youth were required to permit relief of the regular forces from an initial security role.

(C) The guidance on New Life Hamlet construction also contained the concept of making the New Life Hamlets islands of prosperity that would attract new inhabitants and consequently increase Government population control. It was stated that:

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 13. The Government was later to give up the Combat Youth program. A possible reason is suggested by the following excerpt: Although at present the Government is making a particular effort to provide the armed Combat Youths a living expense allowance, it is important to realize that in the current plight . . . the civil population in hamlets are duty-bound to provide the armed Combat Youths with the fullest assistance (both spiritual and material) to enable this force to survive and develop fully and to provide security and order for the hamlets. Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13.

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When the population refuses to move in spite of our explanations, . . . we should not force them, but give them a free choice.

- a) Either they live in New Life Hamlets where they will have all the security guarantees and all the advantages of the New Life Hamlet construction Program,
- b) Or they live outside New Life Hamlets, and they will not profit from the advantages of the New Life Hamlet Construction Program . . .

Meanwhile, we will endeavor to develop New Life Hamlets in every aspect so that they may realize the advantages that the People may enjoy and therefore, request the authorization to move into New Life Hamlets, of their own accord.<sup>41</sup>

(c) Later during 1964 additional guidance on the application of the six criteria was promulgated, and some of the six criteria themselves modified. Criterion 1 was changed to read: "Census of hamlet residents taken and VC infrastructure sought out and destroyed to the extent discovered."<sup>42</sup> Because of the covert nature of the Viet Cong infrastructure, the application of this criterion was a thorny problem. Guidance specified that "destroyed" meant "rendered ineffective" in opposing Government control, and that typical indicators of "ineffectiveness" were:

When the people voluntarily provide effective intelligence to GVN  
...

When the great majority of the people refuse to provide economic aid to the VC infrastructure.

When it has been demonstrated that the police and other civil authorities can identify . . . control, and arrest, if necessary, the VC infrastructure without Non-regular police assistance.

When the people in a hamlet, village, district headquarters of province capital accept and are responsive to the GVN.<sup>43</sup> 11

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>42</sup>Criteria to Evaluate New Life Hamlets, 8 Oct 1964, p. 1. The definition of "VC infrastructure" was "the overt and covert administrative, political and intelligence organization and network which have been established by VC to control and administer the areas they dominate or carry on their subversive programs in areas they do not control."

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-2.

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Since the Viet Cong infrastructure is best attacked by police work, meeting this criterion required a rural complement of National Police. In fact, the police function was assigned to village and hamlet paramilitary forces until civilian police could be made available.<sup>44</sup>

(c) In addition to the change in Criterion 1, Criterion 2 was changed to read: "Adequate numbers of village and hamlet paramilitary forces selected, trained and equipped to perform their assigned mission."<sup>45</sup> The Combat Youth were dropped in favor of the concept of a Civil Defense, which was to be a civilian organization, generally unarmed, consisting of all hamlet residents not in the armed forces. The Civil Defense would patrol and mount guard within the hamlet, acquire intelligence, and cooperate with the full-time armed paramilitary forces in the vicinity. As of February, 1965, the Civil Defense existed only on paper and had not been established in the rural areas.<sup>46</sup> Of the armed Combat Youth, approximately 65,000 were incorporated into a full-time, paid paramilitary force (the Popular Force). The remainder, said the High Command, "are now operating inconsistently and do not enjoy the support of the Central or Regional authorities or the people."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> RVN, High Command, Directive AB 139, 25 Dec 1964, Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces), p. 5 and Appendix 2 (PF and Civil Defense Force), p. 3. (CONFIDENTIAL). This High Command directive prescribed missions in accordance with the Chien Thang plan for 1965, and gave considerable attention to the subject of RVNAF roles and missions generally. The US Mission also had a strong interest in proper definition of force roles and missions, and contributed to the drafting of the statements contained in Directive AB 139. The mission statements were finalized at that time, except for Civil Defense "which is still under study." USMACV, Memorandum, Subject: "RVNAF Counterinsurgency Roles and Mission," 4 Feb 1965. This memorandum gave wide distribution to Annex E, noting that it was "extremely important."

<sup>47</sup>Directive AB 139, Annex E, Appendix 2, p. 3.

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(C) Criterion 6 was changed to read: "Hamlet Committee has been elected or appointed in accordance with current GVN decrees or laws."<sup>48</sup> No explanation for this change is available to the author. The other criteria remained unchanged.

(U) It was accepted as axiomatic that the effort leading to the achievement of a pacified status, in terms of the six pacification criteria, called for an integrated civil-military undertaking. The joint civil-military character of pacification was its most distinctive characteristic, and the level of sophistication achieved in civil-military coordination wrote a new chapter in the histories of the military and administrative arts.<sup>49</sup> While there were frequent breakdowns in the application of this concept,<sup>50</sup> these reflected the difficulties inherent in the coordinated deployment of civilian and military resources on a large scale in an underdeveloped country.

(C) The United States Mission Council in South Vietnam described the relationship of civilian and military actions in pacification as follows:

This effort aims at the provision of physical security against VC guerrilla activities in these areas [i.e., rural areas] through the coordinated use of military force and police, and, through action on the socio/economic/political front beginning at the household and family level and extending up through the village and district, the arming (in the classical sense) and motivation of the population to resist Viet Cong encroachment and domination, to aid GVN forces in combatting such encroachment, and to present a hostile environment against the Viet Cong subversive effort--all of this beginning at the lowest levels of households, populated places, villages

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<sup>48</sup> Criteria to Evaluate New Life Hamlets, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> The high point of civil-military coordination was achieved in the planning and execution of the Hop Tac plan for the pacification of provinces in the Saigon area. This plan is discussed below.

<sup>50</sup> For examples, see USOM, Reports From USOM Provincial Representatives, 28 Feb and 31 Mar 1965.

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and on up to districts and provinces.<sup>51</sup>

(U) It follows from this concept that a purely military pacification operation did not exist. The two principal types of pacification operations in which military forces played a major role--clearing and securing operations--were, fundamentally, civil-military operations in which the military contributed to the attainment of the over-all goal.<sup>52</sup> That goal was essentially political: it encompassed nothing less than the restoration of Government authority over the entire rural population of South Vietnam.<sup>53</sup>

(C) A pacification clearing operation was an integrated civil-military effort to take physical possession of an area--and the population and resources contained therein--that was not formerly under Government control. The United States Mission Council defined the term "clearing" as follows:

// Activities occurring in a well defined zone of the contested area directed at destroying or driving off organized VC military forces and reducing the effectiveness of the VC political-military

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<sup>51</sup>United States Mission Council, Joint Mission Directive, The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures, 1 Feb 1965, pp. 1-2. (CONFIDENTIAL). While prepared rather late during the first year of the Chien Thang plan, this document gives every evidence of being distillation of the accumulated experience under the plan to the date of publication. It also elaborated upon the basic concepts, such as clearing and securing which had to be worked out in detail in the field. Consequently, the document should be read not only as an "ideal type" for future operations, but as a statement of the direction in which pacification was heading since 1 April 1964, as concepts were refined and sharpened by trial and error in the field. Since this was a coordinated position paper of USOM, USIS, and MACV, approved by the Mission Council presided over by the U.S. Ambassador, it no doubt received careful consideration. For an earlier statement of pacification concepts see USMACV, Directive Nr. 320-1, Definitions of Commonly used Terms for Pacification and Associated Military Operations Conducted Under the Chien Thang Plan of South Vietnam, 29 June 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). Vietnamese Sources are: Annex E (Technique of Pacification Operations) to the Chien Thang Plan, 22 Feb 1964; and High Command Directive AB 139, 12 Nov 1964. (SECRET).

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., passim.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

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apparatus. The purpose is to relieve pressure on nearby pacified areas or areas where securing is taking place or, through military, psychological, intelligence and civic actions, to prepare or soften the area for later securing operations when favorable conditions develop.<sup>54</sup>

(C) The concept for the employment of military forces in clearing operations was described as follows:

Military operations . . . will be undertaken to destroy or drive off organized VC forces. Units will systematically search out the entire zone to be cleared, destroying VC elements contacted. Primary emphasis will be on small unit activity to saturate the area over an extended period of time using day and night patrols, raids, hamlet searches, ambushes, etc. Larger unit operations may be required to exploit intelligence gathered.

.....

Fundamental to the clearing process is the prolonged saturation of a particular area. However, if the security of the area can be improved by short, sharp operations outside the clearing zone against known and located VC units, clearing forces should be so employed from time to time. The duration of such forays should be short (not more than two or three days) so that the clearing unit can return to its primary mission before the VC can react to its absence.<sup>55</sup>

As this concept makes clear, clearing forces were supposed to remain in the clearing zone on the periphery of the oilspot except for short absences. The area of influence<sup>56</sup> of such forces was, therefore, normally restricted to the general area of the oilspot and its periphery. Within this area, clearing forces were mobile, that is, they could exploit their capacity to move by means of organic and non-organic means

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>56</sup>For purposes of this paper, "area of influence" is defined as the geographical area within which a military force can be committed, within a specified time, by virtue of its mission and its physical means of mobility. For example, a general reserve battalion, with transport aircraft for movement, has an area of influence extending over the entire country. A battalion of the 21st Division, which was not committed to a pacification mission, had an area of influence which consisted of the entire 21st Division tactical area. As explained in the text, a battalion committed to pacification normally had an area of influence which extended to the outer limit of the clearing zone of its assigned oilspot. Except for short periods, this area could not be extended out to the limit of the means of physical mobility (i.e., helicopters) of the battalion, for then it could not properly accomplish its pacification mission.

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of transportation to operate anywhere in the area. On the other hand, such forces were relatively immobile with respect to (1) reinforcement of other oilspots, and (2) strikes into Viet Cong-controlled areas. Even though they possessed a high degree of mobility in the physical sense, their mission required them to remain in the general vicinity of the assigned oilspot most of the time. Consequently, such forces were relatively immobile with respect to employment outside of their assigned oilspot, and their area of influence was correspondingly reduced.

(C) The following civil-military activities were also to be carried out during clearing operations:

Surveys will be conducted in hamlets by trained teams, normally composed of civilian cadre working under the protection of clearing forces, to determine people's attitudes and grievances and to assess the hamlets' susceptibility to the next phase of pacification.

Police will assist and support military clearing operations, particularly through their intelligence and population/resources control activities.

Because of its importance, intelligence will receive special emphasis. Trained police interrogators and investigators, conspicuously identified as police, should accompany the clearing unit to question hamlet members designated by survey teams, suspects and prisoners to develop intelligence of the VC structure. Intelligence activities will be carried out in close coordination with local authorities who will be seeking to establish intelligence nets or to strengthen existing nets and to develop informants and sources of information in the hamlets throughout the area.

Psychological operations will be directed at VC elements and at all of the uncommitted people in the zone. Against the active VC, the objective is to demoralize and confuse him and show him that his cause is hopeless. However, the prime objective during clearing is to dissuade the population from supporting the VC. To this end, disciplined, well-behaved military sources showing friendly interest in the people and respecting their rights and properties provide the principal psychological tool. Psywar teams can assist, particularly in face-to-face persuasion and in distribution of printed matter.

Simple Military Civic Action such as immediate assistance to injured and bereaved individuals, temporary repairs to damaged structures, drainage of unproductive surface water, minor repairs to roads and bridges, transportation and distribution of relief supplies, improvement of area sanitation, and similar projects calculated to dispose the inhabitants favorably toward the military forces and foster

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collaborating in intelligence gathering, will be undertaken by clearing forces as operations permit. Military Civil Action Teams accompanying the clearing forces will assist in identifying remunerative projects and will reinforce civic action capabilities of the clearing troops.<sup>57</sup>

(C) A pacification securing operation was an integrated civil-military effort to restore Government authority by the re-establishment of effective public administration in an area. The hallmark of a "securing" area, or area "undergoing pacification," was that a concerted effort was made to displace the Viet Cong apparatus of population control and establish a Government apparatus in its place. Once Government cadre had been introduced into an area to re-establish the structure of local government, the clearing operations ended and the securing operation began.<sup>58</sup>

(C) The Joint Mission Directive defined the term "securing" as follows:

Activities of a civil-military-police nature conducted in a cleared area for the purpose of permanently expanding the government zone of control. The objective is to render the VC political-military structure ineffective, provide security against VC encroachment, and establish effective, responsive village and district government.<sup>59</sup>

(C) The concept for employment of military forces in securing operations was described as follows:

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<sup>57</sup>The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-5. USMACV, Directive 335-10, Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Population and Area Control, 15 July 1964, Inclosure 2. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 4. The prototype of a securing operation (and of a clearing operations as well) was the clear-and-hold operation that was conducted in connection with the strategic hamlet program during 1963. See US Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam, Tactics and Techniques of Counterinsurgent Operations, 1 July 1963, *passim*. (CONFIDENTIAL); and U.S. Army Section, U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam, Lessons Learned Number 35: Clear and Hold Operations, 10 Jan 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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Integrated security operations by paramilitary forces and police, will be undertaken to provide day and night security to hamlets and villages undergoing pacification. Primary emphasis will be on small unit activity to cover the area with patrols, ambushes, checkpoints, lookouts, etc. If reentry of VC military elements into the area is detected, prompt action will be taken, in conjunction with necessary reinforcement . . . to eliminate or to expel the VC forces. ARVN should normally not be tied down in securing operations.<sup>60</sup>

This concept explicitly recognized that securing was the primary responsibility of paramilitary forces and police, and that the securing mission was not the best employment of regular army units. The last sentence of the quotation is especially significant. It summed up the lessons of a year during which substantial regular forces were committed to securing missions,<sup>61</sup> or became so engaged because sufficient paramilitary forces were not raised to take over the job of territorial security after clearing and securing had begun.<sup>62</sup>

(U) The success of the securing phase of pacification was dependent in large measure upon the success of the Government effort to re-establish an effective system of population control. To accomplish this task, the Chien Thang plan relied upon two basic types of civilian cadre: locally-recruited mobile action cadre and specialized cadre recruited and trained at the national level. The mobile action cadre were formed to provide leadership at the hamlet level in achieving the six

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>61</sup>This fact is developed statistically in Chapter VI.

<sup>62</sup>According to the concept of pacification, the clearing forces were to clear an area and secure it for the introduction of Government cadre and the restoration of an administrative apparatus in the villages and hamlets. Since this apparatus was a prime target of the Viet Cong, forces were required to remain in the securing area for its protection. Consequently, unless paramilitary forces became available to perform the territorial security mission, the existing forces could not be employed to expand outward to clear additional areas. Such forces were relatively immobilized in the securing area. The extent of the paramilitary strength problem is developed quantitatively in Chapter VI.

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pacification criteria, and to establish an administrative structure from district to village and hamlets. The specialized cadre consisted of persons trained in such fields as health, agriculture, animal husbandry, and administration; their purpose was to provide specialized assistance to the mobile action cadre and to help implement government programs.<sup>63</sup> In this paper, the mobile action cadre will be referred to as pacification cadre, and all cadres will be referred to collectively as Government cadre.

(U) The mobile action cadre were so called because their pacification task was considered accomplished once the hamlet to which they were assigned met the six pacification criteria. The length of time for this process was estimated to be from one to three months.<sup>64</sup> Thereafter, the cadre could be deployed to another hamlet and pacification continued.

(U) The concept for the employment of mobile action cadre was expressed as follows:

Recruiting of mobile action cadre from local areas, and their training, is commenced as soon as possible in order that sufficient numbers of high quality personnel are available to do their part in getting the securing phase underway. A typical 5-man mobile action cadre might be organized as follows:

Team Leader Command, supervision, liaison.  
Asst Team Leader Information, propaganda, education, defense.  
Security Cadreman Population control, census, intelligence, police matters.  
Social-Economic Cadreman Agriculture, health, hamlet organization,

<sup>63</sup>USMACV, Pacification Tasks (Spread Sheet), Aug 1964. This reference is a single large sheet in which the pacification phases and the tasks to be accomplished therein, together with the concept of employment of the forces and agencies deployed to accomplish the tasks, are outlined and summarized. It was published for the ready reference and guidance of U.S. advisors.

<sup>64</sup>GVN, Ministry of Defense, Central Pacification Committee, Official Letter, 23 Jun 1964, Subject: "Pacification Cadres in Charge of Organizing New Life Hamlets," p. 8.

Defense Cadreman youth activities, self-help.<sup>65</sup>  
Defense organization & training. Defense con-  
struction.

High quality mobile action cadre are the key to the commencement of the New Life program. Principles observed regarding these cadre are:

1. They are recruited locally.
2. They are trained within the province.
3. They live in the hamlets where they work.
4. They provide physical labor and initiative which sparks the physical construction of the hamlets by the people.
5. They temporarily assume hamlet administrative responsibilities until permanent officials are appointed or elected, and provide the link between the people and the special cadre of the public services in identifying and providing for the needs of the people.

Mobile action cadre have a definite intelligence mission. They cannot be successful in a hamlet until they have succeeded in eliminating the enemy agents. In their daily contacts with the people they should constantly be seeking information and should do so in complete co-operation with more professional police efforts.

Mobile action cadre assist in recruiting paramilitary forces by identifying and proselytizing likely candidates.

Depending on the particular needs of each hamlet, assistance may be provided through the following programs:

1. Rice seed
2. Fertilizer
3. Pig/corn
4. Poultry
5. Swine-breeding
6. NACO loans<sup>66</sup>
7. Irrigation
8. Land reform

Mobile action cadre in the hamlets identify the needs of the people & with the assistance of the special cadre (agriculture & animal husbandry) at the province and/or district level, make available necessary assistance through resources provided under the above programs. . . .

<sup>65</sup>The term "self-help" refers to the self-help program, a USOM-supported program for hamlet improvement consisting of projects suggested by the inhabitants and toward which they contribute local labor.

<sup>66</sup>NACO stands for the National Agricultural Credit Organization, a government agency providing low-interest agricultural credit to farmers.

It is envisioned that as the securing phase progresses in a village or hamlet the responsibilities of mobile action cadre who carry the burden of work initially, will be phased out as the village and hamlet officials are appointed or elected, and become able to perform their normal functions.<sup>67</sup>

(U) From the foregoing, it is clear that mobile action cadre were called upon to play a large and vital role in pacification. Much depended upon the strength and effectiveness of the administrative structure for which they laid the groundwork.<sup>68</sup> Yet, from the beginning, the weakness of the mobile action cadre was recognized as one of the major problems in implementing the Chien Thang plan.

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<sup>67</sup> USMACV, Pacification Tasks, passim.

<sup>68</sup> The mobile action cadre were not the only component of this administrative structure. There was a program for training village and hamlet chiefs at the national level, and Village Administrative Committees were ultimately to take over public administration from the mobile cadre. A diagram of the village administrative structure which the Government sought to install is contained in Appendix 1. This structure is, in effect, the Government's basic apparatus for population control. It was taken from Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces) to Directive AB 139, 25 Dec 1964. In addition to mobile action cadre, a corps of mobile administrative cadre who were more directly concerned with the establishment of village administration, was organized by the Department of the Interior. See USOM, PAD, Translation of Government Decree of 1 July 1964 on Mobile Administrative Cadre, 7 July 1964. In addition, there was a host of specialized and technical cadre concerned with the programs of the various ministries. At province and district level, these cadres worked through the appropriate specialized section (e.g., Public Health, Agriculture, Public Education) of the province or district staff. USMACV, Pacification Tasks, passim. Twenty-seven types of provincial cadres were listed in the Central Pacification Committee's guidance on preparation of the 1965 pacification plans. RVN, Central Pacification Committee, Permanent Bureau, Letter 21 Oct 1964, Subject: "Preparation of Pacification and Development Plans for 1965." (SECRET). It must not be forgotten, however, that while village and hamlet chiefs and various government cadres could be recruited in the secure areas, the mobile action cadre and mobile administrative cadre carried the burden of re-establishing Government control in the insecure areas. For additional information on mobile action cadres, see Annex E (Technique of Pacification Operations) to the Chien Thang Plan, p. 3-E. USOM, PAD, Proposed Instructions Mobile Action Cadre, 23 May 1964. A basic reference on Mobile Action Cadre and Mobile Administrative Cadre is Central Pacification Committee letter, Subject: "Pacification Cadres in Charge of Organizing New Life Hamlets," 23 Jun 1964.

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(U) On 23 June 1964, the Minister of Defense in the Government of Vietnam wrote:

The Pacification Program was initiated in local areas a few months ago. The results have not been entirely satisfactory because the recruitment, training and use of Pacification cadres in the organization of New Life Hamlets are not meeting the prescribed objectives. In addition the cadres do not fully understand the importance of the work to which they have been assigned.<sup>69</sup>

(U) Toward the close of the first year of the Chien Thang plan, several provinces cited continuing problems with the mobile action cadre:

LONG AN:

Mobile cadre continue to operate but their effectiveness is considered only marginal. Perhaps a great deal of supervision of these individuals would improve their efficiency to some degree. Of the 154 mobile action cadre in Long An province, fully half of them will be conscripted into the military service during the current calendar year. During the last weekend of the reporting period, two teams which had been working in Hanh Duc district failed to return to the places where they had been working the following sic weekend. The status of these individuals is still not known.<sup>70</sup>

VINH LONG:

The province has begun to check into the cadre situation and has discovered many interesting things. It appears some cadre have been working in offices and for other services and have actually been quite 'immobile.' Others are seen on payday. It is hoped that from this survey an evaluation system will be set up to 'select out' ineffective members and to recruit new members to fill the slots.<sup>71</sup>

DARLAC:

The mobile action cadre remain ineffective due to low quality of personnel, poor pay, inadequate training, and poor supervision. The district chiefs claim they do not have time to supervise the program. The prov rep feels that for this program to work it may be better to reduce the number of people and train them better.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Central Pacification Committee, Letter 23 Jun 1964, Subject: "Pacification Cadres in Charge of Organizing New Life Hamlets."

<sup>70</sup>USOM, Reports for USOM Provincial Representatives, 31 Mar 1965.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>USOM, Reports for USOM Provincial Representatives, 28 Feb 1965.

## LAM DONG:

Mobile action cadre teams were active in nine hamlets during the month. The effectiveness of these teams ranges from good to poor. Primary weakness is lack of leadership by and motivation of the team leaders.<sup>73</sup>

## LONG KHANH:

There has been a number of instances in which it was found that the Mobile Action Cadre were not making any effort to do their jobs. The province chief sent a memorandum to the District Chiefs urging them to better control their cadre and to recommend dismissal for those who did not perform satisfactorily.<sup>74</sup>

## PHUOC TUY:

The Mobile Action Cadre have not improved in the past month and 2 were fired because of lack of effort.<sup>75</sup>

(U) In addition, there were also reports of cadre being drafted, and that the morale of the cadre was adversely effected by their being subject to the draft.<sup>76</sup> It is difficult to imagine the Viet Cong making a similar mistake in their manpower policy.

(U) It may very well be that until an underdeveloped country like South Vietnam can afford to invest a year or longer in the training of its cadres in hamlet defense, rural reconstruction, and administration, it will be extremely difficult to establish an effective apparatus of population control in the rural areas. While the full story of the mobile cadre has not been written, there is good reason to believe that their intended role in pacification was not matched by their performance.<sup>77</sup>

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73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid., passim.

77 The inability to obtain the cadres required to make the concept of pacification work may very well be endemic to an underdeveloped country. In early 1965, according to data furnished the author by the Permanent Bureau of the Central Pacification Committee, there were only 6,494 mobile action cadres in all of South Vietnam. This number may have been adequate, considering the limited means for providing security for the cadre. However, as pacification progresses, there is an increased requirement for cadre to staff the village and hamlet administrative

To the extent that this was true, a serious question is raised about the advisability of undertaking securing operations with military forces when the object of such operations is vitiated to some extent by the lack of trained, effective Government cadre.

(U) Furthermore, to the extent that the recruitment of paramilitary forces is dependent upon marginally effective Government cadre, the securing operation may drag on indefinitely. It is imperative for the Government apparatus to be able to deliver the manpower. This is its prime task. As the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam has stated:

Recruiting and training these [paramilitary] forces to replace ARVN forces is absolutely mandatory and is the key to continued progress of pacification to other areas.<sup>78</sup>

(U) In addition to establishment of an administrative structure, and the recruitment of paramilitary forces, a population and resources control program was another important component of the securing phase of pacification. This program was part of the Government's over-all effort to dispute the manpower and material resources of an area with the Viet Cong. While taxation, conscription, and recruitment policies mobilized resources for Government use, population and resources control programs sought to deny the resources of the Government-controlled areas to the enemy.

(C) These programs were defined as follows:

II RESOURCES CONTROL: An effort to regulate the movement of selected resources, both human and material, in order to restrict the enemy

structure. This requirement must be programmed for, and taken into consideration in establishing manpower policies, if an organization to carry out Government programs is to be established in the rural areas. Some interested reader may wish to research this challenging problem further.

<sup>78</sup>USMACV, Pacification Tasks, passim. ↗

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support or deprive him of it altogether and to interrupt or destroy all non-military communication.

POPULATION CONTROL: The control of civil disturbances, riots and other massive activities on the part of the civil population.<sup>79</sup>

(U) The concepts of resource control stressed techniques for controlling movement. For example, four major resource control activities were outlined as follows:

Mobile and static checkpoints--To deny the enemy freedom of movement and the ability to transport supplies, static checkpoints will be established to block all major routes & mobile checkpoints will operate in areas which the enemy will use to avoid the static checkpoints.

Curfew--Uniform curfews imposed which prohibit movement during specified hours of darkness. Provisions will be made for emergency movement. Persons found moving during curfews outside hamlets will be fired on; those moving inside hamlets will be arrested and investigated.

Commodity controls--Movement of materials and supplies controlled by publication of a list of restricted (controlled) items which will then become subject to manifesting, purchase controls, inventories, limited stock levels & controlled movement.

Census and identification cards--All persons above the age of 18 will be issued individual identification cards & all persons will be registered in family census books. These systems will be used in determining the presence & movement of unauthorized individuals, & will provide the basis for determination of status at the checkpoints and during searches & investigations.<sup>80</sup>

A final resources control program consisted of searches and investigations to apprehend enemy cadres and persons engaged in illegal activity.<sup>81</sup>

(C) It should be noted that a major difference between the Viet Cong and Government approach to population control is the emphasis of the former on mass organizations, and the emphasis of the latter on techniques--checkpoints, curfews, and the like. Certainly, population and

<sup>79</sup>The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures, p. 9.

<sup>80</sup>USMACV, Pacification Tasks, passim.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

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resources control is much broader in scope than the regulation of movement and control of civil disturbances as defined by the Joint Mission Directive. So defined, population and resources control is only one facet--albeit an important one--of an over-all system of population control which includes manpower programs, preclusive purchasing of food-stuffs, and establishment of an administrative structure. The fact that a program entitled "population and resources control" exists should not mislead one to believe that this by itself comprises a sufficient effort in the broader field of population control.

Pacification Forces Roles and Missions.

(U) Pacification was viewed as encompassing "all civilian, military and police actions to eliminate organized VC military activity, detect and eliminate the overt and covert VC political apparatus and nurture economic, political and social development of a viable economy."<sup>82</sup> To accomplish these tasks, a coordinated effort of regular forces (ARVN), paramilitary forces, National Police, mobile action cadre, and various specialized cadres and teams (psywar, civil affairs, medical civic action, information, public services, and so on) was envisioned.<sup>83</sup> These agencies were assigned specific responsibilities during each phase of pacification, with the military and paramilitary role predominating in the early phases (clearing and securing), and the civilian role gradually assuming

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<sup>82</sup> The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures, p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> Pacification Tasks, *passim*. Specific responsibilities and techniques are spelled out in this document for each agency and each phase of pacification.

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greater importance toward the end of the securing phase.<sup>84</sup>

(U) Since the United States provided support, under its Military Assistance Program, to the Vietnamese military and paramilitary forces, joint agreement was necessary on the roles and missions to be carried out by these forces. In this way requirements could be determined, tables of organization and equipment drawn up, and funding provided for the resultant force structure.

(C) Paramilitary forces were a particular problem in this regard. For example, once it was decided that the Popular Force should be a village defense force, a basis of allocation in terms of the number of platoons per village could be established and a force structure developed. Obviously, if the Popular Force were to be a hamlet militia force the organization and equipment, basis of allocation, and force structure would be different. The determination of roles and missions was, therefore, basic to the determination of paramilitary force requirements.<sup>85</sup>

(U) Further, once roles and missions were agreed upon, the United States advisory effort could be directed toward insuring the proper employment of forces in accordance with the agreed concept. The determination of roles and missions not only established the basis of force structure planning; it also raised the practical question of the

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid. The role of civilian agencies, except as they relate to a military mission, is beyond the scope of this paper. This section will deal with the military and paramilitary forces and one civilian agency, the National Police.

<sup>85</sup>For the mission and basis of allocation of paramilitary forces to 25 Dec 1964, see Tactics and Techniques of Counterinsurgent Operations, pp. III M-1 to III M-4, and IV B-2. See also, Pacification Tasks, passim. For 25 Dec 1964, see Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces) to RVNAF High Command Directive AB 139, 25 Dec 1964. For the tables of organization of forces, see USMACV, Military Assistance Program Directorate, Organization Charts Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam, 15 Jun 1964 and 1 May 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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existing utilization of forces.

(C) Here again, the employment of paramilitary forces was a vexing problem. There were divergences of opinion between United States and Vietnamese authorities concerning whether existing paramilitary forces were being efficiently utilized. As an illustration, on 30 December 1964 the United States Sector<sup>86</sup> Advisor wrote to the Province Chief of Darlac Province:

Offensive operations in the Darlac Sector in the past few months have been limited in size and number and have met with little success. This is caused to a great extent by the fact that a large majority of the Regional Forces have been utilized in a static security role. In addition, the Popular Forces have not been employed in an offensive role, but have been utilized in the static defense of New Life Hamlets, which is the mission of the Hamlet Militia.<sup>87</sup>

Other examples of the inefficient utilization of paramilitary forces could be cited.<sup>88</sup>

(U) A sound paramilitary force structure was indispensable to the success of the Chien Thang plan. Recruiting, training, arming and equipping these forces had to begin at the earliest possible moment in the pacification sequence; else the expansion process would lose momentum and cease to put pressure against the Viet Cong. It was, therefore, essential that the issue of roles and missions be settled, so that

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<sup>86</sup>A Vietnamese province chief is also the commander of a military sector consisting of the territory of the province. The senior U.S. military advisor to the province chief is known as the sector advisor.

<sup>87</sup>Letter, Darlac Military Sector, Office of the U.S. Senior Advisor, Ban Me Thuot, Vietnam, 30 Dec 1964, Subject: "Offensive Operations," p. 1.

<sup>88</sup>USMACV, J-3, Sector Advisor's Monthly Evaluation, Nov 1964-April 1965. A report of inspection of Long An Province, made 5-9 April 1965, calls attention to "the 94 fixed posts which dot the landscape, 71 of them strictly static. Absorbing over 50% of the total PF force, many of these posts are virtually isolated, and the consensus of the advisors is that few of them contribute significantly to the defense of hamlets." USMACV, Hop Tac Secretariat, Report of Inspection, Long An Province, 26 Apr 1965, p. 6. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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requirements could be projected and funding provided to support the requisite level of paramilitary forces.

(C) Nevertheless, it was not until 25 December 1964 that agreement was reached on paramilitary force roles and missions. No doubt this was due in part to the political instability that existed during the last part of 1964. However, it was also due to unresolved issues concerning the roles and missions of paramilitary forces. As will be explained, these issues involved the Popular Force, Combat Youth, and Civil Defense.

(C) A memorandum transmitting the agreed paramilitary force roles and missions was published by the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, on 4 February 1965. This memorandum stated in part:

The purpose of this memorandum is to focus attention on the subject of RVNAF counterinsurgency roles and missions. As a result of recent joint GVN-US detailed discussions at the Internal Security Council-Mission Council level, final agreement has been reached on the subject, except for the matter of Civil Defense which is still under study. The agreed-upon mission statements, including the Civil Defense proposal, have been published to RVNAF . . .

In view of the divergent opinions which have existed on the subject in the past, it is now extremely important that the agreed mission statements be thoroughly understood by all concerned. Particular attention is directed to Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional and Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense, and National Police Forces) . . .

Now that force missions and employment doctrine have been promulgated, it is imperative that the advisory effort at all echelons be directed towards achieving mutual understanding of the proper employment of the various RVNAF forces.<sup>89</sup>

(C) The agreed mission statement contained in High Command Directive AB 139, which ordered the continuation of the Chien Thang plan in

<sup>89</sup> USMACV, Memorandum, Subject: "RVNAF Counterinsurgency Roles and Missions," 4 Feb 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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1965,<sup>90</sup> establish the concepts for the military support of pacification.

The following is the introduction to the mission statement:

1. The pacification of an area, according to the Chien Thang Plan, consists of two phases: The security restoration phase and the development phase.

The security-restoration phase is in turn divided into two sub-phases: the clearing sub-phase and the securing sub-phase.

2. During the clearing sub-phase, ARVN, with the assistance of the Regional Force, must destroy or drive off organized VC military forces from the area to be pacified, and then conduct operations to prevent them from returning to that area.

3. During the securing sub-phase as well as during the development phase, our units must:

a. Destroy VC infrastructure.

b. Provide public security and assist in maintaining law and order.

c. Protect our infrastructure.

d. Defend key installations and axes of communication within the pacification area.

At the beginning, these four missions are assumed primarily by the Regional Force, with the assistance of the existing Popular Force and National Police. The Regional Force will be progressively replaced by the Popular Force which will in turn be relieved by the National Police.

In case there is neither sufficient nor available regional forces, ARVN must perform the above missions until the Popular Force is organized and ready.

4. In addition to the pacification missions, ARVN also has the following responsibilities:

a. Harass VC secret bases and lines of communication.

b. Control national ground borders.

c. Protect strategic communication routes and key installations not within the pacification area. . . .

The last mission [c. above] is one of the Regional Force's primary

<sup>90</sup> RVNAF, High Command, Directive AB 139, Subject: "Mission of CTZ's, CMD, Air Force and Navy in 1965," 25 Dec 1964.

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missions. In the event there is no available Regional Force, then ARVN is to be used to assume this responsibility.<sup>91</sup>

(C) The missions of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), Regional Force, and Popular Force are stated as follows:

ARVN:

(1) Organization: ARVN is a regular force consisting of infantry, airborne, ranger and support units (plus any attached Marine units) which provides the primary means of destroying organized VC units.

(2) Mission:

(a) The four primary missions of ARVN are:

1. During the clearing sub-phase of an area, destroy or drive off organized VC military forces from the above area, then conduct operations to prevent them from returning to that area.

2. Harass VC secret bases and line of communication.

3. Control national ground borders.

4. Provide elements of the general reserve, of the corps reserve, of the division reserve, or sometimes of the sector and sub-sector reserve.

(b) In case there is no available Regional Force, ARVN performs two important secondary missions which are the two primary missions of the Regional Force:

1. From the beginning of the securing sub-phase of an area until it is replaced by the Popular Force or the National Police:

a. Destroy VC infrastructure.

b. Provide public security and assist in maintaining law and order.

c. Protect our infrastructure.

d. Defend key installations and protect axes of communication within the pacification area.

2. Protect lines of communication and defend key installations not located within the pacification area.

REGIONAL FORCE:

<sup>91</sup>"Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces) to RVNAF High Command Directive AB 139," pp. 1-2. Emphasis supplied.

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(1) The Regional Force is a national military force composed of rifle companies, river boat companies and support units. The Regional Force is organic to sectors and sub-sectors for pacification, defense and security.

(2) Missions:

(a) The Regional Force's three primary missions are:

1. From the beginning of the securing sub-phase of an area, until it is relieved by the Popular Force or the National Police:

a. Destroy VC infrastructure.

b. Provide public security and assist in maintaining law and order.

c. Protect own infrastructure.

d. Defend key installations and protect lines of communication within the pacification area.

2. Protect lines of communication and defend key installations not located within the pacification area.

3. Elements of sectors' and sub-sectors' reserve.

(b) The Regional Force performs two important secondary missions which are:

1. To help ARVN, during the securing sub-phase of an area, destroy or drive off organized VC military forces from the above area, then conduct operations to prevent them from returning to the above area.

2. To help ARVN harass VC secret bases and lines of communications.

POPULAR FORCE:

(1) Organization: The Popular Force is a national military force composed of rifle platoon and squads, that provides the village with organic troops for pacification, defense and security roles.

(2) Mission: The four primary missions of the Popular Force are to:

(a) Destroy VC infrastructure.

(b) Provide public security and assist in maintaining law and order.

(c) Protect our infrastructure.

(d) Defend key installations and axes of communication within the village.

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The Popular Force will assume these missions upon replacing the Regional Force (Clearing Sub-Phase) and until it is relieved by the National Police (Development Phase).<sup>92</sup>

(C) These mission statements assigned primary responsibility to the regular army (ARVN) for military operations during the clearing phase of pacification. Primary responsibility for military support of the securing phase of pacification was assigned to the Regional Force and Popular Force. However, it was also provided explicitly that when Regional Force troops were insufficient, the securing mission would be assumed by regular forces. This latter provision was consonant with the opinion,

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., pp. 2-4. The missions of the Regional Force prior to 25 December 1964 were stated as follows: (1) Complete the internal pacification of an area following clear-and-hold operations by regular forces. (2) Provide area security as required. (3) Provide security for fixed installations as required. (4) Assist regular forces in combat. (5) Provide escorts as needed. The missions of the Popular Force were stated as follows: (1) Protect their own villages and specifically the village committee. (2) Provide inter-village protection. (3) Maintain order and security in the villages, and oppose subversion and terrorism. (4) Protect public buildings and places. Tactics and Techniques of Counterinsurgent Operations, pp. III M-1 to III M-3. The provision of security for a pacification area was based on the concept of a clearing zone and a securing zone. The clearing zone served as a buffer between the securing or pacification zone and the enemy. In effect, the clearing forces endeavored to screen the main pacification area from incursions by Viet Cong main force and local force units. Within the securing or pacification zone, forces were assigned to provide hamlet security, local security of the village area, and pacification zone security for the entire area undergoing pacification. Pacification zone security was provided by mobile forces which operated throughout the zone to support and reinforce the local security and hamlet defense forces. Concerning the provision of security within the pacification zone, the view of the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, was that:

"As the securing phase approaches its completion--hamlet security should be provided by one or more squads of Popular Forces per hamlet; local security should be provided by Popular Force platoons and squads.

"Pacification zone security should be provided by Regional Forces.

"In the early stages of securing, when Popular Forces & Regional Forces are being recruited and trained--

"Hamlet security may have to be provided, all or in part, by Regional or ARVN forces.

"Local security may have to be provided, all or in part, by Regional or ARVN forces.

"Pacification zone security may have to be provided, all or in part, by ARVN forces. . . ." Pacification Tasks, passim.

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discussed earlier, that regular forces should remain in the pacification area to provide security until relieved by paramilitary forces.

(C) The Regional Force, which consisted mainly of rifle companies under the control of province and district (sector and sub-sector), was to take the lead in the securing phase of pacification. Besides the task of providing a secure environment for the operation of Government cadre (referred to as "our infrastructure"), Regional Forces were expected to initiate population and resources controls and police actions against the Viet Cong infrastructure.<sup>93</sup>

(C) The Popular Force, conceived as a village-level defense force, was to relieve the Regional Force of the securing mission as soon as the Popular Force could be recruited and trained. In this way, the Regional Force would be freed to undertake securing operations in another area, or throughout the securing zone as a whole. Later, in the development phase, the Popular Force would be relieved by the civilian National Police.<sup>94</sup>

(C) The mission of the Popular Force had been one of the points at issue between United States and Vietnamese authorities. This issue was closely related to the role of another paramilitary force, the hamlet militia.<sup>95</sup>

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93 Pacification Tasks, passim.

94 Ibid., See also the Village Organizational Chart, Appendix 1. For the missions of the National Police, see "Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces) to Directive AB 139," pp. 5-7. This source states that the National Police is "a national force formed at province, district and village level to maintain law and order, to provide security and public safety, and to establish population and resources control." Ibid., p. 5.

95 At that time the Popular Force was a village defense force and the desired employment of this force was for local security in the general area of the hamlets of the village. Pacification Tasks, passim. The purpose of the hamlet militia was to provide close-in security around and

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(c) During the planning for support of the Chien Thang plan which took place after the March 1964 visit of the United States Secretary of Defense, consideration was given to a proposal of the Government of Vietnam to integrate a large number (30,000-75,000) of hamlet militia into the Popular Force.<sup>96</sup> At that time, the hamlet militia comprised a volunteer paramilitary force, armed, trained, and organized into squads to defend their hamlets in the event of attack.<sup>97</sup> As of 20 March 1964, the assigned strength of the hamlet militia was 181,060, of which 166,212 were trained and 85,293 were armed.<sup>98</sup> The hamlet militia were authorized no pay other than that provided by the village or hamlet,<sup>99</sup> but United States support was required for their weapons, which consisted of five

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within the hamlet. The question of the proper paramilitary force structure at village and hamlet level is an important one in an insurgency. It is possible that a few armed men in each hamlet would serve the useful purpose of keeping out Viet Cong cadres, guerrillas, and armed propaganda teams. On the other hand, each hamlet then becomes an arsenal and source of weapons for the Viet Cong, who need only mass superior force against one hamlet at a time. This is a problem that must be faced early in an insurgency, prior to the decision to organize and arm a hamlet militia force. The problem is a fruitful area for additional research. During the 1964-65 period, however, the hamlet militia was already in being, and the problem was whether to continue to support it. This problem was directly related to the concept of pacification, for it will be recalled that one of the criteria for a pacified hamlet was: "Adequate numbers of village and hamlet paramilitary forces selected, trained, and equipped to perform their assigned mission. (Paramilitary forces include Popular Forces, Civil Defense and other armed militia forces if any)." Criteria to Evaluate New Life Hamlets, p. 2. The Combat Youth and Civil Defense were different names applied to the hamlet militia.

<sup>96</sup> USMACV, J-3, Memorandum 20 March 1964, Subject: "Force Structure and Personnel Requirements for Pacification." (SECRET).

<sup>97</sup> Tactics and Techniques of Counterinsurgent Operations, p. IV  
B-2.

<sup>98</sup> "Force Structure and Personnel Requirements for Pacification," passim.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

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shotguns, five carbines or rifles, and 24 grenades for each hamlet squad.<sup>100</sup>

(C) The United States view at this time was that if the Government of Vietnam adhered to the proper employment of Popular Force (that is, one platoon per village to hold after the restoration of public security), an increase in the strength of the Popular Force would not be required.<sup>101</sup> It was realized that the integration of hamlet militia into the Popular Force would have the effect of establishing a small nucleus of Popular Force in each hamlet.<sup>102</sup> In effect the Popular Force would be responsible for both village and hamlet defense.

(C) The outcome was that the United States refused to support an increase in the authorization for the Popular Force. The authorization remained at the figure of 110,000 throughout 1964.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, the Government of Vietnam went ahead with its plans. On 5 April, the hamlet militia were renamed the Combat Youth.<sup>104</sup> On 12 May, a Government decree directed the integration of certain members of the Combat Youth into the Popular Force.<sup>105</sup> Since this soon raised the strength of the Popular Force above that authorized for Military Assistance Program support, the integrated Combat Youth continued to use their Combat Youth weapons. The United States agreed to support the integration

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<sup>100</sup>Tactics and Techniques of Counterinsurgent Operations, p. IV  
B-2.

<sup>101</sup>USMACV, J-3, Memorandum 11 March 1964, Subject: "Outline of Requirements to Pacify South Vietnam," passim. At this time, the Popular Force was known as the Self Defense Corps. For simplicity, the term "Popular Force" will be used in the text.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>USMACV, J-3, RVNAF Force Structure Documents, Dec 1964.  
(SECRET).

<sup>104</sup>Directive 0660, 5 April 1964.

<sup>105</sup>USMACV, Quarterly Review and Evaluation for the Third Quarter, 1964, October 1964.

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of 75,000 Combat Youth in this manner.<sup>105</sup> The United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam's Quarterly Review and Evaluation for the Third Quarter, 1964 stated:

In compliance with the GVN decree of 12 May 64, the Popular Force (PF) continued to integrate members of the Combat Youth. However, no PF force structure had been agreed upon between US and GVN authorities as of the end of the quarter, and the 110,000 force structure (2,804 platoon equivalents) of the former SDC remained the approved figure.

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Popular Force 30 Jun 64 Strength: 99,611; 30 Sept 1964 Strength; 156,670. . . Popular Force strength increase resulted primarily from the integration of 57,218 Armed Combat Youth out of the total 75,000 authorized for integration during the period July-December 1964.<sup>107</sup>

(C) Two points should be made here. The first is that the increase in the strength of the Popular Force that took place between 30 June 1964 and 31 March 1965 was by no means a net increase in paramilitary forces. Almost the entire increase was achieved by transferring personnel from the Combat Youth to the Popular Force.<sup>108</sup>

(C) The second point is the likelihood that the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, in its effort to induce the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces to employ the Popular Force in the agreed manner, jeopardized the possibility of achieving a substantial net expansion of paramilitary forces during 1964. Holding the Popular Force authorization at 110,000 throughout 1964, when the actual strength was substantially in excess of this number, must be counted as a major factor limiting the expansion of the Popular Force in line with the concepts

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

<sup>108</sup>The 31 March 1965 strength of the Popular Force was 159,093. Letter, USMACV, J-1, 30 Apr 1965, Subject: "Selected Personnel Data, Regular and Paramilitary Forces, as of 31 March 1965." (CONFIDENTIAL). This figure should be compared to the 30 June 1964 strength (99,611) and the number of integrated Combat Youth (57,218) given in the text. See Chapter VI for further discussion.

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of the Chien Thang plan. In addition, the freezing of the authorization no doubt inhibited the projection of requirements for this type force, which was essential to the manpower support of the plan.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>109</sup>Initial consideration by United States authorities of requirements for support of the Chien Thang plan took place in March and April 1964, after the March visit of the Secretary of Defense. During the planning it was considered that the Chien Thang of the Popular Force (Self Defense Corps) and hamlet militia would require further study. Pending completion of such study, the Popular Force authorization was to remain at 110,000. USMACV, J-3, Memorandum, Subject: "Outline of Requirements to Pacify South Vietnam," 11 Mar 1964. USMACV, J-3, Memorandum, Subject: "Force Structure and Personnel Requirements for Pacification," 20 Mar 1964. The Popular Force requirement, calculated by USMACV in March 1964 at a time when the Popular Force strength was 91,648, was 109,991. However, because of the division of function between Popular Force (village security) and hamlet militia (hamlet security) existing at that time, the requirement for Popular Force must be related to the availability of hamlet militia. In March 1964, there were 181,060 hamlet militia (Combat Youth), of which 85,293 were armed. The Popular Force requirement, calculated by the Government of Vietnam and requested for Military Assistance Program support, was 122,874 in March 1964. The increase in Popular Force strength was to be achieved by integrating a portion of the hamlet militia, and the GVN requested a hamlet militia authorization of 180,000. Ibid., passim. The requested force authorizations were for the remainder of calendar year 1964. In November and December 1964 a force structure survey was conducted by USMACV J3, in order to establish authorizations for 1965. By this time the hamlet militia (combat youth) program was being discarded in favor of the Civil Defense, and Popular Force requirements were calculated for both village and hamlet security. Still, the U.S.-recommended force authorization was only 174,185. While this was a substantial increase over the 110,000 authorization for 1964, it must be remembered that the strength of the Popular Force in January 1965 was already 166,689, achieved mainly by integrating Combat Youth. While the effectiveness of this force would be increased by authorizing MAP support for 174,185 instead of 110,000, the bulk of the force was already employed in securing village and hamlets under Government control. There was far too little room between the 174,185 ceiling and the 166,689 assigned strength figure for the expansion of the Popular Force in line with the contemplated expansion of Government control under the Chien Thang plan. One suspects that the determination of the new force level was influenced by (a) estimates of recruiting potential, (b) the number of villages and hamlets under actual Government control--not the number to be brought under Government control, and (c) the force level that it was believed higher headquarters would "buy." If so, the impact of the preclusive conscription and recruiting policies of the Viet Cong, and the general inadequacy of the Popular Force to support the Chien Thang plan, are clearly reflected in the new force goal. USMACV, Force Structure Planning Documents, 1964. "Selected Personnel Data, Regular and paramilitary Forces, as of 31 March 1965." The reader is cautioned that additional research is

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(C) With the integration of the hamlet Combat Youth into the Popular Force, the United States view became that the Popular Force should be the only village-level defense organization (until civilian National Police became available). This organization would have platoons for general village security, and squads for hamlet defense, all operating under the authority of the village chief and controlled by the village Popular Force commander. This concept was eventually adopted by the Government of Vietnam.<sup>110</sup>

(C) According to the foregoing view, since there would be Popular Force squads within (or in the vicinity of) the hamlets, a hamlet militia force--the Combat Youth--was no longer required for hamlet defense.<sup>111</sup> On the other hand, the Vietnamese High Command believed that

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required to place the entire subject of force development planning in proper perspective, and that the hypotheses propounded in this section are subject to revision. The concern here has been to illuminate the question of whether paramilitary force requirements were projected in line with the roles and missions contemplated for such forces under the Chien Thang plan. Force development planning for the Regional Force will be taken up in the next Chapter, when the question of sufficiency of military resources to support the plan will be taken up again.

<sup>110</sup>Pacification Tasks, *passim*. This document, published about August 1964, clearly reveals the United States concept of the Popular Force as a village and hamlet defense force. It is stated that "as the securing phase approaches its completion--hamlet security should be provided by one or more squads of Popular Forces per hamlet; local security should be provided by Popular Force platoons and squads." Additionally, the relevant criterion for a pacified hamlet is stated as "Popular Forces have been selected, trained and armed." The Combat Youth--or any other hamlet militia force--are not even mentioned. Ibid. The concept of a Popular Force organized with platoons for general village security and squads for hamlet defense was adopted by the Government of Vietnam in "Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces) to Directive AB 139." The Popular Force organization is portrayed in the Village Organizational Chart, Appendix 1. The chart was extracted from Annex E to High Command Directive AB 139.

<sup>111</sup>This statement is a deduction from the absence of mention of Combat Youth, or any other hamlet militia force, in Pacification Tasks. Since this document includes the mission of every agency concerned with pacification, and assigns to the Popular Force the mission of hamlet defense, it seems reasonable to conclude that United States authorities

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a militia was still necessary. It stated:

The Popular Force<sup>7</sup> will be isolated, if all the hamlet or village residents are not properly organized into groups which are always ready to:

- a. Lend a helping hand to the Popular Force and National Police.
- b. Particularly assist in patrol and guard duties within the hamlet limits.
- c. Collect and pass on intelligence information.
- d. Take charge of liaison between one hamlet and another.
- e. Give warning, first-aid and evacuation, if need be.
- f. Help the population in case of natural disaster.<sup>112</sup>

Consequently, in December 1964 the High Command accepted the dissolution of the Combat Youth, but at the same time promulgated a new militia organization--the Civil Defense.<sup>113</sup>

(C) The concept of a Civil Defense force differed from that of the Combat Youth in that the Civil Defense were to be generally unarmed.<sup>114</sup>

considered that there was no longer a valid requirement for Combat Youth. This conclusion is reinforced by the eventual demise of the Combat Youth, and the withholding of United States consent to its successor, the Civil Defense. "Appendix 2 (Popular Force and the Civil Defense Force) to Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces) to Directive AB 139."

<sup>112</sup>"Appendix 2 (Popular Force and the Civil Defense Force) to Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces) Directive AB 139."

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid. The Civil Defense was also placed under the Interior Ministry, whereas the former Combat Youth had been under the National Defense Ministry. The High Command stated the following with respect to arming the Civil Defense: "The Civil Defense Force is generally not armed and meant to support the Popular Force and the National Police. However, there may be occasions or localities in which certain elements outside the Popular Force and the National Police may be armed for special purposes on behalf of the Village, Province of District Chiefs. Such actions should be approved by the DTA [Division Tactical Area] Commander." Ibid.

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The mission statement for the Civil Defense was as follows:

Organization: The Civil Defense force is a civilian organization, generally unarmed, composed of groups and inter-groups of all hamlet residents, men, women and children, not in the Armed Forces. It is the primary civilian organization designed to provide mutual self-help and to support the Popular Force and the National Police at hamlet and village levels.

Mission:

- (1) To provide mutual self-help and to help the people in cases of natural disaster.
- (2) To support the Popular Force and the National Police, particularly in the following fields:
  - (a) Patrol and guard within the hamlet limits.
  - (b) Collect and transmit intelligence information to the Popular Force and the National Police.
  - (c) Spread alarm of VC attacks or infiltrations.
  - (d) Liaison between one hamlet and another for the benefit of the Popular Forces.
  - (e) First aid and medical evacuation.<sup>115</sup>
- (c) As of 4 February 1965, the United States had still not agreed to support a Civil Defense organization.<sup>116</sup> However, the concept was taken into account in pacification planning. The United States Mission Council directive on pacification, issued 1 February 1965, stated that during the securing phase:

Hamlets will be pacified following procedures set forth in the New Rural Life Program. This will include completing a census, organizing the population, preparing defenses, setting up a communications system, rooting out the enemy infrastructure, etc. Development of the civil defense organization will be started.<sup>117</sup>

- (U) This completes the discussion of the roles and missions of

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>"RVNAF Counterinsurgency Roles and Missions," passim.

<sup>117</sup>The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures, p. 5.

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pacification forces. In principle, regular forces were oriented toward the clearing phase of pacification, and the Regional Force was oriented toward the securing phase. Regular forces were to undertake the securing missions if the Regional Force was inadequate to the task.

(U) The actual employment of these forces will be taken up in the next chapter.<sup>118</sup>

(C) During 1964 the concept for village and hamlet defenses underwent a major evolution. In early 1964, the role of the Popular Force was to provide village security, and hamlet defense was a function of the hamlet militia. Later, with the integration of a large number of the militia (Combat Youth) into the Popular Force, the Popular Force emerged as the sole defense force for villages and hamlets. A civilian auxiliary organization, the Civil Defense, was established to cooperate with and assist the Popular Force.

(C) The Popular Force-Combat Youth problem, together with the retention of a 110,000-man Popular Force authorization throughout 1964, must be counted as a major factor limiting the expansion of the Popular Force. In addition, there does not appear to have been a projection of time-phased requirements for the expansion of this force, in line with the concepts of the Chien Thang plan, until the 1965 force-structure surveys undertaken in late 1964.

<sup>118</sup>While the role of regular forces will be considered in detail, only the strength of the paramilitary forces in twenty key provinces, and a general indication of their area of employment is within the scope of this paper. A detailed evaluation of the success of the Regional Force and Popular Force in accomplishing pacification missions must await additional research. The question is an important one, as it is clear that a sound paramilitary force structure is essential to the success of any pacification effort. The concepts of employment of such forces must be refined, and in this respect the experience in South Vietnam will be invaluable. Of particular interest should be the degree of success experienced with the assignment of police-intelligence missions, in addition to security missions, to the Regional and Popular Force.

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Organization for Pacification Under the Chien Thang Plan.

(C) The Government of Vietnam organization for pacification under the Chien Thang plan is shown in Figure 2, Appendix 2. The United States counterpart organization is also shown.<sup>119</sup>

(C) Figure 2 reveals that the echelon for detailed execution of pacification plans was the province. The reasoning for this is disclosed in the following statements:

While the pacification of the entire nation and the reimposition of GVN control constitutes the end goal of our effort here, it is recognized that this national objective is one made up of the pacification of 45 separate provinces and must accommodate local differences. In each one of these provinces the pacification problem may vary somewhat, and thus may need to be attacked in varying ways. . . .

The specific mode and means of implementation, and the sequence through which the . . . aspects of pacification will pass, are matters to be determined by the varying needs of each province.

There are at all times two targets for pacification efforts; the enemy apparatus and the people. It is, accordingly, at the province and district levels that pacification must be directed, and the properly balanced use of available resources depends upon the situation in each area as determined by responsible local authorities. Priorities and objectives established at higher echelons will determine the resources that are provided, and will effect the rate at which results against the two targets can be obtained.<sup>120</sup>

(U) Not shown in Figure 2 is another important echelon in the pacification structure--the district. The district or sub-sector is subordinate to province and is one echelon nearer the people. Immediately

<sup>119</sup>USMACV, J-3, Memorandum, Subject: "Outline of Requirements to Pacify South Vietnam," 11 Mar 1964. The abbreviation, CPC, stands for Central Pacification Committee. CINCAVF stands for Commander-in-Chief, Vietnamese Armed Forces. CTZ and DTZ stand for Corps Tactical Zone and Division Tactical Zone respectively; these were military organizations comprised of two or more sectors (see Appendix 6). The Commanding General of the Corps Tactical Zone also served in the Government's administrative structure, by virtue of his office as Regional Governor of a grouping of provinces.

<sup>120</sup>The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures, pp. 1-2.

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subordinate to district are the villages. It should be noted that province and district are units in the Government of Vietnam's administrative structure. The combining of civilian and military functions at these echelons (the province chief commanded a military sector consisting of the territory of the province, and so forth) was in keeping with the civil-military nature of pacification.<sup>121</sup>

(C) Also not shown in Figure 2 is the United States advisory echelon corresponding to district level. This echelon did not come into being until November and December 1964, when Sub-sector Advisory Teams were deployed to the most important districts of South Vietnam. While these teams were composed of military personnel, their advisory function extended to civilian as well as military matters pertaining to pacification, and these advisory activities served to strengthen the administrative apparatus essential to the implementation of pacification programs.<sup>122</sup>

(U) Each province prepared a pacification plan establishing the priority pacification areas, and showing a time-phased projection of pacification goals. An illustration of the graphical portion of a model plan is contained in Appendix 3.<sup>123</sup>

(U) The province and district chiefs, as sector and sub-sector commanders, commanded the Regional Force and Popular Force troops assigned to their sector or sub-sector.<sup>124</sup> The regular army (ARVN) division

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<sup>121</sup>Letter, Hq. USMACV, 30 Nov 1964, Subject: "Information for Sub-Sector Advisors."

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

<sup>123</sup>RVN, Central Pacification Committee, Permanent Bureau, Memorandum, Subject: "Preparation of Pacification and Development plans for 1965," 21 Oct 1964, pp. 1-8. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>124</sup>Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces) to Directive AB 139," pp. 3-4.

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commander commanded the regular forces within a tactical zone comprising the territory of two or more provinces.<sup>125</sup>

(C) In principle, the division commander was to assign forces to the sector commander for the military support of pacification. With respect to clearing operations, it was held that:

"Because of the interrelationship of military and political factors, clearing forces should be deployed in accordance with political (district/village) boundaries and normally placed under control of a province (or district) chief. However, political boundaries must not be permitted to restrict pursuit of VC elements.<sup>126</sup>"

(C) With respect to securing operations, the principle of placing forces under sector control was enunciated even more strongly:

"Because of the dominance of social-economic-political factors, securing forces will be under the control of a province (or district) chief.<sup>127</sup>"

(C) However, there were wide variations from the norm in practice. To illustrate, the following provides an insight into the organization for pacification in Binh Duong Province on 5 March 1965:

Since it includes within its boundaries the 5th Division CP and both the 7th and 8th Infantry Regimental Cp's, Binh Duong could logically be expected to have command problems. It does--and this fact is considered here as a very pronounced aspect of the current implementation of the Hop Tac plan. . . .<sup>128</sup> It is clear that the Province Chief/Sector Commander, presumably responsible for pacification in his province, controls only a portion of the military resources committed to that end. At the time of this inspection he held operational control of one of the six infantry battalions deployed in the Hop Tac portion of his province (normally he controls two). Moreover, there are indications that the Province Chief's

<sup>125</sup>"Annex C (Territorial Responsibilities and Positioning of Forces) to Chien Thang Plan," 28 Mar 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). See also Appendix 6.

<sup>126</sup>The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures, p. 3.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>128</sup>The Hop Tac plan was a comprehensive plan for the pacification of the Saigon-area provinces, of which Binh Duong was one. The Hop Tac plan is discussed below.

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authority with respect to matters clearly "provincial" has been encroached upon by the senior ARVN commanders, at least in one important instance. The 5th Division commander has given Lt Col Chuyen, 8th Infantry Commander, overall responsibility for hamlet pacification in Phu Hoa District. . . . [However], only the Phu Hoa District Chief has ready access to the essential pacification resources which are controlled by provincial rather than ARVN officials. Conflict between the 7th Infantry's commander and the Ben Cat District Chief over their respective operational responsibilities and/or authorities has occurred more than once. In short, the net impression gained, albeit very quickly and perhaps superficially, is that the 5th Division commander is playing a disproportionate role in the pacification of Binh Duong, with the consequence of an erosion of the Province Chief's authority, particularly in Ben Cat and Phu Hoa Districts. Sector operational control of ARVN units is usually irrelevant when these units are employed in search-and-destroy missions, and is probably not of too much concern during most of the clearing phase. But it is hard to see how securing operations can be conducted effectively if the military forces employed therein are not tied closely to the hamlet-village-subsector-sector command structure; sector operational control can best assure this. If conditions exist within Binh Duong which invalidate this, they were not apparent.<sup>129</sup>

(C) Even when regular forces were assigned to sector for support of pacification, complications could still arise between the force headquarters and the pacification headquarters. An insight into the organization for pacification in Long An Province on 9 April 1965, where two regiments were placed under sector control, is provided by the following excerpt:

25th Division has given operational control of the 46th and 50th Infantry Regiments to Long An Sector. Long An has exercised that authority by assigning to each regiment responsibility for hamlet pacification in certain areas, with the added stipulation that its subsectors will be subordinate not only to the two regimental headquarters but also to whichever battalion headquarters are charged with implementing the pacification program. On paper it sounds reasonably clear-cut, but the practical relationships are quite different. Division retains direct control of both regiments, or else it withdraws it from Sector often enough so that the effect is the same. Sector issues specific orders to the regiments reluctantly, and the regiments respond in the same manner; occasions have occurred when orders were not carried out. Subsectors "co-operate and coordinate" with regiments, but give little evidence of

<sup>129</sup>Hop Tac Secretariat, Report of Inspection, Binh Duong Province, 24 March 1965, pp. 2-3. It will be recalled that a year earlier the 5th Division Commander was being criticized for not taking enough interest in pacification. USMACV, Military Reports, April 1965, passim.

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subordination to battalions; on virtually all matters they deal directly with sector. The effect has been that a command structure commendably designed to give Sector control of necessary pacification resources, to employ usefully the two regimental headquarters, and to effect a working relationship between subsectors and major ARVN units has done none of these. . . . The opinion here is that a realignment of roles and missions is in order. 25th Division must be restrained in its function to: (1) formulation of an overall DTA implementing plan for Hop Tac's OPLAN-2; (2) determination of priorities between Hau Nghia [province] and Long An [province] and the assignment of appropriate resources thereto; (3) overwatching the employment of these resources and vetoing that which invites disaster; (4) directing and controlling those operations involving the crossing of provincial boundaries or which involve resources beyond the ability of sector to control. Sector must be recognized by all concerned as a headquarters senior to regiment, and it should issue orders accordingly. These orders should recognize that supervision of hamlet cadre and/or local security of the hamlets themselves are poor ARVN roles . . . Police, special intelligence agencies, resources control officials, psywar teams, cadre of various types-- the relations of all of these with hamlets are far more easily monitored and/or controlled by a District staff than by that of a battalion or regiment.<sup>130</sup>

(C) Of interest in the foregoing report is the view that division should be principally an allocator of resources, and not a major maneuver headquarters. This was a thorny problem, in that divisions had operational missions other than the support of pacification (such as road clearing, reaction to attacks by major Viet Cong forces, and so forth), and found it necessary to withdraw forces from sector control to conduct such operations. There is probably no better analysis of this problem than that of Major General Charles J. Timmes, who stated:

Effective control and efficient use of ground combat forces in support of pacification demanded clearly-defined command relationships between division, regimental, and battalion commanders on the one hand, and province chiefs on the other. A problem arose because of simultaneous and often conflicting requirements for purely military operations against known or suspected Viet Cong concentrations and for security/civic action activities (clear-and-hold operations) in areas being pacified. Operations against Viet Cong concentrations required rapid assembly of friendly forces and were usually of relatively short duration, while the success of clear-and-hold operations

<sup>130</sup>Hop Tac Secretariat, Report of Inspection, Long An Province, 26 Apr 1965, pp. 3-4.

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depended heavily upon continuity of effort over a prolonged period.

Division or regimental commanders generally controlled offensive operations by ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) against Viet Cong concentrations, whereas province chiefs, being responsible for pacification of their respective areas, ordinarily controlled clear-and-hold operations. Often a battalion or regiment was given the mission of supporting a province pacification effort without the division commander ensuring that the tactical commander was responsive to the province chief. If the tactical commander and the province chief got along well together, the operation proceeded smoothly on a cooperative basis. But all too frequently, the two disagree, and the pacification effort suffered accordingly. In other cases the division commander deliberately limited the province chief's authority over ARVN units supporting province pacification efforts and repeatedly withdrew units on short notice from clear-and-hold areas to participate in large-scale offensive operations. The Viet Cong rarely missed an opportunity to attack a pacification area which was exposed when ARVN units were absent.

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The allocation of sufficient ground combat forces to support province pacification activities, and the establishment and enforcement of clear-cut and workable command arrangements to ensure their proper utilization, were constant subjects of advisory emphasis.<sup>131</sup>

(C) Major General Timmes concluded that:

When security requirements have been established and troops allocated for a clear-and-hold operation, they should not be withdrawn (even temporarily) except in the gravest emergency.<sup>132</sup>

However, this conclusion was reached in June 1964, when guerrilla activity was still the main threat, and area saturation--which could be efficiently conducted by regular troops assigned to sector--was felt to be the best military countermeasure.<sup>133</sup> This conclusion belonged to a stage of insurgency that was rapidly passing into history.

(U) It is quite possible that the much-maligned division headquarters became a distinct asset after Viet Cong main forces began to

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<sup>131</sup>Letter, Headquarters, Department of the Army, Subject: "De-briefing of Senior and Designated Key Officers Returning from Field Assignments," pp. 3-4. Emphasis supplied.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

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appear in strength, for the division commander then had the capability to concentrate his forces to deal with a threat anywhere in the division tactical zone, and to reinforce threatened oilspots. Without the division, the Government would surely have gone into mobile warfare with its regular forces fighting separate battles in approximately thirty different sectors, with only a limited capability of mutual support.<sup>134</sup>

(U) As it was, the inhibition against removing forces from pacification areas once they had been committed to pacification detracted from the capability of utilizing such forces in a mobile role. This is discussed further in the next chapter.

(U) It is clear from the discussion of this section that the military organization for the support of pacification reflected the predisposition, already discussed, that stability in the assignment of regular forces to a pacification area was a sine qua non of success under the Chien Thang plan. The principle that regular forces should be assigned to sector for the support of pacification--thereby removing forces from control by a tactical headquarters and placing them under a pacification oriented headquarters--was a logical consequence of this view. While laudable in its concept of placing military forces in a civil-military chain of command, this method of organization must also be recognized to involve a tendency toward dispersion of force among several non-mutually supporting sectors.

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<sup>134</sup>The outlines of the problem of the optimal command and control structure for pacification can only be indicated here. The military organization for the support of pacification in South Vietnam is a fruitful area for additional research. As so often appears to be the case, the organization appropriate to the guerrilla stage of insurgency does not seem appropriate to a more advanced stage.

National Priorities and Force Deployments Under the Chien Thang Plan.

(C) In order to guide the allocation of resources at the national level, priorities were established for support of province pacification plans. First priority of support was assigned to the provinces of Gia Dinh, Long An, Hau Nghia, Binh Duong, Bien Hoa, Phuoc Tuy, and to Tan Uyen District of Phuoc Thanh Province.<sup>135</sup> This strategic and densely populated area<sup>136</sup> surrounding the national capital constituted a single geographic entity, and was the scene of an integrated pacification effort known as the Hop Tac plan.

(C) Approximately concentric rings emanating from Saigon defined pacification zones and served as phase lines (A,B,C,D) for the outward expansion of the oilspot. The Hop Tac A Zone was drawn to coincide with the area of secure Government control; this zone was considered pacified and in the development phase. The B Zone defined the area to be brought under pacification initially; securing operations were undertaken in this zone. The C Zone defined the area to be cleared; clearing operations were undertaken to prepare this zone for pacification. In the outermost zone, the D Zone, search-and-destroy operations were to be conducted against Viet Cong forces that posed a threat to the inner zones.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>135</sup> RVN, Central Pacification Committee, Permanent Bureau, Memorandum, Subject: "Preparation of Pacification and Development Plans for 1965," 21 Oct 1964, p. 1.

<sup>136</sup> The area contains thirty percent of the national population, eighty percent of the national industrial capability. USOM, Public Safety Division, "The Nature of the Resources Control Problem in Vietnam," 22 Mar 1965, p. 1.

<sup>137</sup> Headquarters, III Corps Tactical Zone, Opord Hop Tac 1, 12 Aug 1964, with Change 1, 30 Sep 1964. (SECRET). Hop Tac Council, Opord 2, Hop Tac 1, 18 Jan 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL). The planning group which drew up the Hop Tac plan was under III Corps, and that headquarters issued the first order. Subsequent orders emanated from the Hop Tac Council, discussed below.

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(C) The Hop Tac Zones constituted objectives for the phased outward expansion of the pacification effort. By 1 July 1965, the B Zone was to have achieved a "secured" status, and would enter into the development phase; the C Zone was supposed to be "cleared," and would enter the securing phase with the introduction of mobile action cadre into the area. Clearing operations would then begin in the D Zone, and so on.<sup>138</sup>

(C) Unique to the Hop Tac plan was its treatment of the area of several provinces as a single entity for pacification. In the rest of the country, the individual province was the basic unit for pacification. The Hop Tac plan not only integrated the pacification activities of several provinces, but also provided an organization--the Hop Tac Council--to insure continuous civil-military coordination in support of the plan. The Hop Tac Council was a coordinating body directly subordinate to the Chief of Staff, High Command. Membership of the Council consisted of a chairman, commanding officers of the military zones encompassed by the Hop Tac area, an assistant for civil affairs, an assistant for military affairs, an assistant for National Police and an intelligence representative.<sup>139</sup> The Council was provided with a permanent secretariat, composed of representatives of military and civilian agencies involved in pacification, to perform the day-to-day coordination.<sup>140</sup>

(C) The mission statement of the first Hop Tac operation order

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<sup>138</sup>Opord 2, Hop Tac 1, passim. USMACV, Advisory Team 100, Report of Inspection, Binh Duong Province, 24 Mar 1965, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, Advisory Team 100, Report of Inspection, Long An Province, 26 April 1965, passim. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>139</sup>Hop Tac Council, "Hop Tac Organization," 16 Oct 1964.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid. The Council did not command troops. Troops in the Hop Tac area were commanded by III Corps, Capital Military District, and Rung Sat Special Zone.

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declared that:

The objective is to eliminate VC forces and political organizations, neutralize their productive, economic, and financial activities and to provide control and security for the population in order to give them a standard of living perceptibly better than that offered under VC influence.<sup>141</sup>

(C) Provisions for the command of forces stated that clearing operations would be under the command of the division tactical area or military special zone<sup>142</sup> commander. Units involved in securing operations were placed under sector commanders, who were made responsible to division tactical area or military special zone commanders for the proper employment of forces.<sup>143</sup>

(C) D-day for the Hop Tac plan, originally set for 1 September 1964, was postponed to 15 October 1964.<sup>144</sup> In the initial phase, securing operations were to be conducted in Zone A with six (ARVN) battalions--one

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<sup>141</sup> Opord Hop Tac 1, passim.

<sup>142</sup> A Special Zone was a tactical area with a headquarters and assigned military forces. See Appendixes 6 and 7 for the location of the special zones. In the Hop Tac area, the Phuoc Binh Tanh (PBT) Special Zone and the Phuoc Dien (PB) Special Zone were subordinate to III Corps, as were the 5th and 25th Divisions. The Rung Sat Special Zone, consisting of the mouths of the Saigon River, was under the Vietnamese Navy. It was represented on the Hop Tac Council along with III Corps and the Capital Military District.

<sup>143</sup> Opord Hop Tac 1, passim. Opord 2, Hop Tac 1, contained the following provision:

"All forces operating within a Province on securing and development missions normally are under the operational control of the Sector Commander. Clearing forces may be placed under the operational control of the Sector Commander."

It was also directed that:

"Clearing forces will not be deployed from their assigned zones of action except in cases of 'hot pursuit.' Securing forces will not be deployed from assigned areas without prior concurrence of the Chairman of the HOP TAC Council."

Opord 2, Hop Tac 1, passim.

<sup>144</sup> "Change 1 to Opord Hop Tac 1," 30 Sep 1964.

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battalion in Binh Duong sector, two battalions in Hau Nghia sector, and three battalions in Long An sector. Concurrently, clearing operations were to be conducted in Zone B by remaining regular forces.<sup>145</sup>

(C) The second Hop Tac operation order, issued 18 January 1965, directed that securing operations be conducted in Zone B with eleven (ARVN) battalions--one battalion in Phuoc Thanh, two in Binh Duong, two in Hau Nghia, four in Long An, and two in Bien Hoa. It was also directed that clearing operations be conducted in Zone C with eleven battalions--one battalion in Phuoc Thanh, two in Binh Duong, two in Hau Nghia, three in Long An, and three in Bien Hoa. The remaining regular forces were to conduct search-and-destroy operations in Zone D.<sup>146</sup>

(C) It should be quite apparent from the foregoing recitation of the development of the Hop Tac plan--which must surely be the most systematically conceived of all clear-and-hold operations--that each step in the outward progression entails a substantial drain of force for the securing mission.<sup>147</sup> Clearing forces are reduced at the same time that the circumference of the outer perimeter over which they must operate increases considerably (by virtue of moving from an inner to an outer circle). Securing forces become committed to the defense of the area under pacification, and are unable to contribute to further outward

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<sup>145</sup>Opord Hop Tac 1, passim. The text refers to the employment of III Corps forces only. The Capital Military District also had three battalions securing.

<sup>146</sup>Opord 2, Hop Tac 1, passim. At this time III Corps had 32 battalions, of which 22 were clearing and securing, and ten on other missions (security, search-and-destroy, reserve).

<sup>147</sup>In this case, securing battalions increased from six to eleven, and clearing battalions decreased from sixteen to eleven. This assumes that ten battalions, of the thirty-two available, were employed on "other missions" in October as in January, leaving twenty-two for clearing and securing.

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expansion.<sup>148</sup> Once again, the timely recruitment of paramilitary forces appears as the decisive factor upon which continued progress depends.<sup>149</sup>

(C) The national priorities and phasing of the Chien Thang plan are illustrated in Appendix 4. The first priority provinces (Hop Tac area) have already been discussed. The provinces designated as second

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<sup>148</sup> It will be noted that as a token of the changed character of the mission, command passes from division (or special zone) to sector, that is, from the purely military chain of command to the civil-military (pacification) chain of command.

<sup>149</sup> It is emphasized that this sentence does not mean that if the problem of sufficient paramilitary forces is solved, the spreading oil-spot concept will be successful. For one thing, recruitment of Popular Forces for village and hamlet security will not eliminate the necessity for some mobile forces to be stationed in the area to support the Popular Forces in the event of attack. The Popular Force units are like so many hostages to the enemy; if back-up forces do not remain in the area, the Popular Forces can be attacked and destroyed a squad or platoon at a time. Under such circumstances, the motivation of the Popular Force to stand and fight will not be great. A mobile reaction force is, therefore, required in the securing zone. This is a function of the Regional Force, which may or may not be adequate to the task. Furthermore, as the outer ring of the clearing zone becomes larger, it will be easier for Viet Cong units to evade the screen and launch attacks against the securing and development zones. Simply because of the space involved, the enemy strategy of making the rear area the battlefield can check the expansion of the oilspot unless clearing forces are increased pari passu with the increase of the outer perimeter. This is precisely what happened in Long An province in July 1965, when the 50th Regiment left the secured area along Route 4 to undertake clearing operations. Viet Cong activity along the highway soon forced the return of the regiment. "Interview with Lt Col Edwin Chamberlain, former Senior Advisor, 50th Regiment," 23 Mar 1966. This problem is compounded when the oilspot expands to the point that it abuts against a Viet Cong base, or even includes the base within the clearing zone. In this case, Viet Cong units can readily launch forays into the pacification area from their base, as they do continually in Long An and Hau Nghia provinces from the Plain of Reeds, or in Binh Duong and Tay Ninh provinces from the Bo Loi forest, and so forth. These are some of the military factors that mitigate against carrying out the scheme of a cleared zone and a secured zone in practice, without the commitment of large forces. Additionally, there is the question of the time that it takes to pacify an area, recruit and field sufficient paramilitary forces, and so forth. If the enemy utilizes this time to consolidate his hold on his own areas, and build up his forces, the oilspot will be pushing outward against stronger resistance. Experience with the execution of the Hop Tac plan, which illustrate these points, will be taken up in the next chapter.

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priority for pacification are shown in Appendix 4. Within this latter group of provinces, priority of support was assigned to Tay Ninh, Dinh Tuong, Vinh Long, Go Cong, and the districts of Kien Hoa bordering on the Mekong River.<sup>150</sup>

(C) The task organization of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam was designed to support the foregoing scheme of priorities.<sup>151</sup> A major reallocation of regular forces was completed in October 1964 in order to support the pacification of the first priority provinces. Appendix 6 shows the task organization of the Vietnamese Army for the period 1 May-1 October 1964.<sup>152</sup> Appendix 7 shows the task organization for the period 1 October 1964-1 April 1965.<sup>153</sup>

(C) The major changes made in the task organization on 1 October 1964 were designed to support the Hop Tac plan for the pacification of the first priority provinces. These changes included the movement of the 25th (ARVN) Division from the Quang Ngai-Binh Dinh area of II Corps to the Long An-Hau Nghia area of III Corps; the resumption by III Corps of responsibility for Long An province, which placed all the first priority provinces in the III Corps Tactical Zone; and the inclusion of 7th (ARVN) Division in IV Corps rather than under the High Command, now

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<sup>150</sup>USMACV, J-3 Background Briefing, May 1964. "Preparation of Pacification and Development Plans for 1965," pp. 1-2.

<sup>151</sup>See Appendix 5 for the basic organization and chain of command of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF). USMACV, J-3 Background Briefing, Oct 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>152</sup>RVNAF High Command, "Annex C (Territorial Responsibilities and Positioning of Forces) to Chien Thang Plan," 28 Mar 1964. (Source is SECRET), (Data shown in Appendix 6 is CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, Military Reports, Apr 1964. (Source is SECRET, data used in Appendix 6 is CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>153</sup>USMACV, J-3 Background Briefing, Oct 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, Military Reports, Sep 1964. (Source is SECRET, data used for Appendix 7 is CONFIDENTIAL).

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that it no longer commanded the southern approaches to Saigon.<sup>154</sup>

(C) The movement of the 25th Division was accompanied by the transfer of responsibility for Quang Ngai province from II Corps to I Corps, effective 1 October 1964. This had one unfortunate consequence, in that it would now be more difficult to shift forces from Quang Ngai (I Corps) to Binh Dinh (II Corps) than in the past when one division was responsible for both provinces.

(C) Another change was the transfer of the Binh Lam Special Zone from III Corps to II Corps. The 23d (ARVN) Division, which assumed responsibility for the Binh Lam Special Zone, was not assigned any additional forces.<sup>155</sup>

(C) It is sometimes heard that the number of battalions in the first priority provinces (Hop Tac area) did not increase as a result of the redispositions effected in September and October 1964. This contention is not correct. Formerly, there were three regiments--the 7th, 8th, and 46th--in Binh Duong and Hau Nghia, and one regiment--the 10th--and one airborne battalion in Long An. With the transfer of the Binh Lam Special Zone to II Corps, the 43d Regiment was released for employment in Hau Nghia (or Phuoc Tuy); and the 49th Regiment, 25th Division, replaced the airborne battalion along Route 5 in Long An. In short, after 1 October 1964 there were four regiments--the 7th, 8th, 46th and 43d--in Binh Duong and Hau Nghia, and two regiments--the 50th (which replaced the 10th) and 49th--in Long An. Furthermore, the 52d Ranger Battalion, which

<sup>154</sup> USMACV, Military Reports, Mar 1964 and Sept 1964. ARVN Order of Battle, Sept 1964 and Oct 1964. The 7th Division played a key role in Saigon politics; in fact, an attempted coup was launched against the Khanh-Minh-Khiem Government by its commander at the time of the reorganization in September 1964. See USMACV, "Daily Staff Journal," 13 Sept 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>155</sup> ARVN Order of Battle, Oct 1964.

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habitually operated in Long An, was left there by the 7th Division when it moved out of Long An.<sup>156</sup>

(C) Besides permitting reinforcement of the Hop Tac area, the redispositions in October also permitted reconstitution of the General Reserve. Formerly, two Marine battalions were employed continuously in Go Cong, and two airborne battalions reinforced the 7th Division in Long An and Dinh Tuong. Now all of these battalions were returned to the general reserve, and the 7th Division was required to take up the slack with the regiment that had formerly been stationed in Long An.<sup>157</sup>

(C) The re-allocation of combat power resulting from the foregoing changed is summarized in Table 1, which shows the distribution of infantry-type battalions, not including the General Reserve, on 1 June and 1 October 1964. Basically, there was a shift of four battalions from II Corps to III Corps. In order to accomplish this, the 25th Division, with two regiments, moved from II Corps to III Corps; the 43d Regiment moved from the Binh Lam Special Zone to Hau Nghia; two ranger battalions were sent from III Corps to I Corps (Quang Ngai); one ranger battalion was sent from IV Corps to II Corps; and the 10th Regiment moved from Long An to Kien Hoa.<sup>158</sup>

(U) Thus, the force deployments to support the pacification of the top priority provinces under the Chien Thang plan were not completed until October 1964.

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<sup>156</sup>ARVN Order of Battle, Jun, Sep, Oct 1964. The author is personally familiar with these movements, as it was his responsibility to record them for the order of battle reports.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid.

<sup>158</sup>Ibid. I Corps shows an increase of only one ranger battalion, instead of two, and IV Corps shows no change in ranger battalions, because in August I Corps had to give up one ranger battalion--the 32d--to IV Corps. ARVN Order of Battle, Aug 1964.

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TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF INFANTRY AND RANGER BATTALIONS BY CORPS, ADJUSTED  
FOR CHANGES IN CORPS BOUNDARIES, 1 JUNE AND 1 OCTOBER 1964<sup>a</sup>

	<u>Infantry</u> <u>Battalions</u>	<u>Ranger</u> <u>Battalions</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Battalions</u>
<b>I Corps (includes Quang Ngai)</b>			
1 June 1964	21	2	23
1 October 1964	21	3	24
<b>II Corps (includes Binh Lam Special Zone)</b>			
1 June 1964	24	3	27
1 October 1964	18	4	22
<b>III Corps (includes Long An)</b>			
1 June 1964	18	10	28
1 October 1964	24	8	32
<b>IV Corps (includes 7th Division)</b>			
1 June 1964	27	5	32
1 October 1964	27	5	32
<b>Capital Military District</b>			
1 June 1964	3		3
1 October 1964	3		3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>113</b>

<sup>a</sup>Source: USMACV, Military Reports, May-October 1964. USMACV, J-3, ARVN Order of Battle, June-October 1964.

NOTE: Corps boundaries are as of 1 October 1964. On 1 June 1964, there were two regiments in Quang Ngai, one regiment in the Binh Lam Special Zone, and one regiment and a ranger battalion in Long An. The 93 infantry and 20 ranger battalions accounted for are the total authorized on 1 June and 1 October 1964. Data in the table is classified CONFIDENTIAL.

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Conclusion

(U) This chapter has analyzed the Chien Thang plan in terms of its basic assumptions, concepts for military support, and requirements for success. The main thrust of the analysis has been to show the emphasis of the plan--in its military aspect--on the assignment of regular forces to pacification missions, and maintenance of these forces in pacification areas until relieved by paramilitary forces.

(U) Since each province was a claimant upon national military resources, the tendency toward dispersion of force among a number of oilspots, incapable of mutual support, was indicated. The practical limitation on the ability to reinforce threatened oilspots, due to the inhibition against removing forces from pacification areas--an inhibition that was reinforced by command arrangements as well--was also pointed out.

(U) Earlier chapters have pointed out that, beginning in July 1964, the Viet Cong accelerated the development of their main forces and escalated to the level of mobile warfare. The resource mobilization activities underpinning this achievement have been discussed at length.

(U) Two questions arising from this development must be faced. The first question is: Since the Viet Cong build-up coincided with the launching of the pacification effort, to what extent was this build-up made possible by the fact that regular troops were operating in the vicinity of the oilspots, allowing the Viet Cong to conduct their mobilization activities in areas under their control substantially free of Government interference? Obviously, no precise answer can be given to this question, nor can it be known whether military operations of the search-and-destroy type would have significantly impaired the Viet Cong

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build-up. However, it is possible to suggest that the Viet Cong were able to consolidate their control apparatus and undertake their mobilization activities more readily because of the lack of significant interference by Government forces. Without the systematic projection of military power into the Viet Cong--controlled areas--not necessarily at the bases, but at the more densely populated areas, aiming at the "combat hamlets"--there could be little interference with Viet Cong activities.

(U) The second question is: To what extent did the substantial build-up in Viet Cong main forces, and the launching of mobile warfare,<sup>159</sup> invalidate the spreading oilspot concept of pacification? In other words, is it possible to pacify in the face of main force battalions?

(C) It has been pointed out that the Chien Thang plan, in its concept of "area saturation," and in the supporting intelligence estimates, assumed the continuation of guerrilla warfare. One cannot help but be struck by the fact that the military concepts of the plan make sense when applied to the guerrilla warfare stage of insurgency, and that such a plan, if implemented earlier, might have produced substantial results.

(U) An answer to the second question, based on empirical data, will be attempted in the next chapter. At this point, it is possible to

<sup>159</sup>It is emphasized that the term "mobile warfare", as used in this paper, refers to the period in which the enemy deliberately undertook to engage and defeat Government regular forces in battle. While guerrilla warfare continued, attacks by main force units became the main threat. Unlike the guerrillas, whose sphere of activity was localized, the main force units could maneuver to deliver widely dispersed attacks, or concentrate to attack and hold a given area. The Viet Cong strategy in this regard has been discussed in Chapter III, and the execution of this strategy is presented in Chapter VI. The term "mobile warfare" has a specific empirical content, and is used to refer to a specific stage of the insurgency in South Vietnam. It is not used in the general sense in which it is often encountered in the Maoist lexicon, as obviously the term, without reference to a specific historical context, has many meanings for many people.

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suggest that once mobile warfare has begun, area saturation becomes more difficult, because battalions have to remain more concentrated than when operating against guerrillas. Also, it is possible for the enemy to take advantage of the fact that pacification forces are inflexibly deployed among several oilspots, by concentrating his forces against one oilspot at a time.

(U) The enemy can also launch strikes with his mobile forces deep into the pacification zones, thereby making it difficult in practice to establish clearing and securing zones from which organized enemy forces have been eliminated. It is probable that clearing forces will seldom be adequate to defend along the entire outer perimeter of the oilspot. Enemy units can, therefore, move behind the clearing forces to attack the securing and pacified zones. Continual probes of this nature can create such a degree of insecurity in the inner zones that the process of outward expansion is brought to a halt.

(U) It would appear that a sound course of action for the enemy, when confronted by our advancing forces, is to strike deep into our rear to throw our forces on the defensive. If the reaction to this is a halt to "re-pacify" the rear area, involving perhaps the commitment of additional forces to the securing mission, the result is probably what the enemy desires. It would seem that the proper remedy for deep attacks is holding the mobile reaction forces in readiness, not commitment of additional forces to securing.

(U) The Chien Thang plan also contained other assumptions, such as the ability to deploy the necessary resources, the ability to raise a corps of efficient (if not dedicated) mobile action cadre, and the ability to recruit the requisite paramilitary forces. It also assumed that all this could be done in the short run, as the long run contained too many

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political uncertainties. The plan soon faced the dilemma that the short run goals--a climate of security, establishment of a Government infrastructure, raising paramilitary forces--required for their success preconditions that could only be established over the long run, preconditions such as confidence in the Government and willingness to take sides against the Viet Cong.

(U) The very tenuous reasoning upon which the success of the entire plan depended is nowhere better illustrated than in the following excerpt from the High Command's implementing directive for 1965:

Gradually, as time goes by and due to the permanent [securing] activities of the Regional Force:

- a. The village inhabitants will become more interested, enthusiastic, and confident in the National Government and will participate in the pacification task.
- b. The youths who have dissevered or "fled away" will gradually return.
- c. The VC cadres will either flee away, be arrested, or be destroyed.

If the three above requirements can actually be satisfied, we will then start forming an armed force made up by the village residents themselves to replace the Regional Force. Otherwise, every effort in these spheres will only lead to failure.<sup>160</sup>

It should be noted that, of the foregoing preconditions, the first two are not under the Government's control, and the third is difficult to achieve.

(U) The United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, linked success, in terms of the ability to recruit Regional and Popular forces, to conditions that would be established by the pacification program:

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<sup>160</sup>"Appendix 2 (PF and Civil Defense Force) to Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces) to Directive AB 139," p. 1.

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As military security is established, measured controls are imposed, local government is strengthened and the New Life program gets underway, the ability to recruit Popular and Regional Forces should improve.

Recruiting and training these forces to replace ARVN forces is absolutely mandatory and is the key to continued progress of pacification to other areas. . . .

High quality mobile action cadre are the key to the commencement of the New Life program. . . .<sup>161</sup>

(U) It is evident that the ability to recruit paramilitary forces, which was of vital import to the employment of the regular forces, was largely dependent upon the prior success of other aspects of the pacification effort.

(C) It was imperative that regular forces not be immobilized--relatively speaking--on securing missions. The implication was that, if the prospects for recruiting paramilitary forces were not good, or if the process were to be dragged out indefinitely, then securing was not the best use of the regular forces and another use should be found for the troops.<sup>162</sup>

(C) Recognizing this, the later pacification documents established certain prerequisites to be achieved prior to undertaking securing operations. These criteria were stated as follows:

Prerequisites: Securing should take place only when an area is ready for it and there is a reasonable chance to create a sustainable government presence. Guidelines are needed by province and district chiefs to assist them in determining the direction and timing of the securing effort. Therefore, securing operations may be undertaken in a particular area when the following conditions are generally met:

(a) Organized VC military forces have been eliminated from the area.

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<sup>161</sup>Pacification Tasks, *passim*. Emphasis supplied.

<sup>162</sup>"ARVN should normally not be tied down in securing operations." The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures, p. 5.

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(b) Sufficient ARVN or RF are active in clearing operations around the exposed periphery of the area and in search and destroy operations against nearest areas of VC strength to keep the VC off balance and on the defensive.

(c) Necessary PF have been or can, within a short time, be recruited locally within the area to assure local security against an enemy with a strength of not over a platoon.

(d) Surveys of the hamlets have been completed and people's attitudes indicate a favorable climate for expansion of pacification activities. Potential active supporters of the Government have been identified as well and their use as local organizers, both overt and covert, has been planned.

(e) A nucleus of informants is in place in the hamlets and a plan for acting on information they provide is ready for rapid execution.<sup>163</sup>

(C) Now, if these guidelines were adhered to, it would appear that the number of securing operations justifying the commitment of regular forces would be limited. Indeed, the implication of the guidelines is that a sound paramilitary force structure--consisting of Popular Force squads in hamlets, mobile Popular Force platoons for village security, and mobile Regional Force companies for rapid reaction to a threat--must be capable of establishment in the area "within a short time." If this condition could be met, it would be necessary to employ only limited regular forces on securing operations for limited periods.<sup>164</sup>

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163 Ibid., p. 4.

164 The guidelines were a definite advance over the earlier view that the commitment of regular forces to pacification would insure eventual success. The guidelines recognize that several factors--not all of them military--are involved in realizing even the preconditions of the securing phase. It is possible that a number of pacification operations were begun on the theory that regular forces would insure success. Indeed, progress could be shown up to the point where the mobile action cadre were introduced, and securing was begun. Then, when the inability to recruit paramilitary forces became a limiting factor, expansion came to a halt. The areas being secured eventually became pacified, but no new areas could be brought under pacification because the troops were inadequate to both secure the original area and clear new areas. This was the case of the regiment that was committed to pacification along Route 4 in Long An province. See Report of Inspection, Long An Province.

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(U) This chapter has dealt with the theory and concepts of pacification under the Chien Thang plan. It is now necessary to take up the actual implementation of the plan in its military aspects. The experience of the first year of the plan will be considered with a view to shedding light on the questions raised in this chapter, namely, the validity of the spreading oilspot concept in a period of mobile warfare, the extent to which forces were committed to clearing and securing missions in dispersed oilspots, and whether or not the plan was supported by an adequate paramilitary force structure.

## APPENDIXES

Appendix 1      Figure 1 - Village Organizational Chart

Source: "Annex E (Employment of Regular, Regional, Popular, CIDG, Civil Defense and National Police Forces) to RVNAF High Command Directive AB 139," 25 Dec 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

Appendix 2      Figure 2 - GVN Organization for Pacification and U. S. Counterpart

Source: USMACV, J-3, Memorandum, Subject: "Outline of Requirements to Pacify South Vietnam," 11 Mar 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

Appendix 3      Figure 3 - Outline Province Pacification Plan

Source: RVN, Central Pacification Committee, Permanent Bureau, Memorandum, Subject: "Preparation of Pacification and Development Plans for 1965," 21 Oct 1964, p. 8. (CONFIDENTIAL).

Appendix 4      Figure 4 - National Priorities and Phasing of the Chien Thang Plan

Source: USMACV, J-3 Background Briefing, May 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). RVN, Central Pacification Committee, Permanent Bureau, Memorandum, Subject: "Preparation of Pacification and Development Plans for 1965," 21 Oct 1964, pp. 1-2. (CONFIDENTIAL).

Appendix 5      Figure 5 - Chain of Command, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces

Source: USMACV, J-3 Background Briefing, Oct 1964.

Appendix 6      Figure 6 - Territorial Organization and Deployment of Forces Under the Chien Thang Plan, 1 May 1964-1 October 1964

Source: RVNAF High Command, "Annex C (Territorial Responsibilities and Positioning of Forces) to Chien Thang Plan," 28 Mar 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, Military Reports, April 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

Appendix 7      Figure 7 - Territorial Organization and Deployment of Forces Under the Chien Thang Plan, 1 October 1964-1 April 1965

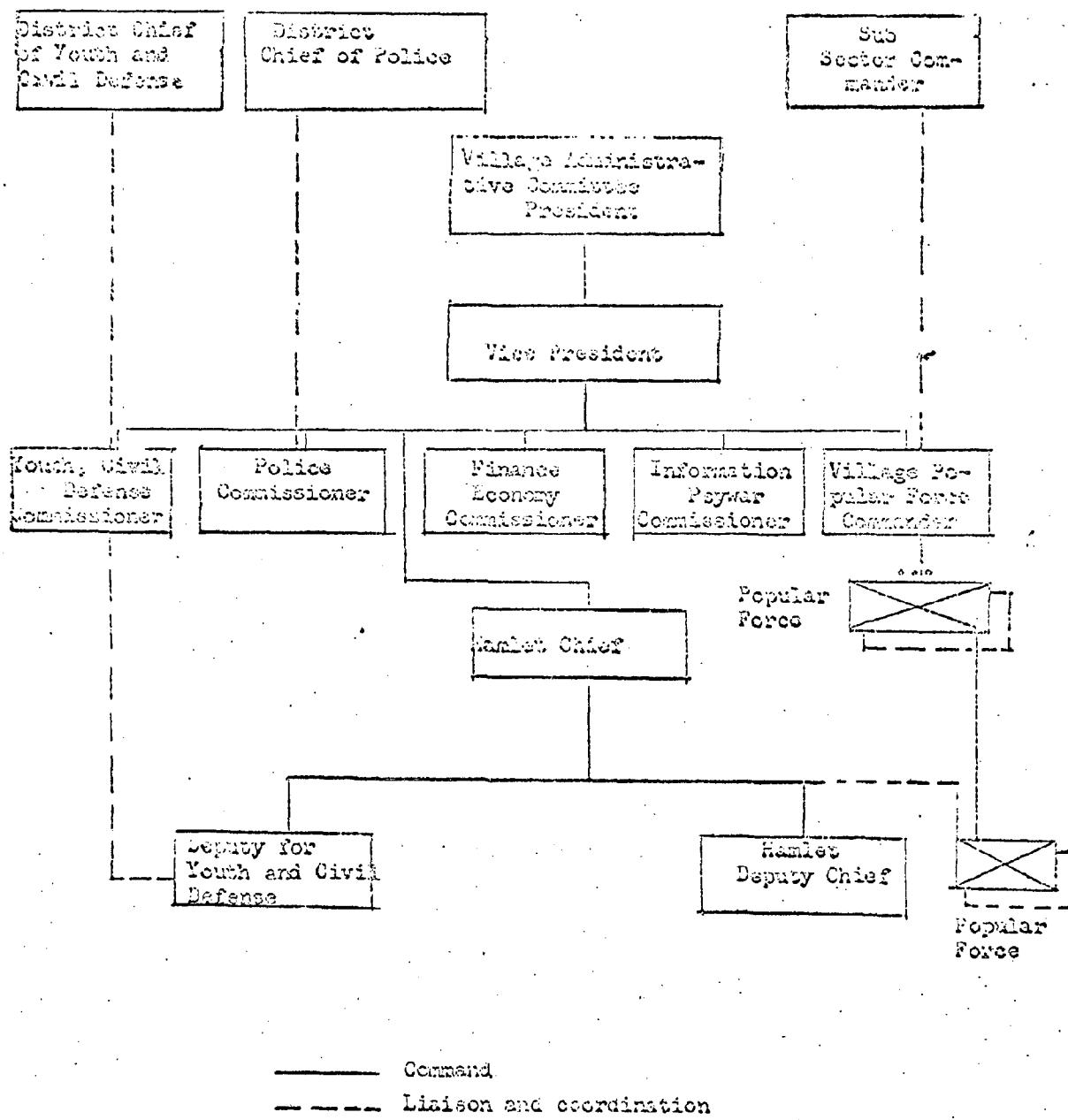
Source: USMACV, J-3 Background Briefing, October 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, Military Reports, Sept 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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FIGURE 1  
SOLAR EXCITATION ENERGY

## Village Organization

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### Command

### — — — Liaison and coordination

## Appendix 1

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FIGURE 2

GOV

ORGANIZATION  
FOR  
PACIFICATIONCONFIDENTIAL  
U.S.  
COUNTERPARTDETERMINES  
PACIFICATION  
POLICIESCENTRAL  
PACIFICATION  
COMMITTEECOUNTRY  
TEAMSMT. OF  
THE EXECUTIVECINOVAT  
SECY GEN. OF THE CPCCOMPOSITE  
EXECUTIVE  
AGENT

Open book w/ C.I.A. logo

EXECUTE THE  
PACIFICATIONREGIONAL GOVERNORS  
CG OF CTZSENIOR ADVISOR,  
CORPS COMPOSITE  
ADVISORY TEAMC.C.  
OF  
CTZSR. ADVISOR,  
DIVISION  
ADV. TEAMCHIEF OF  
PROVINCE  
S  
SECTOR  
COMMANDERSENIOR ADVISOR,  
PROV. COMPOSITE  
ADVISORY TEAMPACIFICATION CHANNEL  
EXCL. PURE MILITARY CHAIN OF CMD

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FIGURE 3  
OUTLINE PROVINCE PACIFICATION PLAN

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## LEGEND:



PACIFIED AREAS



PHASE BOUNDARIES



DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_ 1: 100,000

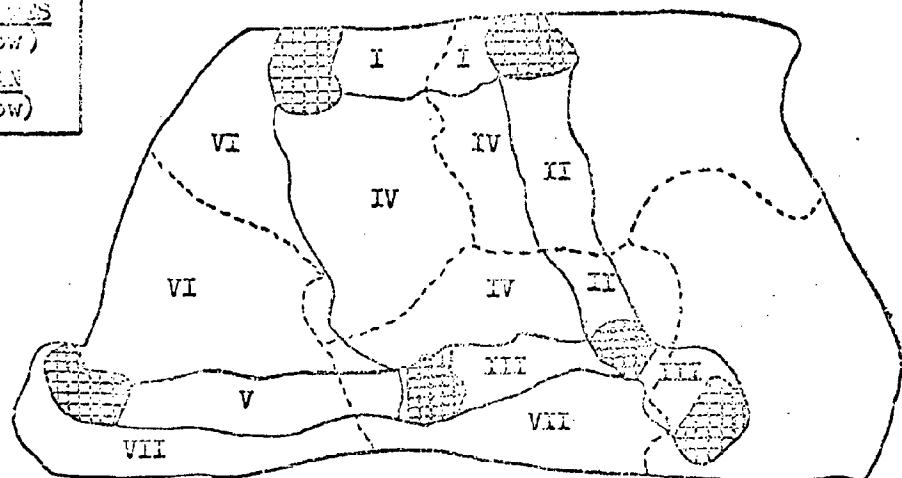
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## PACIFIED AREAS

(See Below)

## TASK ORGAN

(See Below)



## PHASE DATES

	10	Hamlets already Constructed
I - 2 Months (1 May - 30 Jun 64)	22	Hamlets Planned
II - 2 Months (1 Jul - 31 Aug 64)	18	Hamlets Planned
III - 2 Months (1 Sep - 31 Oct 64)	21	Hamlets Planned
IV - 3 Months (1 Nov - 31 Jan 65)	30	Hamlets Planned
V - 4 Months (1 Feb - 31 May 65)	25	Hamlets Planned
VI - 4 Months (1 Jun - 30 Sep 65)	23	Hamlets Planned
VII - 2 Months (1 Oct - 31 Dec 65)	8	Hamlets Planned
TOTAL	157	

## TASK ORGANIZATION

Appendix 3

9th Ranger Battalion 248  
35th Civil Guard Battalion

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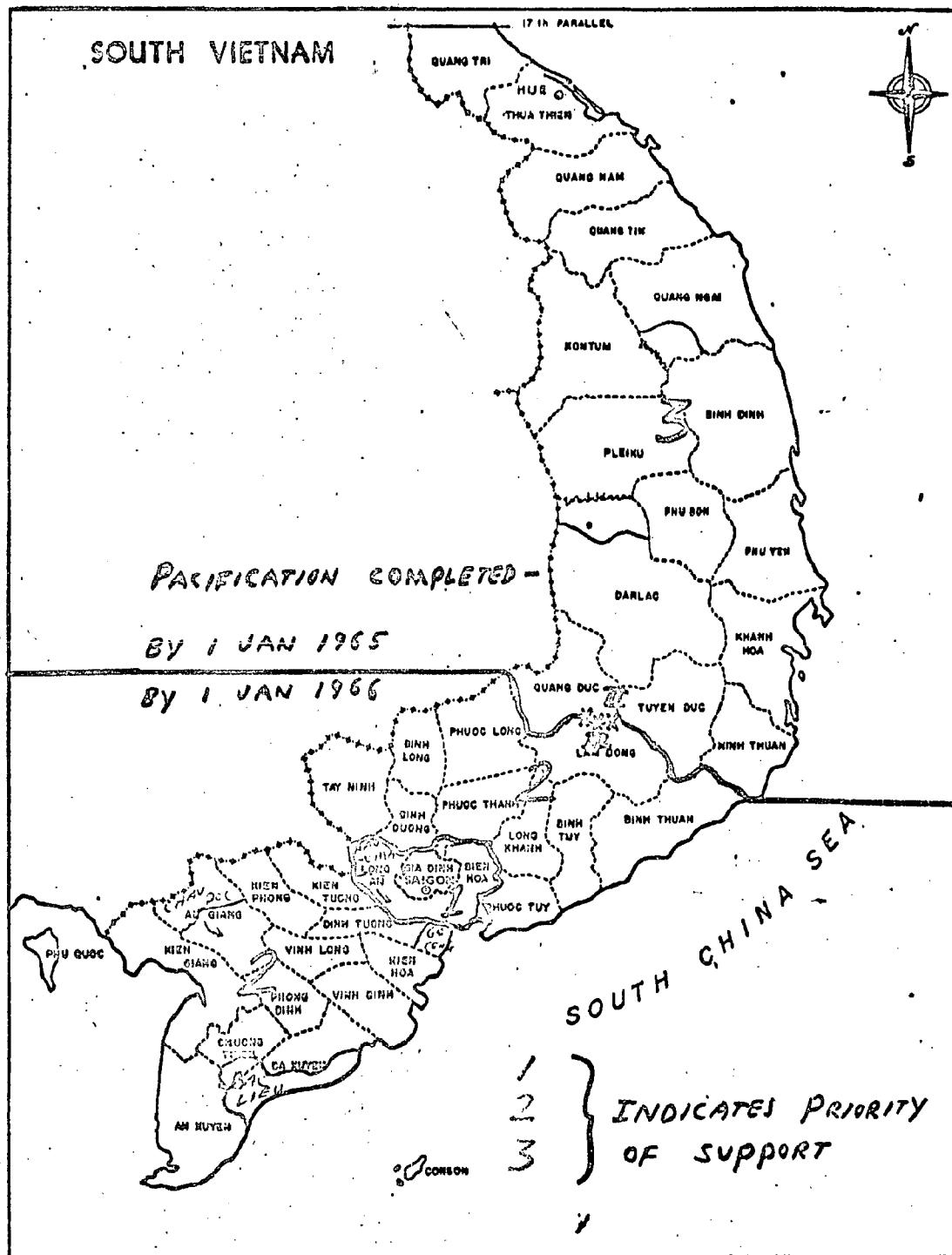
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## CONTENTS

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FIGURE 4

## NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND PHASING OF THE CHIEN THANG PLAN



## Appendix 4

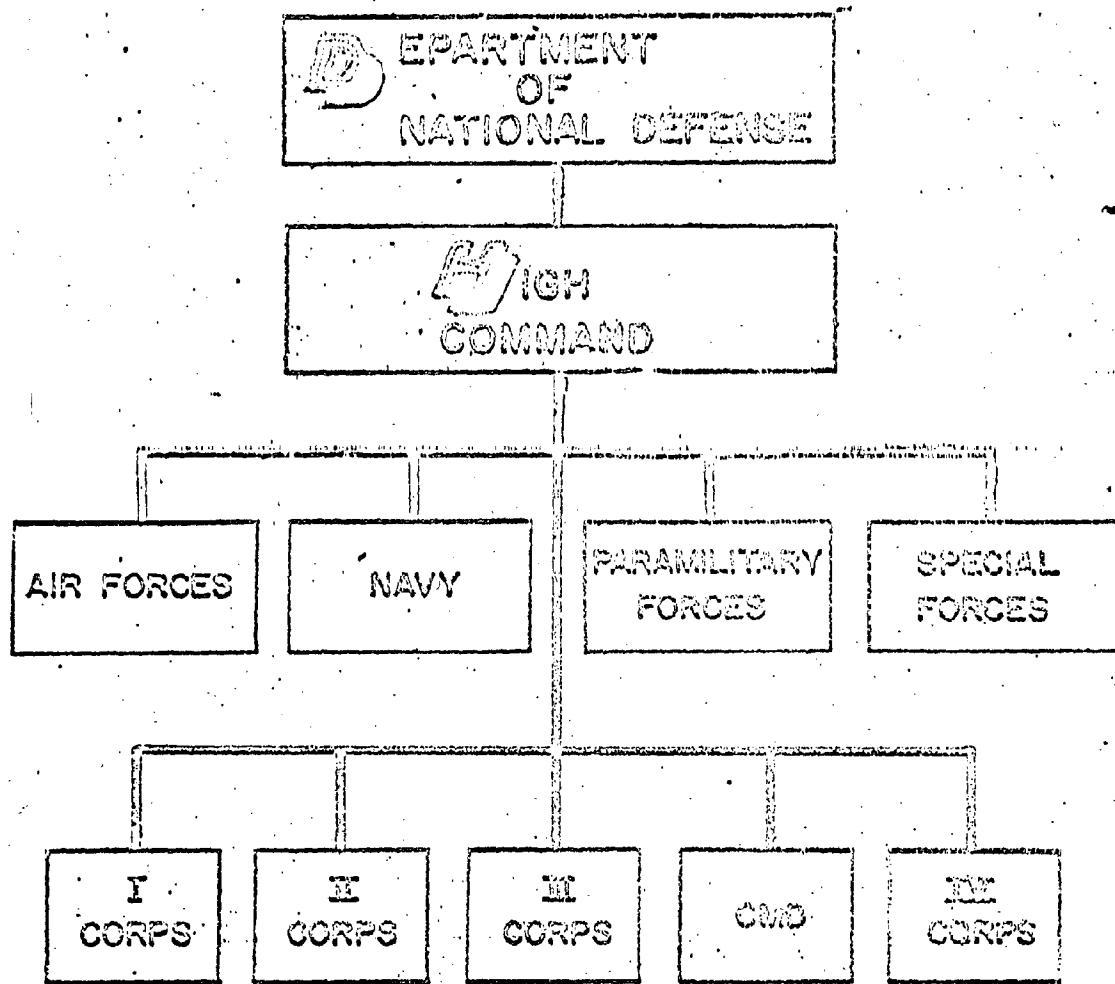
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FIGURE 5

CHAIN OF COMMAND, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES

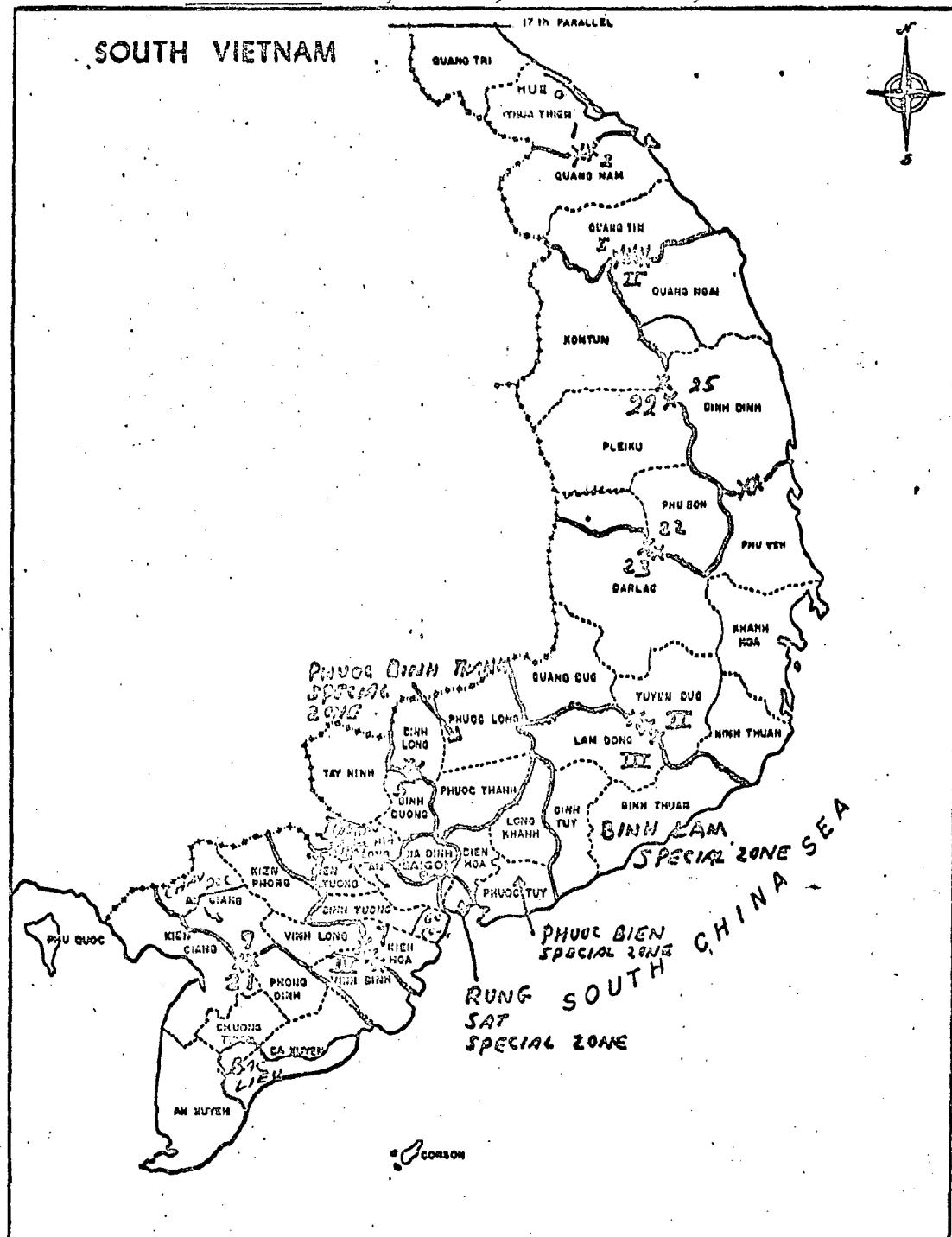


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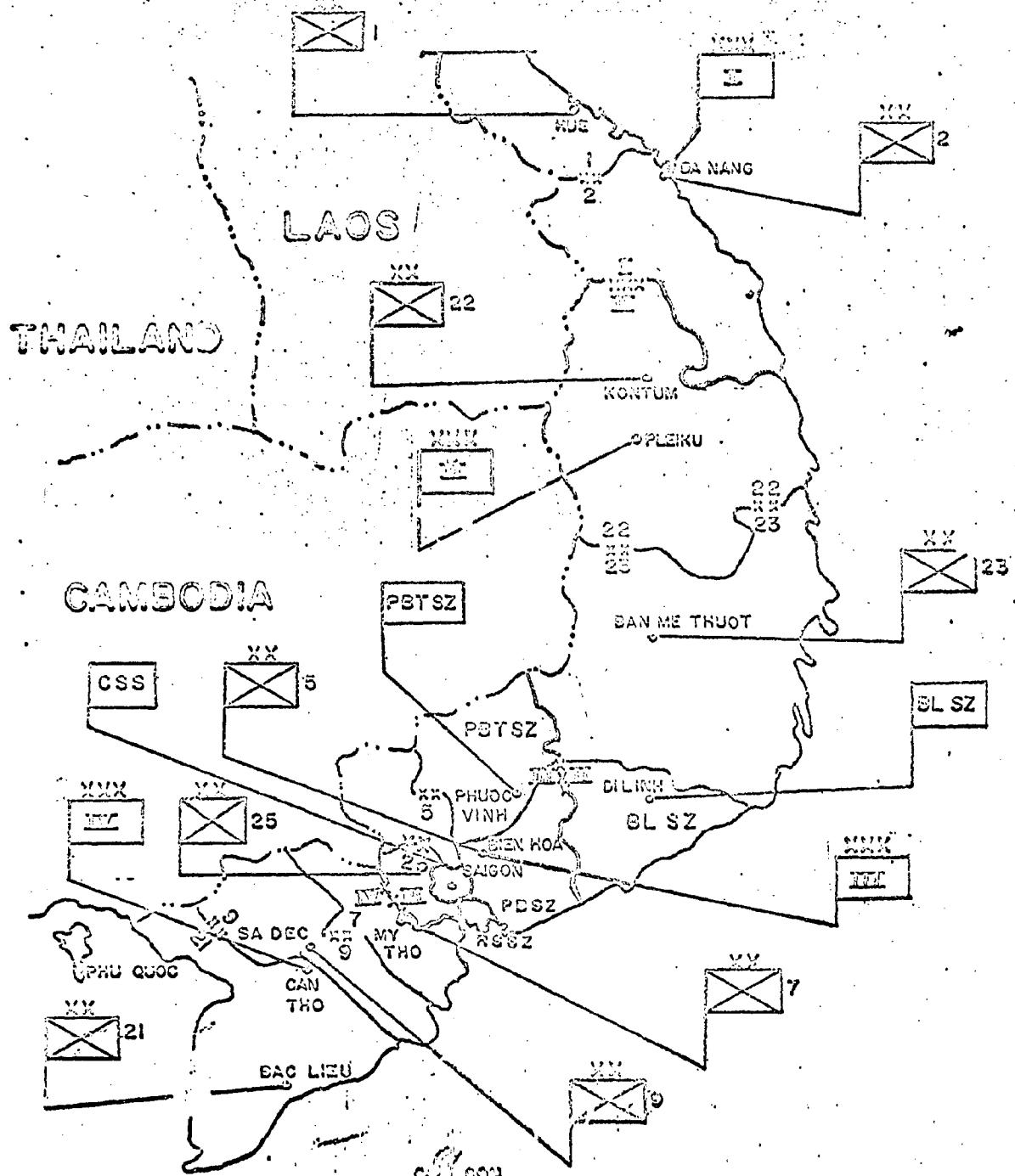
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FIGURE 6  
TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION AND DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES UNDER  
THE CHIEN THANG PLAN, 1 MAY 1964--1 OCTOBER 1964



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FIGURE 7

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION AND DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES UNDER  
THE CHIEN THANG PLAN, 1 OCTOBER 1964-1 APRIL 1965

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## CHAPTER VI

## A BALANCE SHEET OF THE CHIEN THANG PLAN, APRIL 1964-APRIL 1965

The enemy is being bitterly defeated and his internal contradictions are very acute and deep. On our side, we are scoring many achievements and successes. We are very enthusiastic as our revolutionary pride is constantly promoted. We have the sympathy and support in the country as well as in the world. This is our strategic opportunity. We are in the position of relentlessly attacking the enemy. This tendency is growing every day. The initiative in the overall picture is now in our hands.

--Viet Cong document, early 1965.

The 1965 pacification plan is not realistic, as there are not the necessary military resources to carry out the plan. Also, the difference between the resources required and the resources available is discouraging. If the Government begins pacification in an area and it has to leave there will be very bad psychological effects.

--USOM representative in Dinh Tuong Province, 31 March 1965.

Introduction

(U) The execution of the Chien Thang plan was influenced significantly by the Viet Cong offensive that began in July 1964, and by the availability of resources--especially manpower. Both of these factors were in turn shaped, in part, by the concepts of the plan. On the one hand, when the Government of Vietnam assigned the bulk of its regular army (ARVN) battalions to pacification oilspots, to permit methodical expansion of control from secure to insecure areas, the Viet Cong were left relatively free to raise the forces required for their offensive. On the other hand, the Government's manpower requirement was shaped by

the necessity of recruiting sufficient paramilitary forces to provide local security in each oilspot, so that regular troops could continue to expand their clearing operations.<sup>1</sup>

(U) The pace of pacification--at least, the pace of the military effort in support of pacification--was geared to the rate of recruiting, training, and fielding paramilitary forces. Success therefore depended in large measure upon manpower mobilization. As this chapter will show, such manpower mobilization was not effective in meeting requirements. Further, if a realistic projection of manpower requirements were made, the question of the feasibility of attaining the required manpower level would have been seen more clearly, and this possibly would have aided in the execution of the plan.

(U) It should be recognized that manpower mobilization is a function of population control, which is itself a function of the strength of the control apparatus, popular attitudes, and the pre-emptive proselyting activities of the enemy. This being so, manpower mobilization could very well remain limited in spite of the presence of Government security forces.

(U) Manpower requirements, and the programs and policies needed to support such requirements (conscription, pay, benefits, dependent care, and so forth), had to be projected to keep this process going. This was certainly feasible, as local pacification plans were required to be projected by phase. Thus, it should have been possible to predict manpower requirements and associated money costs for 1 July 1965, the date

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<sup>1</sup>It is evident that, under a different plan, manpower requirements would be arrived at differently. It is also true that the concepts of a plan may impose requirements that are beyond the capability of being fulfilled. This factor must, therefore, be taken into account in judging the soundness of a plan.

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when the priority provinces were scheduled to be pacified. If this were done, the results could have been examined in relation to capabilities, and an estimate made of the feasibility of the Chien Thang plan.

(U) The Viet Cong offensive had a direct impact upon the status of population control and hence upon the manpower problem. In addition, the advance from guerrilla to mobile warfare might very well have entailed a revision of requirements to place greater emphasis on mobile forces. At the minimum, an effective replacement system was required to offset the increased attrition of Government forces, especially the regular forces.

(U) This chapter will look first at the typical utilization of regular forces to support the Chien Thang plan. It will then consider the dimensions of the Viet Cong offensive and the attrition inflicted thereby. The strengths of Government and Viet Cong combat forces in twenty key provinces, at the start of pacification and approximately one year later, will be examined to determine whether the Government made any appreciable progress in manpower mobilization, and whether there was any significant shift in relative strengths due to the Viet Cong build-up. The status of population control, during the period of the Chien Thang plan, will be noted for the same twenty provinces and for the country as a whole. The impact of manpower shortages in retarding the pacification plan by 1 April 1965 will be examined and the appropriate conclusions drawn.

Employment of Regular Forces (ARVN) under the Chien Thang Plan.

(C) Appendix 1 shows an order of battle listing for the Army of the Republic of Vietnam on 14 February 1965, and indicates the mission of each unit under the pacification plan. The date 14 February 1965 was

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selected because it is the best data available, and by that date most of the major troop shifts made to reinforce the Saigon oilspot had been completed.<sup>2</sup> The data of this appendix is summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1

ARVN BATTALIONS<sup>a</sup> AND MISSIONS UNDER THE CHIEN THANG PLAN<sup>b</sup>

	Battalions Engaged in Clearing Operations	Battalions Engaged in Securing Operations	Battalions Employed as Mobile Reaction Forces	Battalions Assigned Security Missions	Total Battalions
I CORPS	4	9	7	4	24
II CORPS	5	10	6	1	22
III CORPS	14	11	6	1	32
IV CORPS		10	20	2	32
CMD		2		1	3
Gen Reserve			11		11
TOTAL	23	42	50	9	124
Percent	19%	34%	40%	7%	

<sup>a</sup>Includes 93 Infantry, 20 Ranger, 6 Airborne and 5 Marine battalions, the total authorized in the RVNAF force structure.

<sup>b</sup>Source: USMACV, J-3, ARVN Order of Battle, 14 Feb 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

(U) The terms "clearing operations" and "securing operations" are military operations in support of the clearing and securing phases of pacification, as defined in Chapter V. The term "mobile reaction force" is used to refer to a unit held in reserve, and to forces employed on

<sup>2</sup>The author was responsible for the preparation of ARVN order of battle reports from August 1964 to April 1965. Through periodic visits to units and discussions with U.S. advisors he was able to ascertain where and how the battalions were employed.

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search and destroy operations against Viet Cong units.<sup>3</sup> The Vietnamese Army uses the term "striking force" instead of "mobile reaction forces."<sup>4</sup>

(C) Units assigned security missions were employed to protect vital installations and facilities, as contrasted to securing an area to bring the population under Government control. Examples were the use of regular battalions to secure the Ha Tien cement plant in Kien Giang province, the Can Tho airfield, the bridges at Tan An and Ben Luc in Long An province, and the ammunition dump and other facilities in Pleiku. Also included in this category were units assigned reconnaissance missions, such as two battalions of the First Division employed in western Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces for surveillance of the approaches from Laos.<sup>5</sup>

(C) In general, battalions engaged in clearing operations were active on the periphery of Government-controlled areas, seeking to expand Government control by eliminating organized Viet Cong resistance and making the area secure for the introduction of pacification cadre. This was the case in III Corps, where the bulk of the battalions operating

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<sup>3</sup>Search and destroy operations have as their object the destruction of enemy forces rather than the pacification of an area. The forces available for such operations could be employed anywhere in the commander's tactical zone, and were not limited to operations in the general area of an oilspot, as were clearing and securing forces. Operations mounted against known or suspected locations of enemy units, or against VC bases, or as a reaction to Viet Cong initiatives are examples of search and destroy operations conducted by mobile reaction forces.

<sup>4</sup>RVN, High Command, Directive AB 139, 12 Nov 1964, p. A-4. (SECRET). This directive prescribes the continuation of the Chien Thang plan in 1965 and specifies the mission of each tactical zone. Among other things, it directs that the regular and regional forces of a tactical zone be distributed as follows: "(1) Pacification forces: 60% (pacification operations) (2) Striking forces: 30% (destroy operations) (3) Reserve forces: 10%." Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>USMACV, J-3, ARVN Order of Battle, 14 Feb 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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under the Hop Tac plan for expansion of the Saigon/Gia Dinh oilspot were engaged in clearing former Viet Cong-controlled territory. However, the picture was not always this bright. Clearing operations also had to be conducted to eliminate Viet Cong encroachments on Government-held areas, as was the case in Binh Dinh province (II Corps) at this time.<sup>6</sup>

(U) Battalions engaged in clearing operations are an indicator of Government initiative, as the forces endeavor to expand Government control to a wider area, or to regain lost ground. On the other hand, battalions engaged in securing operations have the task of maintaining security in an area so that the work of the pacification cadre in restoring Government control (making sure that hamlets meet the six criteria for pacification) can go forward. Such battalions are fully committed to the security-restoration mission, and the further expansion of Government control is dependent upon the fielding of adequate paramilitary forces to assume the territorial security mission. As paramilitary forces become available, the regular troops regain their mobility, that is, the ability to project themselves into Viet Cong-controlled areas that results from being relieved of the securing mission in the oilspot.<sup>7</sup>

(C) To illustrate, consider the pacification status overlay for Long An Province (for February, 1965), that is contained in Appendix 4.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid. The order of battle report upon which Appendix 1 is based was prepared soon after the Viet Cong defeat of the 40th ARVN Regiment in Binh Dinh. Consequently, several Government battalions were at the time engaged in clearing the Viet Cong from the populous coastal area where several new life hamlets had been overrun. USMACV, Military Reports, February 1965.

<sup>7</sup>As was pointed out in Chapter V, when sufficient paramilitary troops were not available, the regular troops had to perform double duty, assuming operational missions in the daytime and returning to the pacification area at night.

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The north-south strip in the western part of the province, that is shown as pacified or undergoing pacification, was the area secured by the 50th Regiment along strategic Route 4 that links Saigon and the Mekong delta. The 50th Regiment was fully committed to securing the villages, hamlets and bridges in this area from October 1964 to April 1965; prior to that time, from May to October 1964, the 10th Regiment had this mission. For almost a year, therefore, the size of this Government-held area remained approximately the same (compare the February 1965 pacification status overlay in Appendix 2 with those for earlier dates) because the troops were fully employed in securing the area and paramilitary forces to relieve them of this mission did not become available.<sup>8</sup>

(C) Table 1 discloses that a relatively high percentage of regular forces were engaged in securing operations. In addition, many of the battalions engaged in clearing operations in III Corps were preparing to enter the securing phase.<sup>9</sup> and, in any event, restricted their operations to their assigned areas on the periphery of the Saigon oilspot. All told, 60 percent of the available regular forces were engaged in pacification and security missions, and 40 percent as mobile reaction forces. This conforms, by coincidence, exactly to the High Command guideline which called for 60 percent pacification forces and 40 percent striking and reserve forces.<sup>10</sup> I and II Corps also distributed their forces approximately in accordance with the national guideline. From

<sup>8</sup> USMACV, J-3, Report of Staff Visit to Long An Province to Determine Manpower Requirements for Pacification, 1 November 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). Hop Tac Secretariat, Letter 26 April 1965, Subject: "Report of Inspection" (Long An province). (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Hop Tac Secretariat, Letter 24 March 1965, Subject: "Report of Inspection" (Binh Duong province). (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>10</sup> Directive AB 139, p. A-4.

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Table 1, in I Corps 70 percent of the available forces, and in II Corps 73 percent, were engaged in pacification and security operations.

(C) In III Corps, because of the emphasis on pacification under the Hop Tac plan, 78 percent of the forces were engaged in clearing and securing missions. However, as an example of the continuing intrusion of operational requirements upon the pacification mission, at the time of the 14 February 1965 order of battle report the critical situation in Phuoc Tuy province, resulting from the defeat of Government forces at Binh Gia in late December 1964, had resulted in the removal of the 43d Regiment from its pacification zone in Hau Nghia province for operations in Phuoc Tuy.<sup>11</sup> The periodic requirement for the 5th Division to open Route 13 in Binh Duong province has already been mentioned.<sup>12</sup>

(C) In IV Corps, the pattern of employment of forces was perceptibly different from that in the rest of the nation. Approximately half of the forces were retained as mobile reaction forces and employed on search and destroy operations in Viet Cong-controlled areas. This was particularly so in the 21st Division, where ten of eleven available battalions were employed on search and destroy operations throughout the lower delta. It had long been maintained by Vietnamese commanders and some United States advisors at IV Corps, and particularly at 21st Division, that Viet Cong control in the delta was so extensive, and Viet Cong forces so strong, that the best use of Government forces was to destroy the Viet Cong wherever they could be found. It was held that regular forces were insufficient to accomplish pacification while

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<sup>11</sup>ARVN Order of Battle, 14 February 1965, supplemental ncte. USMACV, Military Reports, Jan-Feb 1965.

<sup>12</sup>See Chapter V.

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at the same time retaining the military initiative against the Viet Cong.<sup>13</sup> As a result, while the 7th and 9th Divisions employed considerable regular forces for securing operations, the 21st Division utilized paramilitary forces exclusively for this role and employed the bulk of the regular battalions on operations against the enemy.<sup>14</sup> This strategy produced several notable victories against the Viet Cong in IV Corps in November and December, and thereby maintained Government military ascendancy in the delta.<sup>15</sup>

(U) In addition to regular troops, paramilitary forces--Regional Force companies and Popular Force platoons and squads--were employed in each province in a territorial security role in support of pacification. The strengths of these units in twenty key provinces in May 1964 and February 1965 are contained in Appendix 2. This will be discussed further below.

(C) Basically, this was the employment of Government forces in support of the Chien Thang plan. A large proportion of the regular

<sup>13</sup>Conversation with the U.S. Senior Advisor, 21st Division, in July 1964. Interview with the former G-3 Advisor, 21st Division, on 1<sup>4</sup> April 1966. It should be noted that the terrain of the delta--flat and open--loaned itself to the employment of helicopter-mobile troops and aerial firepower, thereby facilitating quick strikes against the enemy. It was felt that if such strikes could keep the enemy under pressure and off balance, further inroads against Government--controlled areas would be lessened. *Ibid.* (In addition, numerous other conversations, visits, and participation in operations in the delta by the author serve to support this statement of the general approach to the employment of forces in IV Corps and the 7th, 9th, and 21st Division areas.) The actual employment of forces is a matter of record in the order of battle reports, such as Appendix 1, and in the Military Reports and Senior Advisor's Monthly Evaluations for the period June 1964-April 1965.

<sup>14</sup>ARVN Order of Battle. The operations statistics in the Military Reports for April 1964 to April 1965, and in the Senior Advisor's Monthly Evaluations for June 1964 to April 1965 also clearly bear this out.

<sup>15</sup>USMACV, Military Reports, Nov-Dec 1964.

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troops, and all the paramilitary forces, were employed on pacification and security operations in each province. The combat strengths of these forces in twenty key provinces is given in Appendix 2. Also, the areas labeled as "pacified" and "undergoing pacification" in the pacification status overlays of Appendix 4 depict the general location where Government strength was concentrated. All told, 40 percent of the available battalions were employed in a mobile reaction role, and these battalions were also dispersed throughout the country. A comparison of the data in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 reveals that the bulk of the regular forces supporting pacification were distributed throughout the twenty key provinces, with 26 battalions or 37 percent of these forces concentrated in five provinces in the III Corps (Hop Tac) area.

The Viet Cong Offensive.

(C) The dimensions of the Viet Cong offensive, which was launched in July of 1964, are revealed in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 shows monthly totals of Viet Cong incidents for the period November 1963, which was the previous record high for incidents in one month, to June 1965. The intensity of the Viet Cong offensive is revealed in Table 3, which shows Government casualties and weapons losses for the same period.

(C) Table 2 reveals that Viet Cong activity rose sharply from June to July 1964, and then continued at a high rate through October. Total incidents dropped sharply in November, due to the impact of the typhoons and severe floods which struck Central Vietnam.<sup>16</sup> Another

<sup>16</sup>USMACV, Military Reports, Nov 1964. Very extensive damage was inflicted by the storms and floods upon roads, bridges, crops, and New Life Hamlet fortifications in the coastal lowlands. From October to November 1964, Viet Cong incidents declined from 1182 to 733 in I and II Corps areas, or a decline of 38 percent. Incidents in the remainder of the country declined only slightly, from 1181 to 1133.

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TABLE 2

TOTAL VIET CONG INCIDENTS, NOVEMBER 1963 - JUNE 1965<sup>a</sup>

<u>PERIOD</u>		<u>TOTAL INCIDENTS</u>
January	1964	1770
	1965	2206
February	1964	2078
	1965	1982
March	1964	2160
	1965	2056
April	1964	2284
	1965	1860
May	1964	2143
	1965	2263
June	1964	2062
	1965	2597
July	1964	3045
August	1964	2580
September	1964	3091
October	1964	2827
November	1963	3182
	1964	1982
December	1963	1921
	1964	2504

<sup>a</sup>Source: DIA, Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam.  
Data is CONFIDENTIAL.

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## TABLE 3

TOTAL GOVERNMENT CASUALTIES AND WEAPONS LOSSES  
NOVEMBER 1963 - JUNE 1965<sup>a</sup>

		<u>CASUALTIES<sup>b</sup></u>	<u>WEAPONS LOSSES</u>
January	1964	1811	917
	1965	3313	1700
February	1964	1593	708
	1965	4114	2454
March	1964	2033	814
	1965	3104	1442
April	1964	2576	990
	1965	2473	757
May	1964	16017	723
	1965	4065	1701
June	1964	1952	718
	1965	4391	2387
July	1964	3222	1889
August	1964	2811	1106
September	1964	3315	1465
October	1964	3015	1510
November	1963	2883	1595
	1964	2388	1104
December	1963	1670	724
	1964	4147	2111

<sup>a</sup>Source: DIA, Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam.  
Data is CONFIDENTIAL.

<sup>b</sup>Casualties include killed in action, wounded in action, and missing in action.

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upsurge of Viet Cong activity took place in December, and then over-all activity declined during early 1965. The average monthly incident rate for the first six months of 1964 was 2033. For the last six months it rose to 2672, an increase of 28 percent in the monthly incident rate. (While it is recognized that data on total incidents is subject to qualification, since a propaganda incident is weighted equally with an attack, such data is considered a satisfactory indicator of the trend in Viet Cong activity.)

(C) Government casualties and weapons losses shown in Table 3 also rose sharply in the second half of 1964, in line with the trend of Viet Cong activity. In December 1964, Government casualties and weapons losses reached the highest level thus far recorded. Between the first and second half of 1964, average monthly casualties rose from 1935 to 3150, or 63 percent; and average monthly weapons losses rose from 812 to 1531, or 88 percent. Furthermore, in spite of the decline in total Viet Cong incidents between the last six months of 1964 and the first six months of 1965 (from an average monthly rate of 2672 to 2161, or 19 percent), Government casualties and weapons losses continued on an upward trend into 1965. For the first half of 1965, Government casualties rose from an average monthly rate of 3150 to 3577, for a 13.5 percent gain over the previous six months. Government weapons losses also increased 13.5 percent, from 1531 to 1740 average monthly losses. This means that the force or intensity of Viet Cong incidents continued to increase, and that more incidents were occurring with heavy losses.

(C) A particularly disturbing trend that received the attention of the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, during this period was the increase in the number of troops reported missing in action after engagements. The MIA figure increased from a total of 2116

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in the first six months of 1964 to 3920 in the last six months, an increase of 85 percent. This figure increased another 26 percent, from 3920 to 4950 during the first half of 1965. Particularly heavy losses in this category occurred in December 1964 (1092) and in February 1965 (1394), two months which saw heavy engagements.<sup>17</sup> In short, some units were disintegrating in action, even though an undetermined number of survivors would filter back over a period of time to rejoin friendly forces.

(C) One reason for the higher casualties was that attacks by Viet Cong forces of battalion size or larger increased from 14 in the first six months of 1964 to 27 in the last six months of 1964 and 28 in the first six months of 1965.<sup>18</sup> Such a trend was in keeping with the Viet Cong strategy discussed in Chapter III.

(C) The annual totals of Government personnel and weapons losses during 1963, 1964, and 1965 are shown in Table 4. For comparative purposes, Viet Cong losses are also shown. Government losses show an upward trend between 1963 and 1964, and this trend continued in 1965. Viet Cong losses dropped from 1963 to 1964, but rose sharply again in 1965. Of the Viet Cong losses in 1965, 14,451 (35%) were sustained in the first six months of the year.

(C) Between the second and third quarters of 1964, Viet Cong activity rose 35 percent in the II Corps zone, in line with a 34 percent increase nation-wide. Incidents in the I and II Corps zones of Central Vietnam were about 40 percent of total incidents in the country.

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<sup>17</sup>DIA, Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam. P. 29.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 34. These attacks which record only Viet Cong-initiated actions, were of course, not the only engagements with Viet Cong battalions.

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The most significant increase in Viet Cong incidents in II Corps between the second and third quarters was in road and rail sabotage, which increased 150 percent. Of the total incidents in II Corps, most were concentrated in the coastal areas of three provinces: Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, and Phu Yen. Between the second and third quarters of 1964, incidents in Binh Dinh increased 101 percent and in Phu Yen 46 percent. Incidents in Quang Ngai declined 13 percent, but this was a decline from a high level during the second quarter, when the Viet Cong considerably increased their activity in the lowlands of that province.<sup>19</sup>

TABLE 4

GVN AND VIET CONG PERSONNEL AND WEAPONS LOSSES, 1963-1965<sup>a</sup>

	PERSONNEL LOSSES <sup>b</sup>		WEAPONS LOSSES	
	<u>GVN</u>	<u>VC</u>	<u>GVN</u>	<u>VC</u>
1963	20,290	28,383	8,267	5,397
1964	30,510	20,942	14,055	5,881
1965	42,209	41,713	16,915	11,635

<sup>a</sup>Source: Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam. Data is CONFIDENTIAL.

<sup>b</sup>GVN personnel losses include KIA, WIA, MIA. VC personnel losses include KIA, WIA for 1963 only, and POW. After 1963, only Viet Cong killed and captured were reported.

(C) The Viet Cong offensive against the coastal lowlands, and

<sup>19</sup>USMACV, Military Reports, April-October 1964. USMACV, II Corps Advisory Group, Report, Subject: "II Corps Trends," 20 October 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). Once again, since incidents vary in significance one from the other, it is necessary to make the qualification that total incidents can be used to indicate only the general dimensions of Viet Cong activity.

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the deployment in September of the 25th (ARVN) Division from the Quang Ngai-Binh Dinh area of II Corps to the Long An-Hau Nghia area of III Corps, both contributed to the decline of pacification in Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, and Phu Yen.<sup>20</sup> On 20 October, a report by the II Corps Advisory Group stated that the increased Viet Cong activity and worsening military situation had brought pacification to a halt in Quang Ngai, even though no losses of pacified areas were reported.<sup>21</sup> The same report stated that definite losses of population and hamlets to the Viet Cong had occurred in Binh Dinh, and that there had been a regression in pacification in Phu Yen due to the deteriorating security situation.<sup>22</sup>

(C) The heaviest blows against Government forces in Binh Dinh, however, were yet to fall. On 7 December the Viet Cong attacked the An Lao District headquarters,<sup>23</sup> and ambushed the reinforcements that were sent in relief. Government paramilitary forces securing the populous An Lao valley virtually collapsed, as one Regional Force company, one Regional Force platoon, and twelve Popular Force platoons, a total

20 "II Corps Trends," *passim*. The 51st (ARVN) Regiment and two Ranger battalions remained in Quang Ngai, so that there was no over-all reduction in regular forces in the province. In October, Quang Ngai was also transferred to I Corps Tactical Zone. This made it more difficult to reinforce Binh Dinh, which was left with only one regiment of the 22d Division, with forces from Quang Ngai as had been done in the past. USMACV, J-3, ARVN Order of Battle (Monthly Report), Sept 1964-Apr 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL). For forces in Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh on 14 Feb 1965, see Appendix 1.

21 Ibid. The statement in the report that "there were no losses of pacified areas reported" is an indication that the pacification status overlays (Appendix 2) submitted by this province were probably optimistic.

22 Ibid. A comparison of the pacification status overlays contained in Appendix 4 for the appropriate province should be made to assist in following the narrative of this section. Reference is also made to the maps in Appendix 1 to Chapter III.

23 See overlay for Binh Dinh province, Appendix 4.

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strength of 334 men, were reported missing in action with their weapons. The Viet Cong also captured two 4.2-inch mortars and a large quantity of ammunition. While regular forces made subsequent attempts to clear the valley, it was evacuated soon afterwards and yielded to the Viet Cong.<sup>24</sup>

(C) On 7 February 1965, the same day as the attack on American installations at Pleiku, the Viet Cong inflicted a serious defeat upon the 40th (ARVN) Regiment, the only regular troops in Binh Dinh province. A company of one battalion of the regiment was attacked, and the relief battalion was ambushed. Both of these units were eliminated as effective fighting forces, creating a serious situation which caused both II Corps and the High Command to dispatch reinforcements to the province.<sup>25</sup>

(C) Nevertheless, throughout February and March 1965, the Viet Cong continued their offensive in Binh Dinh, attacking the remaining New Life Hamlets and strategic Route 19 which connects Qui Nhon and Pleiku.<sup>26</sup> By this time, Regional Force companies were being employed to secure the New Life Hamlets in Phu My and Phu Cat districts. Nevertheless, on 25 and 26 February the Viet Cong successfully attacked four New Life Hamlets being guarded by two Regional Force companies and several Popular Force platoons. They also attacked the New Life Hamlets along Route 19 and sabotaged the bridges and culverts on the highway. On 21, 22, and 23 February the Viet Cong conducted three ambushes against

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<sup>24</sup>USMACV, Military Reports, Dec 1964. Interview with the former Assistant Sector Advisor, 10 April 1966.

<sup>25</sup>USMACV, Military Reports, February 1965. USMACV, J-3 Briefing Notes, February 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>26</sup>See Map 2, Appendix 1, Chapter III.

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Government reinforcements on Route 19, resulting in heavy friendly losses.<sup>27</sup>

(C) While Government forces were attempting to open up the coastal highway (National Route 1) and railroad, the Viet Cong opened up a new front in An Tuc District by attacking Special Forces Camp Kannack on 8 March. Though the main force battalion which made this attack was repulsed, the Viet Cong remained in the area and blocked Route 19. This forced the High Command to commit additional battalions from the General Reserve to reopen the highway. By late March, a task force of three airborne battalions was clearing Route 19 in the vicinity of An Khe, and two marine battalions had reinforced II Corps troops in the coastal area. The headquarters of the 22d (ARVN) Division moved from Kontum to Binh Dinh to control the operations.<sup>28</sup>

(U) While the Viet Cong offensive in Binh Dinh was the most serious that the Government had to confront during the first year of the Chien Thang plan, the situation in other coastal provinces was only slightly less serious. The halting of pacification in Quang Ngai by October has already been noted. After the November floods, Government troops found it especially difficult to keep the coastal highway and railroad in operation. An indication of the seriousness of the situation at the end of February 1965 is contained in the following excerpt from a summary of the report of the local United States Operations Mission representative:

The province rep reports that the situation in Quang Ngai has changed from bad to worse during the last week of the reporting period. Rumors are circulating that the VC will attempt to take the city or attack the military installations around it. The Medico doctors and nurses have been ordered to leave Quang Ngai [city], leaving the Americans there without any medical help.

<sup>28</sup>USMACV, Military Reports, March 1965. J-3 Briefing Notes, March 1965.

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VC interdictions have once again closed the road traffic on Highway 1. USOM has not been able to bring in commodities by land to this province and air shipment, while it is available, is a limited proposition. A pressing need of this province at the moment is food and other essential commodities. With Highway 1 out of commission compounded by the sudden increase of refugees, the problem of feeding and providing clothing and shelter becomes more pronounced. The stock of rice and other consumer commodities are being used up at a faster rate than it can be replenished.<sup>29</sup>

The reference to increased refugees (about 23,000 at the time of the report) is another indicator of Viet Cong takeover of hamlets formerly under Government control.

(C) In Phu Yen Province, to the south of Binh Dinh, the ability of Government forces to hold the areas considered "pacified" and "under-going pacification" began to deteriorate with the Viet Cong onslaught in July. The Viet Cong could choose their points of attack, and Government forces were simply over-extended in their efforts to protect district towns, the highway and railroad, and the "rice bowl" coastal plains.

A report on Phu Yen made on 9 December 1964 stated:

The VC continue to infiltrate the hamlets in the main pacification areas almost at will, and the armed Civil Defense are extremely undependable. Only those hamlets in the immediate vicinity of one of the three ARVN battalions, or of the available Regional Force companies, are afforded a modicum of security. Of the 14 RF companies, 10 are engaged primarily in providing security for district towns and the highway and railroad.<sup>30</sup>

A summary of the report of the United States Operations Mission representative for February 1965 stated:

The VC have succeeded in cutting off the province by disrupting road and railroad travel. The deteriorating security situation seriously impedes all government-sponsored programs and activities.

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<sup>29</sup>USOM, Reports from USOM Provincial Representatives for the Month Ending 28 February 1965, no date. (UNCLASSIFIED). These reports are summaries of monthly reports submitted by USOM provincial representatives.

<sup>30</sup>USMACV, J-312, Memorandum 9 Dec 1964, Subject: "Staff Visit to Headquarters 23d Division and Darlac and Phu Yen Sectors." (CONFIDENTIAL).

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For example, construction projects had to be suspended, cadre movements were limited to secure areas only, communications problems became more acute than ever and a sudden increase in commodity prices created a bad psychological situation. The province rep feels that before the mission can be accomplished in the province, the security situation must be vastly improved. The province chief and the MACV sector advisor and the USOM rep are unanimous in the opinion that additional troops should be assigned to operate in Phu Yen.<sup>31</sup>

(C) The northernmost provinces of South Vietnam, in the I Corps Tactical Zone, were also the scene of large Viet Cong gains against the limited Government securing forces. It was ironic that this Corps, which had led the way in the employment of the area saturation tactics which were to be employed in securing operations,<sup>32</sup> should see the complete collapse of its main clearing and securing operations in July and August.

(C) Pacification had begun on a wave of optimism in I Corps. The strategy was to conduct area saturation operations in the western part of the coastal lowlands in each province, and gradually to extend such operations to the piedmont (foothills) area. Two large-scale operations, Campaign Dan Chien 1 in Quang Tin Province, and Campaign Dan Chien 2 in Quang Nam Province, were mounted on 16 February 1964 by the 2d (ARVN) Division. Encountering little resistance, the troops were soon in the piedmont. In Quang Tin, the 6th (ARVN) Regiment arrived in the Phuoc Chau Valley, some forty kilometers from the coast.<sup>33</sup>

(C) The pacification of the Phuoc Chau Valley between 28 February 1964 and 29 May 1964 was one of the first successes under the Chien Thang

<sup>31</sup>USOM, Reports for USOM Provincial Representatives for the Month Ending 28 February 1965.

<sup>32</sup>See above, Chapter V.

<sup>33</sup>USMACV, Military Reports, Apr-Jun 1964. Refer especially to the section on Quang Tin Province.

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plan, and was consequently held up as a model operation.<sup>34</sup> The after-action report on the operation revealed, however, that success depended upon the continued presence of the military in Phuoc Chau Valley. The report stated:

It is felt that the situation in the valley will continue to develop in our favor in the foreseeable future if ARVN troops remain in the area to protect the people from VC influence. . . .

The population appears to be very . . . desirous of supporting the government as long as the government shows good faith in providing them with protection. . . .

Emphasize, once again, to the people the announced intention of [ARVN] remaining in the valley.<sup>35</sup>

This was the same thing that advisors everywhere had been saying,<sup>36</sup> with little apparent reflection upon the force depletion that would result from this line of reasoning.

(C) In any event, the 6th Regiment remained in the Phuoc Chau Valley until late February 1965. By that time its supply line to the coast had been cut by Viet Cong destruction of the road, and relief operations were continually turned back by main force battalions. Finally, in what must surely be one of the darkest chapters in that year of war, the Phuoc Chau Valley was evacuated and left to the Viet Cong. The troops

<sup>34</sup>When I arrived in Vietnam, I was placed on the track of this operation by a noted guerrilla fighter, Major Arthur Cates. Subsequently, when General Westmoreland directed that a study be made on "The Evolution of a Hamlet" (from Viet Cong control to pacified status), the Phuoc Chau Valley experience was suggested as a starting point. See C. V. Sturdevant, Pacification Force Requirements for South Vietnam, Rand Memorandum 4421-ARPA, March 1965, p. 38. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>35</sup>Office of the Senior Advisor, I Corps Advisory Group, After Action Report--Phuoc Chau Valley Operations, 29 May 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL), quoted in C. V. Sturdevant, Pacification Force Requirements for South Vietnam, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup>This was also the official opinion of USMACV, frequently expressed in the Military Reports.

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were now needed on the coast, and were brought out by air.<sup>37</sup>

Dan Chien 1 and 2 lasted until July 1964. By that time the companies of the 2nd Division were widely scattered among the hilltops of the piedmont. The Viet Cong had no trouble penetrating to the lowlands, where their own campaign began with an upsurge in activity generally along National Route 1 in the four provinces of Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, and Quang Tin.<sup>38</sup> Faced with this threat, United States advisors urged the Vietnamese Army to regroup its forces along the coast. In the 2d Division area, this was duly accomplished by the termination of Campaigns Dan Chien 1 and Dan Chien 2.<sup>39</sup> The 1st Division also terminated several operations in the western part of its zone and regrouped along the coast.<sup>40</sup> New pacification plans were prepared--starting with the zone along Route 1 and the railroad.<sup>41</sup>

(U) The situation in I Corps toward the end of the first year of the Chien Thang plan is revealed in the reports of the United States Operations Mission province representatives. On 28 February 1965, the Quang Tri province representative reported:

There is a growing feeling of fear in Quang Tri. The people are beginning to feel that they have been deserted by the government since security is no longer certain and the village and hamlet

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Major H. M. Sanders on 16 April 1966. Major Sanders was the G-2 Advisor of the 2d ARVN Division from July 1964 to February 1965, and the Senior advisor to the 6th ARVN Regiment from February 1965 to July 1965.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. USMACV, Military Reports, July - August 1964.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> USMACV, J-3, JOC Branch, Report of Staff Visit to Headquarters I Corps, 10 July 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>41</sup> USMACV, J-31, Memorandum, 11 December 1964, Subject: "Visit to 2nd Infantry Division and Quang Nam and Quang Tin Sectors, Vietnam, 10-11 December 1964." (CONFIDENTIAL).

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officials are now forced to be as transient as the VC. Recently, the VC were able to close down a major provincial road by planting a few mines and publicly announcing that travel would not be permitted on the road. This incident is an indication of how effectively the VC can get the ear of the people and through threat alone carry out their policy. Provincial drivers refused to travel the road even though this road had previously been considered secure. The districts of Quang Tri have rapidly become inclined toward military operations and with increasing the security measures near the district headquarters. Administration has become a very minor part of district operations and this has made it difficult to carry out civilian programs.<sup>42</sup>

(U) A summary of the report of the United States Operations

Mission Quang Nam province representative states:

The province rep reports that during the month of February the VC destroyed telephone poles and dug trenches across the road between Hoi-An and Dien-Ban. The same occurred in a number of other places along Route 1 and there were also ten incidents involving mines and ambushes. At the intersection of Route 1 and provincial Route 14, a USOM truck was ambushed and burned on 9 February. The district headquarters at Dien Ban and Hieu Nhon and the provincial capital at Hoi An have been shelled by the VC. All of these incidents occurred in areas where intense pacification efforts have been initiated since December 1964. The people who live in or near these incident sites neither warned the GVN prior to the incidents nor volunteered information after the fact. In the opinion of the prov rep this is a strong indication that the people are not supporting the GVN effort. In addition to the other pacification efforts directed to these areas, these same people were recipients of vast economic aid and personal assistance from the GVN following the November floods. The prov rep reports that the people will often watch their own soldiers die without lifting hand and that the province officials often reflect the same attitude and it is becoming increasingly difficult to motivate them to do anything in the field of economic development.<sup>43</sup>

(U) The Quang Tin province summary report states:

The province rep reports that 'the great leap toward pacification in Quang Tin is made evident by its very absence.' The number of villages controlled by the VC has increased from 198 to 213, an increase of 15 villages in one month. A high incident rate of stealing, robbing, raping and obtaining free meals in rural residential areas has not endeared the population toward ARVN or Regional Forces. The province officials maintain that they cannot embark on a sound pacification program until the province receives

<sup>42</sup>USOM, Provincial Representatives Reports for Month Ending 28 February 1965.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

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more troops to be used in clear and hold operations. The VC roam almost at will throughout the entire province and can cause terror and havoc and widespread damage anytime they wish to do so.<sup>44</sup>

(C) In short, by March 1965 the situation in all the coastal provinces of Central Vietnam, from Quang Tri south to Phu Yen, was worse than it had ever been before.<sup>45</sup>

(C) The character of the war in three provinces of Central Vietnam--Quang Tin, Quang Ngai, and Binh Dinh--had also escalated to the level of mobile conflict among battalion and multi-battalion forces. In March of 1965 these three provinces were the tip of a giant spearhead which extended west to Kontum-Pleiku and the Laos frontier, where the North Vietnamese 325th Division was committed in support. Not counting the 325th Division, whose 18th Regiment made its appearance in Binh Dinh somewhat later in 1965,<sup>46</sup> the Viet Cong battalion-size forces in these three provinces consisted of sixteen battalions and two regimental control headquarters on 31 March 1965.<sup>47</sup>

(C) It was these forces which attempted to complete the conquest of Binh Dinh in February 1965. In Quang Tin, mobile warfare had begun in December 1964, when the Viet Cong attacked the 3d Battalion, 6th Regiment at Viet An, which controlled a major road at the junction of two valleys in the piedmont. At the same time, a Viet Cong battalion attacked Hill 159, an important position not far from the main headquarters of

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>The losses in population control in these provinces will be discussed below.

<sup>46</sup>DIA, Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam, October 1965, p. 21. (SECRET).

<sup>47</sup>RVN, Ministry of Armed Forces, J-2 High Command, and USMACV, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence (Joint Publication), Viet-Cong Military Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel as of 31 March 1965, (J-2 Log No. 3-283-65, 9 April 1965), II, 381-384.

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Government forces at Tam Ky on the coast. While the Viet Cong were repulsed in both engagements, the defenders suffered heavy losses. The 3d Battalion, 6th Regiment was isolated at Viet An, and numerous attempts by the 5th Regiment to clear the road to Viet An were repulsed by Viet Cong battalions. Viet An was attacked again on 7 February 1965, in coordination with the Viet Cong offensive in Binh Dinh that began on that date. Finally, Viet An had to be abandoned in July 1965.<sup>48</sup>

(c) In the III Corps area it became increasingly clear, even as the forces were taking up their positions for clearing operations in Long An, Hau Nghia, and Binh Duong provinces in October 1964, that the Viet Cong would not hesitate to engage regular battalions in opposing such operations. On 7 October the Viet Cong attacked the 30th Ranger Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 46th Regiment in Hau Nghia province as they moved to take up a position at Luong Hoa, in the northwest corner of Long An Province. This task force was forced to withdraw with heavy losses, and later the 52d Ranger Battalion was moved to Luong Hoa via Long An Province.<sup>49</sup> As the operations of the 25th Division in this area were always strongly opposed by the Viet Cong,<sup>50</sup> it soon became evident that the 52d Ranger Battalion could not operate in the area except in conjunction with additional forces. It therefore established itself in a fortified position in Luong Hoa, where it was resupplied by air. Consequently, it was unable to adequately perform its mission of screening

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Major H. M. Sanders, 16 Apr 1966. USMACV, Military Reports, December 1964-February 1965.

<sup>49</sup> USMACV, J-3 Briefing Notes, 7 October 1964. USMACV, J-3, "Report of Staff Visit to Long An Province to Determine Manpower Requirements for Pacification."

<sup>50</sup> USMACV, Military Reports, November 1964-April 1965.

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the west flank of the main pacification area in Long An Province.<sup>51</sup>

(C) Because of Viet Cong strength in Hau Nghia and Long An, the only clearing the 25th Division was able to conduct was in regimental and division-size operations. Such operations were not mounted more than a few times a month, and the remainder of the time the forces were engaged in securing the small Government-held areas.<sup>52</sup> This was not in accordance with the concept of pacification, but the concept assumed the threat to be primarily guerrilla, with only rare challenges to Government regular forces. Now the guerrillas were supported by battalions which did not hesitate to attack regular troops. Since Government battalions had to remain concentrated, their area of influence and radius of effective population control was consequently more limited than what it would have been in a guerrilla environment.

(C) These conclusions are supported by an inspection report on

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<sup>51</sup>"Report of Staff Visit to Long An Province to Determine Man-power Requirements for Pacification," *passim*. Hop Tac Secretariat, "Report of Inspection, Long An Province," 26 April 1965, pp. 2, 5. The former report states: "The 52d Ranger Battalion is located at Luong Hoa . . . The area is not heavily populated, but serves as a VC base; therefore a battalion operating in the area serves to keep the VC off balance and to screen part of the western flank of Zone A." At that time, Zone A was the main pacification area, the north-south strip shown as "pacified" and "undergoing pacification" in the province pacification overlays of Appendix 4. The second report states: "With the exception of battalion-garrisoned Luong Hoa, 'upper' Ben Luc District (virtually all of the District northwest of Highway 4) is undeniably VC country. . . ." The report goes on to describe the "security mission" of the battalion at Luong Hoa as "static." *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup>"Report of Inspection of Long An Province," p. 2. The report states that six infantry battalions (minus one company) occupied the area shown as "pacified" and "undergoing pacification" in the pacification status overlays of Appendix 4. These were the A and B Zones, the "development" and "securing" zones respectively. With respect to the C Zone or clearing zone the report states: "Zone C is the scene for periodic military operations but these both lack the intensity and duration which would warrant their being described collectively as clearing operations in the sense of the Joint Mission Directive and in the basic Hop Tac plan." *Ibid.*

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the status of pacification in Long An Province as of 9 April 1965. The report states:

" Pacification progress in Long An is lagging behind the current Hop Tac goals. Within the A Zone about half of the hamlets scheduled for pacification have achieved that formal status (9 of 22), but the Senior Advisor, 50th Infantry--the unit responsible for A Zone pacification--estimates that approximately one-quarter of the nominally pacified hamlets have regressed to the point where long stretches of their fences are cut periodically either with the inhabitants' compliance or with an acquiescence such as to preclude even the volunteering of information concerning these acts. Although enemy initiated activity within the zone has generally been limited to harassments, communications sabotage, and individual acts of terrorism, this fact does not indicate a state of security such as is properly associated with the term 'pacified'. . . . Sightings of enemy units have been made, up to battalion size, both within the A Zone and along its boundaries. The insecurity indicated by these facts is clearly reflected in the retention of regular forces either in the Zone or on its immediate borders; five ARVN companies are considered necessary for the security of the Ben Luc bridge, the 50th Infantry headquarters and three hamlets 'undergoing pacification.' Consequently, the conclusion here is that Long An's A Zone should rightfully be considered in the 'securing' rather than the 'development' phase.<sup>53</sup> "

In considering the above excerpt, it must be remembered that Long An Province was probably the top priority province in the top priority pacification area of the country. Also, the excerpt describes the security conditions in the pacified area--the area nominally under the highest degree of Government control.

(c) The report goes on to describe the security situation in the rest of Long An Province as follows:

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 1. The Hop Tac plan was the pacification plan for the Saigon/Gia Dinh oilspot, which extended into the surrounding provinces of Long An, Hau Nghia, Binh Duong, Bien Hoa, and portions of Phuoc Thanh and Phuoc Tuy. Approximately concentric rings emanating from Saigon defined the A Zone (pacified--in the development phase), B Zone (undergoing pacification--in the securing phase), and C Zone (under Viet Cong or general military control of the Government--being cleared). These zones defined objectives, that is, development operations were to be undertaken in the A Zone; all the area in the B Zone was to be brought into the "undergoing pacification" category by means of clearing and securing operations; and forces were to operate in the C Zone to screen the secured areas and clear the zone of Viet Cong units. Search and destroy operations against targets of opportunity were conducted in the outer D zone.

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1/ The major portion of Long An's B Zone is far from the securing status. . . . In fact, even the Highway 4 portion of the B Zone, in which the principal securing effort is being undertaken, does not meet the criteria established as prerequisites for this phase of pacification. Enemy initiated operations, company-sized or larger, have occurred throughout this area in recent weeks, with no subsequent GVN moves which could prevent their reoccurrence. In effect, organized VC units either still inhabit this area or can penetrate it with little difficulty. Zone C is the scene for periodic military operations but these both lack the intensity and duration which would warrant their being described collectively as clearing operations in the sense which that term is used in the Joint Mission Directive and in the basic Hop Tac plan. . . . At least one enemy battalion gives evidence of the ability to operate throughout most of the province with relative freedom and has demonstrated its ability to strike effectively into areas theoretically secured.<sup>54</sup> //

(C) Pacification in Long An and Hau Nghia was handicapped by the existence of Viet Cong bases across the Vaico Oriental River in the Plain of Reeds.<sup>55</sup> This was a persistent problem in the execution of pacification, and numerous other examples can be mentioned of the difficulty of providing security when the pacification area adjoined or was near to a relatively inaccessible area that the Viet Cong could use as a local base of operations.<sup>56</sup>

(C) In the 5th Division area, on 11 October, the Viet Cong

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> See Maps 1 and 2, Appendix 1 to Chapter III.

<sup>56</sup> Other examples are the location of the Khiem Hanh [district] oilspot in Tay Ninh next to the Boi Loi forest base area, and the Tam Binh oilspot in Vinh Long next to a Viet Cong infested area. Concerning the problem in Tay Ninh, the III Corps Advisory Group's Monthly Intelligence Analysis for August 1964 stated: "The pacification plans for Khiem Hanh District, adjacent to the Boi Loi Forest area, seems destined for failure before the plans are well underway. The Cong Tac [Viet Cong] will probably resist violently GVN attempts to occupy an area so close to their strategically situated base zone. . . . This area will continue to be a thorn in the side of any pacification attempts on its periphery. At present time the Boi Loi area is believed to contain a minimum of 1500 Cong Tac forces. The Cong Tac Tay Ninh Provincial headquarters, several district committees, and the headquarters of the Saigon-Cholon-Gia Dinh Special Zone have been reported there." III Corps Advisory Group, Monthly Intelligence Analysis, 1-31 August 1964, 16 September 1964, p. 2. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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attacked the 1st Battalion, 9th Regiment which was securing New Life Hamlets in Tay Ninh.<sup>57</sup> Viet Cong activity along Route 13 in Binh Duong, which began during July and August and had created a serious situation by October, has already been noted.<sup>58</sup> On 16 October, a Viet Cong battalion ambushed the 2d Battalion, 7th Regiment south of Ben Cat but was eventually driven off with heavy losses.<sup>59</sup> Most of the 7th and 8th Regiments had to be employed on road-clearing operations to open Route 13 to traffic two and three times a month.<sup>60</sup>

(c) A report on the situation in Binh Duong as of 5 March 1965 stated:

" Given a continuance of the current level of VC strength and activity it is hard to believe that by 1 July the forces currently available in the [Hop Tac] C and D Zones will have established those conditions which would warrant for Zone C a cleared status--namely, the elimination of organized enemy units from the Zone itself and the prevention of penetration into the Zone of enemy elements larger than platoon. US advisors on the scene are unanimous in believing that 1 July is an unrealistic target date for the completion of securing operations in Zone B . . .<sup>61</sup> ]

(c) Here also, it was found impossible to clear and secure all of the assigned objective areas in accordance with the target dates of the pacification plan. One reason was that Viet Cong activity in Binh Duong forced Government troops to operate generally in battalion size, whether their mission was clearing or securing. The same report states:

Despite the difference in missions [among battalions of the 7th

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<sup>57</sup>USMACV, J-3 Briefing Notes, 11 October 1964.

<sup>58</sup>See above, Chapter III.

<sup>59</sup>USMACV, J-3, JOC Branch, After Action Report Binh Duong Province, 16 October 1964.

<sup>60</sup>USMACV, J-3, Disposition Form, Subject: "Viet Cong Closure of Highway 13 in Binh Duong." (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>61</sup>Hop Tac Secretariat, Letter 24 March 1965, Subject: "Report of Inspection" (Binh Duong Province), p. 2. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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and 8th Regiments<sup>7</sup>, all these battalions operate in essentially the same manner. In general the battalions operate as entities, with long-range, independent, company-sized operations rather uncommon

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Thus, the requirement for Government forces to concentrate limited the area they could clear or secure at any one time.

(C) While Viet Cong attacks upon regular troops had increased since July, even after the battles of An Lao, Viet An, and Hill 159 in early December there was some doubt as to whether the Viet Cong had decided to initiate mobile warfare. After the battle of Binh Gia, 28-31 December 1964, there could no longer be any doubt. The Viet Cong chose weakly-garrisoned Phuoc Tuy Province to be the battleground of a major effort in III Corps. Throughout December 1964, a series of attacks and ambushes in hitherto quiet Phuoc Tuy occurred. Binh Gia was actually captured by a Viet Cong battalion on 5 December, but this force was driven off by the 33d Ranger Battalion which was heliborne to the area. On 28 December Binh Gia was again captured, but this time the Viet Cong held the town against elements of three Ranger Battalions which were committed piecemeal into action, and the enemy did not withdraw until the night of 29 December. The 4th Marine Battalion was committed on 30 December, and linked up with the Ranger battalions without contacting the Viet Cong. Toward evening on 31 December, however, the 4th Marine Battalion--which had moved from Binh Gia to secure the site of a downed helicopter--was attacked, surrounded and overrun by a large Viet Cong force. Friendly losses in this action were 107 killed, 64 wounded, and 12 missing. The Viet Cong force, which was learned to be the C.56 Regiment, directly subordinate to the Central Office of South Vietnam, continued the action on 3 January by ambushing the 35th Ranger Battalion,

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

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an M-113 troop, and an M-24 tank platoon south of Binh Gia. Total friendly losses at Binh Gia for the period 28 December-3 January were 196 killed, 192 wounded, and 68 missing. In addition, 4 UH-1B helicopters with American crews were shot down, two armored personnel carriers were destroyed, and two tanks were damaged. United States losses were 5 killed, 8 wounded, and 3 missing. Viet Cong losses were 140 killed and 1 captured. The C.56 Regiment remained in Phuoc Tuy for another month, and then departed of its own accord.<sup>63</sup>

(C) If the Viet Cong expected to score similar successes in the IV Corps area of the Mekong delta, they were to be sorely disappointed. During the period October-December 1964, the 7th, 9th, and 21st (ARVN) Divisions inflicted a series of defeats and heavy losses upon Viet Cong main and local force battalions, thereby assuring the continued ascendancy of Government forces in conventional battle.<sup>64</sup>

(U) While some IV Corps provinces reported modest gains in pacification, the Viet Cong continued to exercise a high degree of population control (except in the virtually pacified Hoa Hao Provinces of An Giang and Chau Doc) and were able to increase their hold on some provinces.<sup>65</sup> The following excerpts from the summary reports of United States Operations Mission provincial representatives describe the situation in various provinces on 28 February 1965:

Go Cong:

The prov rep reports that during the period the VC began their

<sup>63</sup>USMACV, J-3, Combat Operations Center, Memorandum, Subject: "Chronological Sequence of Activities in Phuoc Tuy since November 1964," 6 Jan 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>64</sup>USMACV, Military Reports, October-December 1964.

<sup>65</sup>USMACV, Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Population and Area Control, June 1964-April 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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anticipated campaign to block the pacification program. There has been an exodus of people from the areas under pacification, indicating that there is a growing lack of faith in the GVN's ability to provide security. The pacification crust is under considerable stress and cracks are appearing. The prov rep reports that those remaining in the VC threatened areas are becoming less willing to cooperate with the government for fear of VC retribution. The local officials are definitely concerned over the turn of events but a number had expected this. They generally conclude that the government must provide a greater degree of effective security for indefinite lengths of time if it is ever to make any permanent progress in pacification.<sup>66</sup>

Kien Tuong:

The prov rep reports that the pacification program is regressing.

The hamlet of Kinh Quang 3 was abandoned by the GVN during the last week of the reporting period. Since the pacification program began 286,000 \$VN were distributed to the families who relocated into the hamlet and cement and roofing was given for the construction of a 3 room school. Additionally, the people received USOM foodstuffs. The GVN withdrew from Kinh Quang 3 because of a VC attack upon the post. The prov rep and the sector advisor both contended that total withdrawal from this hamlet was unnecessary. During the month, the post at Hung Nhong land development center was attacked and the people, realizing the absence of adequate protection from the government have requested permission to relocate to a neighboring land development center at Nhon Bon. The prov rep feels that in Kien Tuong province we are losing people, ground, money and supplies to the VC and doing it without a fight.<sup>67</sup>

Kien Hoa:

The prov rep reports that pacification is standing still or perhaps slightly regressing. The number of VC incidents are less; however, there is an increasing reluctance by district officials to travel by road or to allow USOM or MACV to do so. The supply of commodities from Saigon to the province has continued to dwindle.<sup>68</sup>

Kien Giang:

The prov rep reports that security continues to be the most persistent problem in the province. There are insufficient troops to secure the oil spot areas and insufficient troops to secure the main road to the northern districts. This has led to a disruption of normal commercial traffic and economic development of these two districts.

66USOM, Provincial Representatives Reports, 28 Feb 1965.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

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The overall effectiveness of the VC appears to be increasing. They are having no trouble in collecting taxes and harassing the population. During this reporting period three USOM projects were destroyed by the VC in the Kien Tan District. Two national schools under construction were 70% destroyed and one self help bridge was blown up. Mining continues to prevent the use of transportation routes throughout the province.<sup>69</sup>

These excerpts reveal that while the Viet Cong capacity for large-scale warfare was held in check in the delta, the general inadequacy of military resources to support pacification was as prevalent in the delta as elsewhere.

(c) This section has portrayed the dimensions of the Viet Cong offensive that began in July 1964, as revealed in the available statistics of incidents and losses. It has been shown that the Viet Cong did indeed carry out the intentions disclosed in the captured documents and prisoner interrogation reports presented in Chapter III. It has also been shown that the Viet Cong did escalate to the level of mobile warfare in accordance with their plan. In addition, their main blow fell upon the coastal lowlands of Central Vietnam, with Binh Dinh province being their primary objective. By the end of the first year of the Chien Thang plan--on 1 April 1965--the situation in Central Vietnam had deteriorated seriously. At the same time, the situation in III Corps--which had first priority of pacification support--had not improved markedly. Neither had the situation in IV Corps. It seemed that each province lacked sufficient means to provide security against the existing Viet Cong threat. This would be so as long as the bulk of the mobile forces were committed to the oilspots, and the oilspots continued to fight in isolation.

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69 Ibid.

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(U) Fortunately, statistics of population control are available to permit one to quantify the relative impact of the Viet Cong offensive and the Government pacification effort in terms of population control. It is therefore appropriate to examine such statistics for a better grasp of the status of population control at the beginning and at the end of the first year of the Chien Thang plan. This examination is made in the next section.

The Status of Population Control

(C) In order to provide a broad measure of the over-all progress of pacification, the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, initiated in June 1964 a monthly report of the status of area and population control in each province.<sup>70</sup> United States Sector Advisors<sup>71</sup> were required to submit an overlay each month showing the status of area and population control in accordance with the following categories: pacified areas, areas undergoing pacification, cleared areas,<sup>72</sup> Viet Cong-controlled areas, and areas controlled by neither. Population control was indicated by estimating the number of persons living in the areas falling within each category.

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<sup>70</sup> See USMACV, J-3, Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Area and Population Control, 1 June 1964-25 March 1965. This report contained as inclosures the province overlays from which the diagrams of Appendix 2 were prepared.

<sup>71</sup> The Vietnamese Province Chief also commanded a military sector consisting of the territory of the province. The Sector Advisor was the senior military advisor to the province chief.

<sup>72</sup> The term "cleared area" was later defined as an area "under general military control". USMACV and USOM, Joint Directive 2-64, Criteria to Evaluate New Life Hamlets, 8 Oct 1964, p. 1. (CONFIDENTIAL). The term "pacification" was itself later replaced by "rural reconstruction", and the term "pacified" by "secured". USMACV, Monthly Report of Rural Reconstruction Progress and Area and Population Control, July 1965.

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(C) The basic unit for estimating population control was the hamlet, although the population of province and district capitals and other rural towns was also included in the accounting. The population living in hamlets that had met the six criteria for pacification<sup>73</sup> were considered to be pacified, that is, under secure Government.

(C) Hamlets that did not meet all of the six criteria, but were being secured by Government forces while teams of pacification cadre worked with the inhabitants to develop the hamlet to the point where it met the criteria, were considered "under pacification". The remainder of the population--except for a small number living in inaccessible areas under the control of neither side--lived in cleared areas or areas under Viet Cong control.<sup>74</sup>

(C) These categories were derived from the spreading oilspot concept of the Chien Thang plan, and were thus related to the three phases of pacification. Pacified areas were in either the securing or development phases, areas under pacification were in the securing phase, and the cleared areas were in the clearing phase. The typical patterns resulting from this mode of portrayal are illustrated by the pacification overlays contained in Appendix 4.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>See above, Chapter V.

<sup>74</sup>USMACV, Directive Number 335-10, Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Population and Area Control, 15 July 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL). This directive promulgates the instructions and criteria for preparation of the report.

<sup>75</sup>In the USMACV mode of portrayal, a color scheme was employed: dark blue for a pacified area, light blue for an area undergoing pacification, green for a cleared area, red for a Viet Cong-controlled area, and white for an area controlled by neither side. Regrettably, for reasons of economy, the overlays of Appendix 4 could not be reproduced in color.

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(C) It must be stressed that the picture presented by the monthly reports and overlays from the provinces was only approximate. The report was influenced by the optimism or pessimism of the Sector Advisor, by his estimate of whether the province could provide security to a hamlet should the need arise, and by the manner in which the hamlets were evaluated in terms of the six criteria. From time to time, particularly after a wave of Viet Cong activity, a complete reassessment of the situation would be made; in such cases, the resulting changes in the status of population control might be directly traceable to the Viet Cong. On other occasions, however, the Viet Cong might have little direct influence on the appraisal. A good example of this is the impact upon the November 1964 reports of the Central Vietnam floods. The severe flooding destroyed hamlet fortifications and hence caused a large shift in population from the "pacified" to the "under pacification" category. Once the defenses were reconstructed, the population reentered the pacified category.<sup>76</sup>

(C) In spite of the foregoing qualifications, the Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Area and Population Control is a useful tool of analysis when employed in conjunction with other data shedding light on the situation in the provinces.<sup>77</sup> The important thing is that

<sup>76</sup> USMACV, Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Area and Population Control, Nov 1964 and Jan 1965. Compare the overlays and data for all the coastal provinces north of Khanh Hoa.

<sup>77</sup> Especially useful in this regard are the U.S. Mission Province Reports and the summary reports of USOM provincial representatives. The Monthly Report could also be made a more useful tool by machine-processing the status of each hamlet and emphasizing marginal (rather than aggregate) population control as a basis for reports and analysis. Changes in population control can be used to provide a more sensitive indicator of the progress of the war than is presently available. In addition, the Sector and Sub-Sector Advisors, who cannot possibly

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the report is made by an observer on the ground in the light of the then-existing Viet Cong threat, and provides a broad measure of the direction in which population control is moving. This measure can then be correlated with other data to arrive at a clearer picture of the conflict. In this paper, analysis of population control data will be used to help determine whether the Chien Thang plan succeeded or failed in the task of increasing Government population control during 1964-65.

(C) The areas shown as "pacified" in the population control reports are not difficult to understand. They are areas in which the hamlets satisfy the six criteria and the climate of security is healthy. Occasionally, as was brought out in the inspection report of Long An province previously cited,<sup>78</sup> it becomes evident that the climate of security is far from adequate even in the pacified area. This happens because the balance of forces between the Government and the Viet Cong is not static but continually changing, and the climate of security will change with this balance. When regression recurs, the only thing that can be done, under current concepts, is to re-pacify the area. Often this requires an increased injection of resources. Otherwise, a lesser degree of security must be accepted, regardless of the desiderata established by the fixed criteria. When such a lesser degree of security is accepted, however, it often is not

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remember the status of all of the hamlets with respect to the criteria, should be furnished with a machine readout containing such data and possibly also correlating the data with Viet Cong incidents.

<sup>78</sup>See the previous section's discussion of the Viet Cong offensive in III Corps.

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reflected in the reports of population control.<sup>79</sup>

(c) An area undergoing pacification is defined as follows:

The area has been cleared by GVN regular or paramilitary forces and mobile action cadre teams (or their equivalent) have started work in the area.<sup>80</sup>

Thus, the criterion for an area under pacification is that it be secure enough for the injection of the mobile cadres who are the Government's apparatus of population control. The question of "How secure?" is sometimes a knotty problem, as is indicated by the following excerpt from a report by a United States Operations Mission provincial representative:

Of the 525 hamlets in Quang Nam province, only 12 are considered to be pacified under the six point criteria. MACV has initiated another criterion to be considered before a hamlet can be classified as pacified and that is the requirement that Mobile Action Cadre or Mobile Administrative Cadre must sleep in the hamlet.<sup>81</sup>

Obviously, it was a practice for the cadre to leave the hamlets to sleep in the more secure areas at night. The Kien Phong provincial representative reported the following to be a persistent problem in the areas under pacification:

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<sup>79</sup>This is the case with the Long An province report. Under the circumstances, it is difficult to see what else the province could do-- other than to admit that the criteria could not be achieved without additional resources.

<sup>80</sup>USMACV, Directive 335-10, Inclosure 2. The activities in the area undergoing pacification comprise a securing operation within the meaning of the Chien Thang plan. For an explanation of the securing phase of pacification, see Chapter V. Among the preconditions for securing are: (a) "Organized VC military forces have been eliminated from the area. (b) Sufficient ARVN or RF are active in clearing operations around the exposed periphery of the area and in search and destroy operations against nearest areas of VC strength to keep the VC off balance and on the defensive. (c) Necessary PF have been or can, within a short time, be recruited locally within the area to assure local security against an enemy with a strength of not over a platoon." The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures, 1 Feb 1965, p. 4.

<sup>81</sup>UJSOM, Reports of Provincial Representatives, 31 Mar 1965, passim.

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There are insufficient local pacification forces to provide security for the pacification teams. In other words, the cadre had to return to a safe area at night and could not stay with the people.<sup>82</sup>

Under such circumstances it is, of course, questionable whether Government population control is truly effective in the areas undergoing pacification.

(c) An indication of the degree of security existing in pacified areas and areas under pacification may be obtained by examining the distribution of Viet Cong incidents according to the pacification status of the area in which the incident occurred. Table 5, which is based on data from a study by the Army Concept Team in Vietnam, shows such a distribution of the harassing fire, attack, and ambush incidents in four provinces--Quang Tri, Binh Dinh, Binh Duong, and Dinh Tuong--that occurred during the months of July and September 1964.

(c) Table 5 reveals that while the area of Government control--pacified areas and areas under pacification taken together--was not much more incident-free than the cleared area, nevertheless only nine percent of the attacks and twenty-four percent of the attacks and ambushes occurred in this area. It is possible to conclude that these areas were relatively more secure by virtue of a lower frequency of occurrence of the more violent incidents.<sup>83</sup>

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82 Ibid.

83 Army Concept Team in Vietnam, Employment of Artillery in Counterinsurgency Operations, 25 Apr 1965, pp. C-13-C-22, (CONFIDENTIAL). A USMACV Staff Study found that of 87 ambushes examined which occurred during the first six months of 1964, 12 occurred in pacified areas, 7 in areas undergoing pacification, 32 in cleared areas, 31 in Viet Cong-controlled areas, and 5 in areas controlled by neither side. One of the conclusions of this study was that: "The least number of ambushes occurred in areas undergoing pacification where mobile action cadres are present and ARVN troops most often located." USMACV, Staff Study,

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TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF  
 HARASSING FIRE, ATTACK AND AMBUSH INCIDENTS  
 ACCORDING TO PACIFICATION STATUS OF AREA  
 IN WHICH THE INCIDENT OCCURRED

PACIFICATION STATUS	TYPE OF INCIDENT			TOTAL
	HARASSING FIRE	ATTACKS	AMBUSHES	
Pacified	8	9	5	8
Under Pacification	22	0	36	22
Cleared	34	22	32	32
VC Controlled	34	69	23	36
Neither VC nor RVN Controlled	2	0	44	2
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Army Concept Team in Vietnam, Employment of Artillery in Counterinsurgency Operations, 25 April 1965, p. 49. (CONFIDENTIAL).

(c) The criterion established for a "cleared" area is as follows:

Areas which have been cleared of significant VC military units . . . . VC main or local forces are not present or operating in the area and ARVN forces are capable of maintaining or enhancing present cleared status. This condition does not preclude the occurrence of minor VC acts of terrorism and other incidents and the existence of underground cells and guerrilla forces in the area.<sup>84</sup>

Subject: "VC Ambushes", no date, p. 4. (CONFIDENTIAL). The "pacified" areas do not, therefore, appear to be as secure as the areas undergoing pacification. This conclusion, if substantiated by additional research, is fraught with implication for the method of providing security. It indicates that the hypothesis of the last sentence of this paragraph may not be correct. Additional studies are required, which correlate pacification status and Viet Cong activity before a clearer picture can emerge.

<sup>84</sup> USMACV, Directive 335-10, Inclosure 2. Pacification Tasks, passim. The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures, pp. 2-3. (It will be noted that this definition treats areas of clearing operations as virtually under Viet Cong control.) The

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According to this concept, Government forces conducted military operations oriented principally upon Viet Cong units in the area to be cleared. There was no requirement that Government forces be continuously stationed in the area to provide security. Consequently, it was recognized that in such areas the Viet Cong would install their control apparatus and organize guerrilla forces.

(C) An examination of the pacification overlays contained in Appendix 4 reveals that cleared areas usually surrounded the areas considered pacified or undergoing pacification. By mounting operations in the cleared areas during the day, and returning to the main pacification area at night, Government troops endeavored to screen the secured areas from attack by Viet Cong units.<sup>85</sup> In addition, road-clearing operations were conducted in order to maintain lines of communication between Government-controlled areas, and such roads were shown as cleared on the pacification overlays.

(C) This does not mean that these roads were safe for travel, except in guarded convoys. As Table 5 shows, 22 percent of the attacks

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character and purpose of clearing operations is explained in greater detail in Chapter V.

<sup>85</sup>This was the modus operandi of the 50th Regiment in Long An, and of several other units the author is aware of. Once a unit becomes involved in securing, its normal course is to keep the periphery of its sector at night. Since most of the forces were committed to securing or held as reaction forces (See Appendix 1), there were generally insufficient troops to allow one unit to engage in securing while another engaged in clearing. Hence the securing units were forced to mount clearing operations of short duration, and then return to their securing mission. In the Hou Tac plan, a certain number of battalions were earmarked for clearing, and others for securing. However, the experience was that most of the forces soon became involved in securing, and consequently insufficient clearing forces were available to meet the requirements of the plan. Hop Tac Secretariat, Report of Inspection, Long An Province, 26 April 1965 and Report of Inspection, Binh Duong Province, 24 March 1965.

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and 32 percent of the ambushes occurred in cleared areas. Furthermore, with the growth of Viet Cong strength it became increasingly difficult to keep the roads open for essential travel by government officials and supply convoys. The United States Operations Mission representative in Pleiku province reported that:

When he first arrived in the province, he had the impression that the majority of the VC in Pleiku were low grade laboring types who merely operated rest stations and produced food for the hard core VC moving through the province from Cambodia to Binh Dinh. Now, however, company and larger size units of well trained and equipped hard core VC are operating at will in the province. Frequent vehicle ambushes on the main roads have caused complete disruption in the shipment of food supplies from the coastal areas, causing depletion of the province rice reserve. Inter-province travel has been sharply curtailed due to the poor security situation.<sup>86</sup>

Similarly, the Kontum provincial representative reported:

The security situation has made travel more difficult. Movement by road has become much more hazardous and limited. It is impossible to reach the northern-most district by road because several bridges have been destroyed by the VC. The province chief, who ordinarily devotes a large portion of his time to visiting districts and hamlets, is prevented by the security situation from making his usual visits.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, given the Viet Cong campaign against lines of communication, the cleared status of roads became more difficult to sustain.

(C) The most serious aspect of the pacification status of the cleared areas is that the population in such areas were exposed to a high degree of Viet Cong control. According to the spreading oilspot concept, an area to be pacified was first cleared and made secure enough to permit the introduction of Government officials and pacification cadre. When such cadre were introduced, the area was considered to be under pacification. The chief characteristic of a

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<sup>86</sup> USOM, Reports of Provincial Representatives, 28 February 1965, passim. Phu Yen made a similar report. Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. Kien Hoa and Kien Giang made similar reports. Ibid.

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cleared area, then, is that the condition of security sufficient to permit the introduction of Government cadre had not been achieved. This meant that the Government's apparatus of population control was prohibited from functioning in the cleared areas, and that the way was open for the Viet Cong apparatus to be installed. As the United States Operations Mission provincial representative in Pleiku reported:

The lack of security has caused the cessation of all visits by government officials to the outlying areas and the VC have stepped into this vacuum and are increasing their efforts to establish an administrative organization in the areas outside GVN control.<sup>89</sup>

(C) By definition, a cleared area does not preclude "the existence of underground cells and guerrilla forces in the area."<sup>90</sup> Chapter II has shown that underground cells and guerrilla forces are major components of the Viet Cong apparatus of population control. Consequently, there is strong reason to believe that nearly all of the villages and hamlets in the cleared areas were under effective Viet Cong control. The following reasons are advanced in support of this conclusion: first, the recognized state of insecurity, which prohibits government officials or cadre from

<sup>88</sup> USMACV, Directive 335-10, Inclosure 2. See also, The Concept of Pacification and Certain Definitions and Procedures. Obviously, none of the hamlets in the cleared area meet the six criteria for secure Government control. Also, since the area is considered insecure for Government cadre, it may be assumed that the former loyal village and hamlet officials have either been killed, driven out, or intimidated by the Viet Cong. Thus, in fact as well as in definition, there is no effective apparatus of Government population control in most of the cleared areas.

<sup>89</sup> USOM, Reports of Provincial Representatives, 31 March 1965, passim.

<sup>90</sup> USMACV, Directive 335-10, Inclosure 2.

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remaining in the area; second, the exposure of villagers to intimidation by the Viet Cong; third, the lack of continuity of the Government's military presence due to the inability of the clearing forces to remain in a cleared area for any significant length of time; fourth, the significant proportion of Viet Cong incidents which occur in cleared areas, as indicated by Table 5; and fifth, evidence of Viet Cong taxation and recruitment in cleared areas.<sup>91</sup>

(C) It is reasonable to conclude that the population in the cleared areas are subject to a relatively high degree of Viet Cong control. Consequently, the manpower and material resources of these areas are subject to Viet Cong exploitation to a significant degree. In the final analysis, it is reasonable to expect that when the Government's apparatus of population control is prohibited from functioning in an area, and the Viet Cong apparatus is not so prohibited, it will be the Viet Cong who will gain the manpower and resources. Their control in the cleared areas may not be complete, but as long as it is sufficient to effect this end--to mobilize manpower and resources--it suffices for the basic needs of the insurgency.

(C) It is now possible to analyze the trends in population control, as revealed by the Monthly Reports of Pacification Progress and Area and Population Control, during the course of the Chien Thang plan. To accomplish this, twenty major provinces have been

<sup>91</sup> USOM, Reports of Provincial Representatives, 28 February 1965, passim. See especially the reports of the Phuoc Tuy, Long An, Vinh Linh, Kien Giang, Phong Dinh, and Ba Xuyen representatives. The Phuoc Tuy representative states:

"Village and hamlet people even in cleared and secure areas are forced to pay taxes to the VC." Ibid., passim.

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selected for analysis. These provinces contain eight million, or 62 percent, of the 12.8 million rural inhabitants of South Vietnam.<sup>92</sup> They are also key provinces in terms of rice production, strategic location, and the degree to which they are contested or controlled by the Viet Cong.<sup>93</sup>

(C) Pacification status overlays for these provinces for the months of September 1964 and February 1965 are contained in Appendix 4. These overlays, which have been prepared from the overlays which accompany the Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Area and Population Control, provide a comparative picture of the status of pacification in the twenty provinces at intervals of six and eleven months after the commencement of the Chien Thang plan.<sup>94</sup>

(C) Population control data for the twenty provinces have been extracted from the monthly reports of 1 June 1964, 25 September 1964, and 25 February 1965. This data is tabulated in Appendix 3.

<sup>92</sup> Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Area and Population Control, 25 September 1964 and 25 February 1965. The population totals for the twenty provinces and for the country as a whole are contained in Appendix 3. When the largely Government-controlled provinces of An Giang, Chau Doc, Bien Hoa, and Gia Dinh are added to the twenty provinces under consideration, the total population comes to 76 percent of the national total. These latter four provinces are not considered further because they remained largely under Government control throughout.

<sup>93</sup> See Appendix 1 to Chapter III, and pacification overlays, Appendix 4.

<sup>94</sup> Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Area and Population Control, 25 September 1964 and 25 February 1965, Inclosures. In some cases, overlays for 25 January 1965 have been used because overlays for February were not available. For some provinces, overlays of other months have been included for comparison. The overlays should be examined in conjunction with the discussion of population control trends which follows in the text.

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(U) In order to examine the trend in population control within a particular geographical area, the twenty major provinces have been arranged in four groups. The first group consists of the Central Vietnam lowlands provinces of Quang Nam, Quang Tin, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh and Phu Yen.<sup>95</sup> The second group consists of the Saigon area provinces of Binh Duong, Tay Ninh, Hau Nghia and Long An. These are provinces included in the area of the Hop Tac plan, except for Tay Ninh.<sup>96</sup> The third group consists of the upper Mekong delta provinces of Go Cong, Dinh Tuong, Kien Hoa, Vinh Binh and Vinh Long. The last group consists of the lower Mekong delta provinces of Kien Giang, Chuong Thien, Phong Dinh, Ba Xuyen, Bac Lieu and An Xuyen.

(C) The population control data contained in Appendix 3 for the Central Vietnam provinces reveals that the Government lost heavily in population control in these provinces between 1 June 1964 and 25 February 1965. The percentage of the total population in pacified areas and areas undergoing pacification declined from 56 percent to 38 percent between 1 June 1964 and 1 September 1964, and declined further to 23 percent on 25 February 1965. The decline was particularly pronounced in Binh Dinh, which had actually gained in population control (pacified and under pacification) between June and September, and then fell 60 percent between September and February. Population control in Phu Yen fell 80 percent between September and

<sup>95</sup> See Map 1, Appendix 1 to Chapter III.

<sup>96</sup> The trends in the other Hop Tac provinces, except for Phuoc Tuy where considerable population control was lost beginning with the Viet Cong offensive in December 1964, are not considered as significant as the provinces selected. This may be confirmed by inspection of the Monthly Reports.

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February. The Government lost 359,000 people in Binh Dinh and Phu Yen alone, no doubt largely due to the impact of the Viet Cong offensive between September and February. The over-all loss in the five provinces between June and February was 870,000. The Viet Cong gain was 725,000, and the population in the cleared area (under general military control) also increased. The Viet Cong doubled their share of the total population controlled between June and September--from 9 percent to 18 percent--and then doubled this again to 36 percent between September and February. At the end, the total population under Viet Cong control was undoubtedly much greater than 36 percent, as much of the population in cleared areas were probably under Viet Cong control.<sup>97</sup> An examination of the pacification status overlays for these provinces, contained in Appendix 4, confirms this loss in population control.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>The reasons for this are given in the discussion of cleared areas, above. These areas were also referred to as "under general military control", and are shown under this heading in Appendix 3.

<sup>98</sup>The reported increase in population control in Quang Ngai requires some explanation. It will be recalled that the USOM provincial representative reported on 28 February 1965 that: "The situation in Quang Ngai has changed from bad to worse. . . . Rumors are circulating that the VC will attempt to take the city. . . . VC interdictions have once again closed the road traffic on Highway 1. . . . A pressing need of this province at the moment is food and other essential commodities. . . . The number of refugees is swelling every day and latest count places the number at 23,000." USOM, Reports of Provincial Representatives, 28 February 1965, passim. What happened was that the refugees were counted as "population in pacified areas". While losses of population control were occurring, the influx of refugees served to offset these losses and even increase the population in pacified areas. The monthly report for 25 November 1964 states that losses in population control had occurred in each of the coastal districts of Quang Ngai due to the action of VC forces in the lowlands. The monthly report for 25 January 1965 contains the entry: "Quang Ngai: The large increase in pacified population was due to the influx of refugees from VC controlled areas." By subtracting the 23,000 refugees from the pacified population of 25 February 1965, it can be seen that there was a loss of pacified population from

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(C) In the Saigon area group of provinces, population control figures for 1 June 1964 tell the story of the extensive deterioration that took place in the rural environs of the capital during 1963 and early 1964.<sup>99</sup> It must be remembered that when the Chien Thang plan was implemented Government population control was in a steep decline. This decline reflected the result of a reassessment of Government population control undertaken during the second quarter of 1964.<sup>100</sup> Consequently, while the data for 1 June 1964 and 25 September 1964 reveal little change in the status of population control in the four provinces, this by itself was a gain, for it indicated that the downward trend in population control had been arrested. The figures show 24 percent of the population to be in the pacified and under pacification status in June and 23 percent in September. In addition, by September a modest beginning had been made

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176,320 in September to 160,368 in February. However, this loss is not of the order of magnitude that one might expect. When an area formerly under Government control (pacified or under pacification) is lost to the Viet Cong, it is unreasonable to expect that all villagers will leave their native village. The actual loss of population control, then, is greater than the number of refugees. While one would expect that refugees would offset only a part of the loss of population control, the data show that refugees offset the entire loss and more. It is possible that some refugees came from areas that were formerly under general military control. However, it would appear that most refugees appearing coincidentally with a Viet Cong offensive would be coming from areas formerly under Government control. USMACV, Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Area and Population Control, 25 November 1964 and 25 January 1965, passim.

<sup>99</sup>USMACV, Military Reports, March-June 1964, passim. See also the predecessor reports to the Military Reports, namely, Memorandum for General Harkins and General Ty, January-October 1963; Memorandum for General Harkins and General Don, November 1963-January 1964; and Memorandum for General Harkins and General Khiem, February-March 1964.

<sup>100</sup>(S) As a result of the reassessment, the percentage of pacified population fell from 77 percent to 27 percent during the first quarter, 1964. USMACV, Quarterly Review and Evaluation, 2d Quarter 1964. (SECRET).

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population into the pacified category. However, the pacification over-lays for 25 September make clear that most of this gain stemmed from consolidation of Government control over the rural cities and towns at the center of the oilspots.

(C) The data further reveal that after the initiation of the Hop Tac plan on 1 October 1964, there was an eight percent increase in the population in pacified areas or undergoing pacification during the next five months. This was a significant increase in population control for the five-month period, especially since it was accompanied by a 10 percent decline in the population under Viet Cong control.<sup>101</sup> However, to place this gain in perspective, it must be pointed out that the rate of increase of Government population control for the period was 1.6 percent per month. At this rate it would require forty-three months to bring the remaining 69 percent of the population under Government control; and this assumes that sufficient military and civilian resources would be made available to sustain the existing rate of advance. As a matter of fact, this rate was not sustained, for as of 25 August 1965 the total population in pacified areas or areas undergoing pacification was 402,700 or 37 percent.<sup>102</sup> This was a one percent rate of advance between February and August 1965, or an average of 1.3 percent per month since September 1964.

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<sup>101</sup>The data quite clearly portray the general scheme of pacification, which is (1) to raise the population under pacification to a pacified status, (2) to bring areas that are cleared under pacification, and (3) to clear areas that are controlled by the Viet Cong. The increase in the population in the pacified category between September and February is approximately equal to the decrease in the population under Viet Cong control, indicating that the foregoing shift of population from a lower pacification category to a higher one took place.

<sup>102</sup>USMACV, Monthly Report of Rural Reconstruction Progress and Population and Area Control for the Period 25 July to 25 August 1965, 11 Sept 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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(c) Furthermore, as a glance at the pacification overlays will show, the population in pacified areas in February 1965 consisted almost entirely of the population in the province capitals and district towns.<sup>103</sup> The real measure of Government progress in pacification of the rural countryside, then, is the increase in the population undergoing pacification. The data reveal that there was only a modest increase in the population in this category between September 1964 and February 1965--an increase of approximately 54,000.<sup>104</sup> It cannot be concluded that this represents much progress in pacification.

(c) It must also be noted that by the end of February 1965, 35 percent of the population of the Saigon area provinces was still under Viet Cong control, and another 34 percent was in the cleared area (under general military control) and subject to a high degree of Viet Cong control.

(c) The upper delta provinces show similar trends in population control. The area under Government control (pacified and under pacification) held at 39 percent between June and September, as the decline in Government control was arrested. Then, between September 1964 and February 1965, the Government increased its share of the population by six

<sup>103</sup>This is confirmed by adding the population of the province capitals and main towns of the four provinces. For Long An and Hau Nghia, the population of six main towns comes to 62,000--the same figure in the pacified category. For Binh Duong, the population of five main towns is 60,000. For Tay Ninh, the population of four main towns is 65,000. These people are, of course, the first target of pacification. By concentrating on urban areas, relatively large gains in population control can be achieved, even though no significant expansion into the rural areas proper has taken place. This is why it is imperative to examine the pacification status overlays in conjunction with the population control data. J. A. Wilson and M. J. Penzo, South Vietnam Political Division Tables and Maps, Rand Memorandum 4254-ARPA, Dec 1964.

<sup>104</sup>The decline in Binh Duong appears to be due mainly to a re-evaluation, and is not considered in this calculation. See the Binh Duong pacification status overlays.

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percent, and Viet Cong control declined four percent. At the end of the period, the Viet Cong still controlled 34 percent of the population, with another 21 percent in the category of general military control.

(C) In the lower delta provinces, the population under Government control increased from 32 to 41 percent between June and September 1964. However, most of this gain was attributable to Ba Xuyen province-- the other provinces merely stabilized the situation in accordance with the general pattern. Population control in Ba Xuyen and the newly-formed Bac Lieu province, taken together, declined between September and February, indicating that perhaps the September figure was over-stated.

(C) The Government made a five percent gain over-all between September and February, and once again the gain was concentrated in one province, Phong Dinh. The pacification overlays for Phong Dinh clearly depict this progress, and illustrate the link-up of oilspots which was part of the basic strategy. The overlays for Ba Xuyen and Bac Lieu also reveal pacification gains, although this was not reflected in the population control figure.<sup>105</sup> At the end of the period, the Viet Cong still controlled 36 percent of the population, and another 18 percent were under general military control.

(C) The summary data for the twenty major provinces reveal that pacification did not succeed in these provinces as a group. Government control actually declined from 41 to 37 percent between 1 June and 25 September 1964. It declined to 36 percent between 25 September 1964 and 25 February 1965. The over-all loss from 1 June to 25 February was five percent; during the same period the Viet Cong increased their

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<sup>105</sup>It is apparent that new estimates were made of the population in each category of pacification. This was not an uncommon occurrence in the preparation of the monthly report.

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population control by six percent. At the end of the period, the Viet Cong controlled 35 percent of the population outright, and another 29 percent were subject to a high degree of Viet Cong influence in the areas under general military control.

(C) A comparison between the data for the twenty provinces and for the country as a whole reveals that the Viet Cong population control in the twenty provinces on 25 February 1965 comprised 91 percent of the total Viet Cong control country-wide. If the battle for pacification were to be won, it had to be won by reducing the enemy's population control in the twenty provinces that were decisive for him. However, near the end of the first year of the Chien Thang plan his control was greater in these provinces than at the beginning.

(C) The data for the Republic of Vietnam as a whole clearly reveal the steady decline in Government population control between 1 June 1964 and 25 June 1965. The steady increase in Viet Cong population control is also revealed.

(C) The global data are significant in one other important way, however. It will be noted that there is a striking trend in the two categories, "pacified" and "under pacification;" that is, the population in the former category rose throughout the period, while the population in the latter shows a marked decline. Part of this decline in the population under pacification was due to a loss of population to the Viet Cong; the rest was due to the transfer of population into the pacified category.

(C) Now, if the pacification effort were going according to plan, one would expect that as the pacification of one area was completed, a new area would be brought under pacification and so on. If this were the case, the total population "under pacification" would remain

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approximately the same. However, the figures clearly reveal that pacification during 1964-1965 was marked by the transference of population from the "under pacification" to the "pacified" category. The bringing of additional population under pacification was missing.

(C) This is precisely what would be expected to occur if the forces available were inadequate to the task of securing additional areas to be pacified. Before a village or hamlet can be brought under pacification, forces have to be introduced to secure the area. Once the pacification of an area is completed, that is, the hamlets achieve the six criteria, sufficient local security forces must become available to relieve the mobile securing forces so that they may move on to another area. When such local security forces do not become available or are inadequate to the task, the original securing forces are simply immobilized in the pacification area.<sup>106</sup> Gradually, the total population in the secured area becomes pacified, but the population undergoing pacification steadily declines, because no new areas are brought under pacification.

(C) What the data clearly indicate, therefore, is that the force requirements for continued expansion of the oilspots were generally not met. This is supported by the comparative strengths and force ratios presented in Appendix 2. Additional evidence will now be considered to determine whether or not this was the case.

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<sup>106</sup>When this occurs, there is a real question as to the ability of the securing forces to adequately maintain security in the area under Government control. Especially in the period of mobile warfare, the enemy is free to probe at the perimeter of the secured area, and to choose his points of attack. This presents a dynamic situation, in which it may be difficult for friendly forces to hold onto what they have unless they continue to expand, thereby keeping the enemy on the defensive.

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Force Requirements and Pacification Progress

(C) The comparative combat strength of Government and Viet Cong forces on 1 May 1964 and 1 February 1965, for the twenty major provinces considered in the analysis of population control, is presented in Appendix 2. The data reveal that in fifteen of the twenty provinces the Government/Viet Cong strength ratio turned against the Government during the period under review. In five provinces--Long An, Kien Hoa, Vinh Binh, Ba Xuyen, and An Xuyen--the ratio improved.

(C) The data is subject to qualification, in that estimates of Viet Cong strength, especially guerrilla strength, are subject to error. In addition, assigned strength of Government forces rather than present-for-duty strength is given in the available records. As an illustration of these qualifications, in April 1965 the present-for-duty strengths of Government combat forces in Long An province were: Regular (infantry only): 3067; Regional: 1245; Popular: 3378. The estimate of Viet Cong strength was placed at 1800.<sup>107</sup> These figures yield a Government/Viet Cong strength ratio of 4.2/1, which should be contrasted to the 7.1/1 ratio given in Appendix 2 for February 1965.

(U) Because of the foregoing qualifications, greater significance should be attached to the actual strength figures than to the ratios. It should be recognized that assigned strength overstates actual Government strength. As a check on the trend in the Viet Cong strength, both Vietnamese and American sources were used in preparation of the data for February 1965, and the more precise figures for main and local force strength are stated separately from the estimate of guerrilla strength.

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<sup>107</sup> Report of Inspection, Long An Province, p. 4.

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(C) A study of the data contained in Appendix 2 clearly reveals that, in general, the increase in Government forces during the first year of the Chien Thang plan was insufficient to offset the increase in Viet Cong forces. This tends to confirm the conclusion, arrived at from the analysis of population control data, that forces were generally inadequate to continue the expansion of the oilspots.

(C) While Regional Force and Popular Force strengths increased in most provinces, a province-by-province comparison of the strength data and population control data leads to the conclusion that the additional forces were used to increase security in some areas and to support the limited expansion of population control in other areas. There is little indication that continuous expansion, marked by an increase in the population "under pacification," could have been supported. An exception to this was in the lower Mekong delta provinces, where the recruitment of paramilitary forces among the Hoa Hao no doubt contributed to the expansion of Government population control.<sup>108</sup>

#### Conclusion

(C) With the implementation of the Chien Thang plan, a large proportion of the battalions of the regular forces--together with all of the Regional and Popular forces--were committed to clearing and securing, missions in accordance with the spreading oilspot strategy.<sup>109</sup> The stability of troop assignments which United States advisors had been

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<sup>108</sup>Of the fifty additional Regional Force rifle companies authorized for U. S. support at the outset of the Chien Thang plan (April 1964), thirty were assigned to IV Corps for the recruitment of Hoa Hao companies. USMACV, Regional Force and Popular Force Advisory Detachment, "Fact Sheet," 17 July 1964. (CONFIDENTIAL).

<sup>109</sup>See above, section on Employment of Regular Forces (ARVN) Under the Chien Thang Plan. See also, Appendix 1.

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calling for,<sup>110</sup> in order to assure the population of Government protection, was thereby largely attained.

(C) Each province now became a claimant upon the military resources of the Government to support the province pacification program. The demand was particularly strong for mobile forces--the regular infantry, ranger, and marine battalions--which were the only troops capable of being transferred among the provinces. In general, the corps and divisions assigned a major portion of their forces to support pacification in the most critical provinces or areas of their tactical zone, and held a few battalions in reserve.<sup>111</sup>

(C) Since major oilspots were located in at least twenty-five different provinces of the country,<sup>112</sup> and were by no means within mutually supporting distance (not even in Long An and Hau Nghia, where Viet Cong interdiction of the roads forced troops to be moved from one province to the other via Saigon), the result was a dispersion of force among separate enclaves, each of which conducted its own battle.

(C) Further, because these forces were situated to support a

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<sup>110</sup>See above, Chapter V.

<sup>111</sup>Here no distinction is made between whether the forces were assigned to sector (province), as in Long An and Kien Hoa, or were retained under division control, as in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai. In both cases the forces performed clearing and securing missions, although forces assigned to sector were invariably linked more closely to the oilspots and integrated more closely with the pacification effort. See Chapter V above. USMACV, J-3, ARVN Order of Battle, August 1964-April 1965.

<sup>112</sup>Major oilspots were located in Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Tin, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Kontum, Pleiku, Darlac, Tay Ninh, Binh Duong, Phuoc Thanh, Hau Nghia (2), Long An (2), Dinh Tuong, Go Cong, Kien Hoa, Vinh Long, Vinh Binh, Phong Dinh, Ba Xuyen, and Bac Lieu. For the forces in each of these provinces, see Appendixes 1 and 2. For the location of the oilspots within each province, see the pacification status overlays, Appendix 4.

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particular oilspot, and in principle were not to be moved therefrom except for short periods, the forces available to reinforce any other oilspot were limited. A rigidity was built into the deployment of regular forces: instead of being shiftable among the oilspots,<sup>113</sup> the bulk of these forces were committed to one oilspot or the other, and were not regularly available for employment elsewhere. This facilitated the enemy's tactics of holding Government forces on one front while concentrating against another.<sup>114</sup>

(C) Thus, stability in the employment of forces was achieved only at the cost of flexibility in responding to the Viet Cong threat.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup>The 7th (ARVN) Division, during the period July 1964-April 1965, provides a good example of the shifting of regular forces among oilspots to counter Viet Cong forays. By developing a high degree of helicopter and river-boat mobility, the 7th Division was able to employ its forces to support pacification and still concentrate to defeat the Viet Cong in battle. USMACV, Military Reports, July 1964-April 1965, *passim*. However, this practice was the exception rather than the rule. Elsewhere, the pacification forces indicated in Appendix 1 generally remained within the province in which they were stationed. In some cases battalions were exchanged, that is, one battalion would replace another in an oilspot; but this altered neither the division of forces nor the separateness of the oilspots. ARVN Order of Battle, passim.

<sup>114</sup>This tactic worked successfully in the campaign against the Central Vietnam lowlands, where the intervention of the General Reserve was inadequate to prevent large losses in population control. It is also a classical enemy tactic, having been employed successfully in the Dien Bien Phu campaign. General Vo Nguyen Giap, People's War People's Army (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962). Captured enemy documents also refer to the dispersal of Government strength: "They [the Government] have not been able to accomplish the pacification mission and are forced to split their main forces into companies and platoons and assign them to different areas to carry out the pacification mission. No reserve force is available for their use, so they are not capable of concentrating their mobile troops to sweep or attack us."

USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Letter (written by someone at Western Region level), Log No. 5-218-65, 22 Jun 1965, p. 1. (FOUO).

<sup>115</sup>This was particularly disadvantageous with the advent of mobile warfare, when rigidity in shifting forces to meet Viet Cong threats could only rebound to the benefit of the enemy. In sum, a relatively rigid pattern of deployments assumed that the optimal allocation of resources among the oilspots remained static; whereas the optimal allocation

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The very principle enunciated by United States advisors, in calling for stability of assignment of regular forces, resulted in each province having to get along with a limited number of battalions, with little chance of substantial reinforcement.

(C) Strategically, this employment of mobile forces presented a relatively inflexible structure of deployments to the enemy. It enabled the Viet Cong to concentrate superior forces against individual oilspots--as in An Lao, Phuoc Chau, and Binh Dinh--with limited intervention by Government reinforcements. The Chien Thang plan, which assumed the primary threat to be guerrilla warfare, left Government forces ill-disposed for the onset of mobile warfare. The oilspots were like so many pieces on a chessboard, incapable of mutual support, and all subject to attack.

(C) In addition, while regular troops were employed on clearing and securing missions in the vicinity of the oilspots, the Viet Cong consolidated their hold on the outlying areas and built up their forces. Consequently, the pacification effort had to push outward against stronger resistance. In many cases, the balance of forces turned against the Government, resulting in a deterioration of security in the oilspot and a requirement for additional forces.

(C) When paramilitary forces did not increase sufficiently, regular forces had to undertake securing missions, which restricted their area of influence to the pacification area. This drain of strength

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changed quite frequently as the Viet Cong threat developed. Sufficient flexibility was required to facilitate the re-allocation of resources in response to the changing threat, but under the Chien Thang plan almost the only source of this flexibility was the General Reserve. As an example, during the battle for Binh Dinh a regiment might have been sent from III or IV Corps to II Corps which was hard pressed to meet the threat in the highlands and coastal lowlands as well; however, this was not done.

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resulted in clearing forces being inadequate to the task of expanding the oilspot and screening the periphery. The concept of a clearing zone as a buffer between enemy forces and the securing zone broke down, as the Viet Cong were able to penetrate the clearing zone and probe the securing zone at will. This threat to Government-controlled areas kept the forces in the securing zone pinned to that zone and on the defensive.

(C) This employment of regular forces--dispersed among the oilspots, and securing within the oilspots--made it difficult to prevent the loss of population control in those areas where the enemy chose to make a serious effort. Consequently, it must be concluded that the commitment of regular forces to population security missions in support of pacification contributed to the defeat of the Chien Thang plan.

(C) The Viet Cong were quick to recognize the relationship of the inadequacy of the Government's paramilitary forces to the continued dispersion of its regular forces. They continuously attacked the paramilitary forces while pressing their manpower war to prevent replenishment of Government strength. The regular forces were then forced to do the job of the Regional Force and Popular Force. Commenting on this tactic, the Viet Cong said:

The enemy is short on strength and the number of recruits is not enough to fill up that shortage; regional forces have been worn down and disintegrated so they [the Government] have not been able to accomplish the pacification mission and are forced to split their main forces into companies and platoons and assign them to different areas to carry out the pacification mission. No reserve force is available for their use, so they are not capable of concentrating their mobile troops to sweep or attack us. . . . Our action consists of annihilating and disintegrating their existing regional forces, at the same time conducting a propaganda campaign against their conscription policy to make them unable to recruit men to replace soldiers put out of action and to activate new elements, forcing them to keep on dispersing their main forces, to create favorable conditions for our three types of troops to destroy them and stop their replacement source."116

116 USMACV, J-2, Trans. Sec., Captured Letter (written by someone at Western Region level), Log No. 5-218-65, 22 Jun 1965, pp. 1-3. (FOUO).

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(C) When it became apparent that the mobilization of paramilitary manpower--upon which the success of the Chien Thang plan was said to depend--would be inadequate to support the plan, the continued employment of regular forces on securing missions became questionable. However, this employment could not be questioned without questioning in toto the concepts for employment of military forces to support pacification. This may have been the most difficult task of all to accomplish.

(C) At the end of Chapter IV it was concluded that the first hypothesis to be tested in this study was established, namely, that there was a massive Viet Cong force build-up during the period of the Chien Thang plan, April 1964-April 1965.

(C) The second hypothesis was that the Viet Cong escalated the war to a new level of intensity, involving maneuver in larger formations and a deliberate undertaking to engage and destroy the Government's regular troops in battle. It was shown in Chapter III that such escalation was part of the Viet Cong strategy, and in Chapter VI the dimensions of the Viet Cong offensive of 1964-1965 have been portrayed in terms of incidents, casualties, and major actions. The landmark battles of An Lao, Binh Gia, and Viet An, and the main force offensive of February and March 1965 in Binh Dinh, clearly heralded the onset of mobile warfare. It is considered, therefore, that the evidence of Chapter III and Chapter VI fully justifies the conclusion that during the period under review the Viet Cong escalated the war to a new level of intensity, involving maneuver in larger formations and a deliberate undertaking to engage and destroy the Government's regular troops in battle.

(C) The third and final hypothesis with which this study was concerned, was that the Government's inadequate military resources, together with the dissipation of mobile forces through their employment

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on population security missions, contributed to the defeat of the Chien Thang plan. Evidence concerning the employment of Government forces has been presented in Chapters V and VI. The general inadequacy of military resources, together with the dispersion of mobile (regular) forces and their further dissipation on securing missions, has been exhaustively analyzed in this chapter. It was also shown that the Chien Thang plan did not succeed in the twenty major provinces where it had to succeed if serious inroads were to be made against Viet Cong control of the population and resources of the country. It is believed that the evidence fully warrants the conclusions of this chapter, and substantiates the final hypothesis.

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Appendix 1

## ARVN ORDER OF BATTLE AND PACIFICATION MISSIONS

FOR 14 FEBRUARY 1965

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>MISSION</u>
I CORPS TACTICAL ZONE		
1st Division	Quang Tri Thua Thien	Pacification
1st Regiment	Quang Tri	
1st Battalion	Thua Thien	Security of Phu Bai airfield, near Hue (YD 9415)
2d Battalion	Quang Tri	Mobile Reaction Force
3d Battalion	Quang Tri	Pacification--Securing
2d Regiment	Quang Tri	
1st Battalion	Quang Tri	Mobile Reaction Force
2d Battalion	Quang Tri	Reconnaissance and Security-surveillance of Lao Bao pass and Route 9 from Laos
3d Battalion	Thua Thien	Reconnaissance and Security-surveillance of approaches from Laos
3d Regiment	Thua Thien	
1st Battalion	Thua Thien	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Thua Thien	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Quang Tin	Attached to 2d Division and further assigned to Quang Tin Brigade for Pacification--Securing
2d Division	Quang Nam Quang Tin Quang Ngai	Pacification

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>MISSION</u>
4th Regiment	Quang Nam	
1st Battalion	Quang Nam	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Quang Nam	Security of An Hoa Industrial Area (AT 8746)
3d Battalion	Quang Nam	Mobile Reaction Force
Quang Tin Brigade		
5th Regiment	Quang Tin	
1st Battalion	Quang Tin	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Quang Tin	Mobile Reaction Force
3d Battalion	Quang Tin	Mobile Reaction Force
6th Regiment	Quang Tin	
1st Battalion	Quang Tin	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Quang Tin	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Quang Tin	Pacification--Clearing
Quang Ngai Special Zone		
51st Regiment	Quang Ngai	
1st Battalion	Quang Ngai	Pacification--Clearing
2d Battalion	Quang Ngai	Pacification--Clearing
3d Battalion	Quang Ngai	Mobile Reaction Force
11th Ranger Battalion	Quang Nam	Mobile Reaction Force-- Corps Reserve
37th Ranger Battalion	Quang Ngai	Pacification--Clearing
39th Ranger Battalion	Quang Ngai	Pacification--Securing
II CORPS TACTICAL ZONE		
22d Division	Kontum Pleiku Phu Bon Binh Dinh	Pacification
40th Regiment	Binh Dinh	Pacification--Securing
1st Battalion	Binh Dinh	Pacification--Securing

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>MISSION</u>
2d Battalion	Binh Dinh	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Binh Dinh	Pacification--Securing
41st Regiment	Kontum	
1st Battalion	Kontum	Mobile Reaction Force
2d Battalion	Phu Bon	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Binh Dinh	Pacification--Clearing
42d Regiment	Kontum	
1st Battalion	Kontum	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Kontum	Mobile Reaction Force
3d Battalion	Pleiku	Security at Pleiku
23d Division	Darlac Phu Yen Khanh Hoa Quang Duc Tuyen Duc Ninh Thuan Binh Lam Special Zone Lam Dong Binh Thuan Binh Tuy	Pacification
44th Regiment	Phu Yen	
1st Battalion	Darlac	Mobile Reaction Force-- Division Reserve
2d Battalion	Phu Yen	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Phu Yen	Pacification--Securing
23d Ranger Battalion	Phu Yen	Pacification--Securing
45th Regiment	Darlac	
1st Battalion	Binh Dinh	Pacification--Clearing
2d Battalion	Darlac	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Darlac	Pacification--Clearing

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>MISSION</u>
Binh Lam Special Zone		
47th Regiment	Lam Dong	
1st Battalion	Binh Tuy	Pacification--Clearing
2d Battalion	Binh Thuen	Mobile Reaction Force
3d Battalion	Binh Thuen	Pacification--Securing
21st Ranger Battalion	Pleiku	Mobile Reaction Force--Corps Reserve
22d Ranger Battalion	Pleiku	Mobile Reaction Force--Corps Reserve
51st Ranger Battalion	Binh Dinh	Pacification--Clearing
III CORPS TACTICAL ZONE		
5th Division	Binh Duong Tay Ninh	Pacification
7th Regiment	Binh Duong	
1st Battalion	Phuoc Thanh	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Binh Duong	Security
3d Battalion	Binh Duong	Pacification--Clearing
8th Regiment	Binh Duong	
1st Battalion	Binh Duong	Pacification--Clearing
2d Battalion	Binh Duong	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Binh Duong	Pacification--Securing
9th Regiment	Tay Ninh	
1st Battalion	Tay Ninh	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Tay Ninh	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Binh Duong	Mobile Reaction Force
25th Division	Long An Hau Nghia	Pacification
43d Regiment	Hau Nghia	
1st Battalion	Hau Nghia	Pacification--Clearing

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>MISSION</u>
2d Battalion	Hau Nghia	Pacification--Clearing
3d Battalion	Hau Nghia	Pacification--Clearing
49th Regiment	Hau Nghia	
1st Battalion	Hau Nghia	Pacification--Clearing
2d Battalion	Hau Nghia	Pacification--Clearing
3d Battalion	Hau Nghia	Pacification--Clearing
46th Regiment	Long An	
1st Battalion	Long An	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Long An	Pacification--Clearing
3d Battalion	Long An	Pacification--Clearing
50th Regiment	Long An	Pacification--Securing
1st Battalion	Long An	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Long An	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Long An	Pacification--Securing
52d Ranger Battalion	Long An	Pacification--Clearing
Phuoc Binh Thanh Special Zone	Phuoc Thanh Binh Long Phuoc Long	Pacification
48th Regiment	Phuoc Thanh	
1st Battalion	Phuoc Thanh	Pacification--Clearing
2d Battalion	Phuoc Thanh	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Phuoc Thanh	Pacification--Clearing
34th Ranger Battalion	Binh Long Phuoc Thanh	Pacification--Securing
36th Ranger Battalion	Phuoc Thanh	Mobile Reaction Force
Phuoc Binh Special Zone	Bien Hoa Phuoc Tuy	Pacification
38th Ranger Battalion	Phuoc Tuy	Mobile Reaction Force
30th Ranger Battalion	Bien Hoa	Mobile Reaction Force

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>MISSION</u>
31st Ranger Battalion	Phuoc Thanh	Mobile Reaction Force
35th Ranger Battalion	Hau Nghia	Pacification--Clearing
33d Ranger Battalion	Bien Hoa	Mobile Reaction Force

## IV CORPS TACTICAL ZONE

7th Division	Dinh Tuong Go Cong Kien Hoa Kien Tuong	Pacification
10th Regiment	Kien Hoa	
1st Battalion	Kien Hoa	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Kien Hoa	Mobile Reaction Force
3d Battalion	Kien Hoa	Pacification--Securing
11th Regiment	Dinh Tuong	
1st Battalion	Dinh Tuong	Mobile Reaction Force
2d Battalion	Dinh Tuong	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Dinh Tuong	Pacification--Securing
12th Regiment	Go Cong	
1st Battalion	Dinh Tuong	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Go Cong	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Go Cong	Pacification--Securing
41st Ranger Battalion	Kien Hoa	Mobile Reaction Force
32d Ranger Battalion	Kien Tuong	Mobile Reaction Force
9th Division	Vinh Long Vinh Binh Kien Phong An Giang Kien Giang (part)	
13th Regiment	Vinh Long	
1st Battalion	Vinh Long	Mobile Reaction Force
2d Battalion	Phong Dinh	Security of Can Tho Air-field

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>MISSION</u>
3d Battalion	Vinh Long	Pacification--Securing
14th Regiment	Vinh Binh	
1st Battalion	Vinh Binh	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Vinh Binh	Mobile Reaction Force
3d Battalion	Vinh Binh	Pacification--Securing
15th Regiment	Kien Phong	
1st Battalion	Kien Phong	Mobile Reaction Force
2d Battalion	Chau Doc	Mobile Reaction Force
3d Battalion	Kien Phong	Mobile Reaction Force
43d Ranger Battalion	Vinh Long	Mobile Reaction Force--Division Reserve
21st Division	Phong Dinh Chuong Thien Ba Xuyen Bac Lieu An Xuyen Kien Giang (part)	Pacification
31st Regiment	Chuong Thien	
1st Battalion	Chuong Thien	Mobile Reaction Force
2d Battalion	Chuong Thien	Mobile Reaction Force
3d Battalion	Chuong Thien	Mobile Reaction Force
32d Regiment	An Xuyen	
1st Battalion	Kien Giang	Security of Ha Tien Cement Plant
2d Battalion	An Xuyen	Mobile Reaction Force
3d Battalion	An Xuyen	Mobile Reaction Force
33d Regiment	Ba Xuyen	
1st Battalion	Ba Xuyen	Mobile Reaction Force
2d Battalion	Ba Xuyen	Mobile Reaction Force
3d Battalion	Ba Xuyen	Mobile Reaction Force

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>MISSION</u>
42d Ranger Battalion	Ba Xuyen	Mobile Reaction Force-- Division Reserve
44th Ranger Battalion	Bac Lieu	Mobile Reaction Force-- Division Reserve

## CAPITAL MILITARY DISTRICT

52d Regiment	Gia Dinh	
1st Battalion	Gia Dinh	Pacification--Securing
2d Battalion	Gia Dinh	Pacification--Securing
3d Battalion	Bien Hoa	Security of Ammunition Storage Area

## GENERAL RESERVE

Six Airborne Battalions	Based in Saigon	Mobile Reaction Force
Five Marine Battalions		

SOURCE: USMACV, J-3, ARVN Order of Battle, 14 Feb 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL).  
 Hop Tac Secretariat, Reports of Inspection (various), passim.  
 Field Trips made by the author and Interviews with United  
 States Advisors.

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## Appendix 2

## STRENGTH OF GOVERNMENT AND VIET CONG COMBAT FORCES IN 20 MAJOR PROVINCES, 1 MAY 1964 AND 1 FEBRUARY 1965

PROVINCE	RVN STRENGTH		VIET CONG STRENGTH	
	1 May 64	1 Feb 65	1 May 64	1 Feb 65
Quang Nam				
ARVN	3,073	3,119	Main Force	550
Regional	2,329	1,787	Local Force	720 <sup>a</sup> 500
Popular	4,309	7,655	Guerrillas	400 2,482
CIDG <sup>1</sup>	585	788		
ACY <sup>2</sup>	<u>5,044</u>	0		
Total	15,340	13,349		1,120 3,532
GVN/ VC Ratio	13.6/1	3.8/1		
Quang Tin				
ARVN	4,357	3,727	Main Force	2,115
Regional	1,179	1,618	Local Force	1,220 205
Popular	2,911	5,165	Guerrillas	1,200 1,760
CIDG	550	1,253		
ACY	<u>2,486</u>	0		
Total	11,483	11,763		2,420 4,080
GVN/ VC Ratio	4.7/1	3.9/1		

<sup>a</sup>Figures written between Main Force and Local Force lines indicate total of Main Force and Local Force.

<sup>1</sup>CIDG--Civilian Irregular Defense Group, a paramilitary force composed mainly of ethnic and religious minorities.

<sup>2</sup>ACY--Armed Combat Youth, a hamlet militia force. For discussion, see Chapter V.

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## Quang Ngai

ARVN	8,304	2,985	Main Force	2,380	3,750
Regional	2,853	2,530	Local Force	750	1,000
Popular	7,018	9,900	Guerrillas	545	9,109
CIDG	572	0			
<b>ACY</b>	<b><u>3,855</u></b>	<b><u>4,210</u></b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,602</b>	<b>19,625</b>		<b>3,675</b>	<b>13,859</b>

GVN/  
VC  
Ratio

6.1/1 1.2/1

## Binh Dinh

ARVN	3,915	4,076	Main Force	1,200	929
Regional	2,267	2,342	Local Force	180	770
Popular	5,114	9,021	Guerrillas	679	4,668
CIDG	626	586			
<b>ACY</b>	<b><u>7,265</u></b>	<b><u>2,845</u></b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,187</b>	<b>18,870</b>		<b>2,059</b>	<b>6,367</b>

GVN/  
VC  
Ratio

9.3/1 3.0/1

## Phu Yen

ARVN	2,294	1,449	Main Force		1,175
Regional	1,649	1,810	Local Force	700	405
Popular	3,208	5,887	Guerrillas	600	1,177
CIDG	498	654			
<b>ACY</b>	<b><u>3,553</u></b>	<b><u>1,085</u></b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,202</b>	<b>10,885</b>		<b>1,300</b>	<b>2,757</b>

GVN/  
VC  
Ratio

8.6/1 3.9/1

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## Binh Duong

ARVN	3,336	3,507	Main Force	1,420	2,200
Regional	1,511	730	Local Force	863	260
Popular	1,495	1,703	Guerrillas	614	10,028
CIDG	0	668			
ACY	<u>444</u>	0			
Total	6,786	6,608		2,907	12,488

GVN/  
VC  
Ratio 2.3/1 .53/1

## Tay Ninh

ARVN	1,927	1,014	Main Force	2,050	3,085
Regional	941	1,738	Local Force	285	435
Popular	1,984	3,221	Guerrillas	600	1,914
CIDG	956	1,687			
ACY	<u>618</u>	0			
Total	6,426	7,660		2,935	5,434

GVN/  
VC  
Ratio 2.2/1 1.4/1

## Hau Nghia

ARVN	2,703	5,397	Main Force	0	200
Regional	476	695	Local Force	60	270
Popular	1,327	1,568	Guerrillas	450	4,231
CIDG	0	0			
ACY	<u>154</u>	0			
Total	4,660	7,660		510	4,701

GVN/  
VC  
Ratio 9.1/1 1.6/1

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## Long An

ARVN	3,726	3,692	Main Force	690	500
Regional	804	1,399	Local Force		610
Popular	2,406	3,609	Guerrillas	800	160
ACY	<u>287</u>	<u>362</u>			
Total	7,223	9,062		1,490	1,270
GVN/ VC Ratio	4.8/1	7.1/1			

## Go Cong

ARVN	1,739	1,000	Main Force	0	0
Regional	335	1,079	Local Force	70	230
Popular	779	1,645	Guerrillas	360	Included in Dinh Tuong
ACY	<u>174</u>	<u>0</u>			
Total	3,027	3,724		430	230+

## Dinh Tuong

ARVN	3,296	2,783	Main Force	1,683	1,705
Regional	1,350	1,471	Local Force		465
Popular	3,003	6,137	Guerrillas	1,380	10,500 (Includes Go Cong)
Total	7,649	10,391		3,063	12,670(-)

GVN/VC  
Ratio 3.1/1 1.1/1 (Includes Go Cong)

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## Kien Hoa

ARVN	1,452	2,584	Main Force	950	1,580
Regional	1,824	2,487	Local Force	1,500	700
Popular	4,288	6,037	Guerrillas	15,100	1,850
ACY	<u>1,071</u>	0			
Total	8,635	11,108		17,550	4,200

GVN/  
VC  
Ratio .49/1 2.6/1

## Vinh Binh

ARVN	1,910	1,960	Main Force	990	600
Regional	1,502	2,740	Local Force		970
Popular	3,862	6,964	Guerrillas	4,499	4,255
CIDG	155	0			
ACY	<u>3,075</u>	1,814			
Total	10,504	13,478		5,489	5,825

GVN/  
VC  
Ratio 1.9/1 2.3/1

## Vinh Long

ARVN	4,080	1,249	Main Force	0	300
Regional	1,344	2,047	Local Force	255	435
Popular	4,758	6,557	Guerrillas	50	1,007
ACY	<u>991</u>	0			
Total	11,173	9,853		305	1,742

GVN/  
VC  
Ratio 36.6/1 5.6/1

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## Kien Giang

ARVN	118	575	Main Force	0	670
Regional	1,622	2,302	Local Force	200	490
Popular	1,665	2,681	Guerrillas	1,067	720
CIDG	321	411			
ACY	<u>774</u>	<u>917</u>			
Total	4,500	6,886		1,267	1,880

GVN/

VC

Ratio 3.5/1 3.2/1

## Chuong Thien

ARVN	1,902	1,188	Main Force	840	2,025
Regional	1,332	1,692	Local Force		265
Popular	2,374	4,521	Guerrillas	1,103	4,163
CIDG	154	0			
ACY	<u>717</u>	<u>157</u>			
Total	6,479	7,558		1,943	6,453

GVN/

VC

Ratio 3.3/1 1.2/1

## Phong Dinh

ARVN	1,439	998	Main Force	0	645
Regional	877	2,083	Local Force	150	310
Popular	2,128	3,561	Guerrillas	1,120	1,080
CIDG	0	87			
ACY	<u>1,128</u>	<u>600</u>			
Total	5,572	7,329		1,270	2,035

GVN/

VC

Ratio 4.4/1 3.6/1

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Ba Xuyen<sup>1</sup>

ARVN	5,473	600	Main Force	2,550
Regional	1,124	2,232	Local Force	1,070
Popular	3,817	5,424	Guerrillas	730
ACY	<u>2,437</u>	<u>10,537</u>		
Total	12,851	18,793		4,791
				6,590

GVN/

VC

Ratio 2.7/1 2.8/1

## An Xuyen

ARVN	1,052	3,489	Main Force	295	1,050
Regional	1,777	1,726	Local Force	800	660
Popular	1,344	1,717	Guerrillas	9,311	1,214
CIDG	628	0			
ACY	<u>193</u>	<u>223</u>			
Total	4,992	7,155		10,406	2,924

GVN/

VC

Ratio .48/1 2.4/1

<sup>1</sup>Includes Bac Lieu province on 1 February 1965.

NOTE: Civilian Irregular Defense Group personnel and Armed Combat Youth are shown except where a negative entry is applicable. Some provinces incorporated Combat Youth into the Popular Force, while others continued to maintain a separate armed hamlet militia known as Armed Combat Youth. The ARVN strength shown is combat strength only, that is, strength of infantry, armor, artillery and engineer units. All strengths for Government forces are assigned strengths. Viet Cong Main and Local Forces are confirmed units only. A unit is accepted as confirmed if the confirmation is made either by a GVN or by a USMACV source. The GVN source used is dated 31 March 1965; however, it is a reasonable assumption that listed Viet Cong units were in existence on 1 February 1965, the date used for this analysis. It should be noted that estimates of Viet Cong guerrilla strengths vary widely.

SOURCE: RVN, Ministry of Armed Forces, J-2 High Command, and USMACV, J-2 (Joint Publication), Viet-Cong Military Order of Battle South of the 17th Parallel as of 31 March 1965, II, 380-407. Headquarters, Pacific Command, Weekly Intelligence Digest, No. 7-65, February 1965 (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-3, Province Status Sheets.

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8 May 1964 (CONFIDENTIAL). USMACV, J-2, "Republic of Vietnam and Viet Cong Strength Ratio by Province," 31 January 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL).

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## Appendix 3

STATUS OF POPULATION CONTROL IN 20 MAJOR PROVINCES  
JUNE 1964, SEPTEMBER 1964, AND FEBRUARY 1965

## CENTRAL VIETNAM PROVINCES

PROVINCE AND DATE	UNDER GENERAL CONTROLLED BY VIET CONG			TOTAL
	UNDER PACIFICATION <sup>1</sup>	MILITARY CONTROL <sup>3</sup>	UNDER PACIFICATION <sup>2</sup>	
<u>June 1964</u>				
Quang Nam	117,817	397,998	15,475	557,088
Quang Tin		13,750	286,550	353,300
Quang Ngai	12,298	449,165	54,421	630,392
Binh Dinh	271,666	23,962	508,262	837,375
Phu Yen	196,954	26,256	88,119	338,813
Total	598,735	911,131	952,827	2,716,968
Percent	22%	34%	35%	100%
<u>September 1964</u>				
Quang Nam		183,942	340,046	574,542
Quang Tin		29,308	273,398	353,486
Quang Ngai	176,320	132,340	225,536	650,304
Binh Dinh	289,419	33,189	292,819	852,423
Phu Yen	181,223	28,379	87,190	338,813
Total	646,962	407,158	1,218,989	2,769,568
Percent	23%	15%	44%	100%
<u>February 1965</u>				
Quang Nam	27,451	97,111	193,674	574,542
Quang Tin		26,680	209,865	353,486
Quang Ngai	183,368	130,828	139,702	650,304
Binh Dinh	108,531	21,925	398,541	852,280
Phu Yen		42,431	178,477	318,882
Total	319,350	318,975	1,120,259	2,749,494
Percent	12%	11%	41%	100%

<sup>1</sup>Population living in hamlets which meet the six criteria for pacification. See Chapter V.

<sup>2</sup>Population living in areas which have been cleared of Viet Cong military units and where mobile action cadre (see Chapter V) are working with the people to bring the hamlets to a pacified status.

<sup>3</sup>Population living in areas which have been cleared of Viet Cong main and local force units.

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STATUS OF POPULATION CONTROL IN 20 MAJOR PROVINCES  
JUNE 1964, SEPTEMBER 1964, AND FEBRUARY 1965

## SAIGON AREA PROVINCES

PROVINCE AND DATE	PACIFIED	UNDER PACIFICATION	UNDER GENERAL MILITARY CONTROL	CONTROLLED BY VIET CONG	TOTAL
<u>June 1964</u>					
Binh Duong		95,533	85,774	61,798	243,105
Tay Ninh	4,100	14,000	133,000	42,000	193,100
Hau Nghia		45,084	73,020	115,213	233,317
Long An		84,245	26,805	268,053	382,932
Total	4,100	238,862	318,599	487,064	1,052,454
Percent	.5%	23.5%	30%	46%	100%
<u>September 1964</u>					
Binh Duong		116,055	71,551	55,499	243,105
Tay Ninh	20,891	12,176	145,422	42,000	220,489
Hau Nghia		42,584	74,270	116,463	233,317
Long An	28,164	24,681	49,867	276,493	383,034
Total	49,055	195,496	341,110	490,455	1,079,945
Percent	5%	18%	32%	45%	100%
<u>February 1965</u>					
Binh Duong	66,381	30,985	78,916	66,823	243,105
Tay Ninh	45,100	50,043	110,232	26,982	232,357
Hau Nghia	4,037	58,625	43,070	122,675	228,407
Long An	58,010	24,679	132,648	154,326	373,492
Total	173,528	164,332	363,866	370,806	1,077,361
Percent	16%	15%	34%	35%	100%

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STATUS OF POPULATION CONTROL IN 20 MAJOR PROVINCES  
JUNE 1964, SEPTEMBER 1964, AND FEBRUARY 1965

## UPPER DELTA PROVINCES

PROVINCE AND DATE	UNDER GENERAL MILITARY CONTROL			CONTROLLED BY VIET CONG	TOTAL
	PACIFIED	PACIFICATION			
<u>June 1964</u>					
Go Cong	34,044	28,937	8,511	98,728	170,220
Dinh Tuong	78,587	73,349	89,067	282,900	523,903
Kien Hoa	139,915	11,700	221,774	187,111	560,500
Vinh Binh	104,150	85,000	234,850	108,000	532,000
Vinh Long	212,740	155,523	52,270	126,983	547,516
Total	569,436	354,509	606,472	803,722	2,334,139
Percent	24%	15%	26%	35%	100%
<u>September 1964</u>					
Go Cong	20,882	36,430	55,293	57,426	170,031
Dinh Tuong	88,587	120,623	50,148	282,900	542,258
Kien Hoa	136,312	20,871	87,683	342,187	587,053
Vinh Binh	101,422	29,771	274,711	120,871	526,775
Vinh Long	329,299	31,763	81,943	84,811	547,516
Total	676,493	239,458	549,778	888,195	2,373,633
Percent	29%	10%	23%	38%	100%
<u>February 1965</u>					
Go Cong	35,000	37,663	42,938	55,450	171,051
Dinh Tuong	136,785	138,586	30,206	225,681	531,258
Kien Hoa	173,634	19,366	68,650	275,673	537,323
Vinh Binh	128,150	32,740	260,073	120,871	541,834
Vinh Long	307,924	20,606	92,626	120,237	547,556
Total	781,493	248,961	494,493	797,912	2,329,022
Percent	34%	11%	21%	34%	100%

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STATUS OF POPULATION CONTROL IN 20 MAJOR PROVINCES  
JUNE 1964, SEPTEMBER 1964, AND FEBRUARY 1965

## LOWER DELTA PROVINCES

PROVINCE AND DATE	PACIFIED	UNDER PACIFICATION	UNDER GENERAL MILITARY CONTROL	CONTROLLED BY VIET CONG	TOTAL
<u>June 1964</u>					
Kien Giang	170,000	5,000	85,000	100,000	360,000
Chuong Thien	57,790	3,800	64,432	166,229	292,251
Phong Dinh	75,000	10,000	35,000	275,000	395,000
Ba Xuyen	174,077	28,275	276,648	103,603	582,603
An Xuyen	52,296		27,932	143,772	224,000
Total	529,163	47,075	489,012	788,604	1,853,854
Percent	29%	3%	26%	42%	100%
<u>September 1964</u>					
Kien Giang	170,000	33,000	65,000	92,000	360,000
Chuong Thien	57,790	25,784	53,440	155,237	292,251
Phong Dinh	75,000	30,000	41,000	249,000	395,000
Ba Xuyen	232,472	63,088	184,440	102,603	582,603
An Xuyen	52,296	10,387	17,545	143,772	224,000
Total	587,558	162,259	361,425	742,612	1,853,854
Percent	32%	9%	19%	40%	100%
<u>February 1965</u>					
Kien Giang	172,000	39,800	52,000	96,200	360,000
Chuong Thien <sup>1</sup>	59,061	46,294	28,364	114,718	248,437
Phong Dinh	166,547	68,224	22,643	120,126	377,540
Ba Xuyen <sup>2</sup>	120,686	22,021	113,271	103,468	359,446
Bac Lieu <sup>2</sup>	53,427	30,015	96,887	76,509	256,838
An Xuyen	56,202	5,312	18,909	143,772	224,195
Total	627,923	211,666	332,074	654,793	1,826,456
Percent	34%	12%	18%	36%	100%

<sup>1</sup>Reorganized and lost one district in October 1964<sup>2</sup>Organized from Ba Xuyen and Chuong Thien in October 1964.

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STATUS OF POPULATION CONTROL IN 20 MAJOR PROVINCES  
AND REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

## 20 MAJOR PROVINCES

DATE	PACIFIED	UNDER PACIFICATION	UNDER GENERAL MILITARY CONTROL	CONTROLLED BY VIET CONG	TOTAL
1 Jun 64	1,701,434	1,551,577	2,366,910	2,333,665	7,957,415
Percent	21%	20%	30%	29%	100%
25 Sep 64	1,960,068	1,004,371	2,471,302	2,607,065	8,077,000
Percent	24%	13%	31%	32%	100%
25 Feb 65	1,902,294	943,934	2,310,692	2,803,765	7,982,333
Percent	24%	12%	29%	35%	100%

## REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

1 Jun 64	4,052,165	2,781,480	3,469,156	2,536,428	12,895,069
Percent	31%	22%	27%	20%	100%
25 Sep 64	4,160,259	2,355,540	3,403,983	2,836,872	12,820,689
Percent	32%	19%	27%	22%	100%
25 Feb 65	4,449,793	1,812,224	3,489,657	3,047,799	12,862,270
Percent <sup>1</sup>	34.5%	14%	27%	24%	
25 May 65	4,897,600	1,066,300	3,794,000	3,041,700	
Percent <sup>1</sup>	38%	8%	29%	23%	
25 Jun 65	4,953,000	986,900	2,521,700	3,440,400	
Percent	38%	8%	27%	27%	

<sup>1</sup> Does not add to 100 percent because of a small fraction in the "Controlled by Neither" category.

Source: USMACV, J-3, Monthly Reports of Pacification Progress and Area Control, June 1964, September 1964, and February 1965. (CONFIDENTIAL). Republic of Vietnam data for May and June 1965 was taken from DIA, Military Factbook on the War in South Vietnam, Jan 1966, p. 25. Definitions of pacification categories are contained in USMACV, Directive 335-10, Monthly Report of Pacification Progress and Population and Area Control, 15 July 1964.

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## Appendix 4

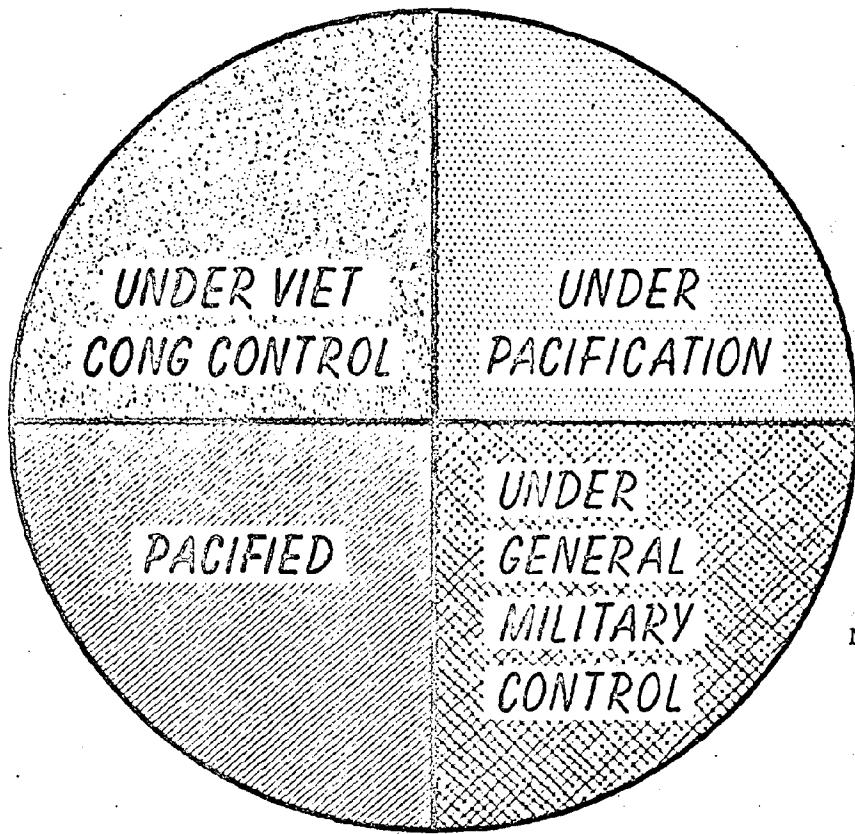
COMPARATIVE PACIFICATION STATUS OVERLAYS  
FOR SELECTED PROVINCES

Quang Nam	Dinh Tuong
25 September 1964	25 June 1964
25 February 1965	25 September 1964
Quang Tin	24 January 1965
25 September 1964	Kien Hoa
25 February 1965	25 September 1964
Quang Ngai	25 January 1965
25 July 1964	Vinh Binh
25 September 1964	25 September 1964
25 February 1965	25 February 1965
Binh Dinh	Vinh Long
25 July 1964	25 September 1964
25 September 1964	25 January 1965
25 February 1965	Kien Giang
Phu Yen	25 September 1964
25 September 1964	25 November 1964
25 February 1965	Chuong Thien
Binh Duong	25 September 1964
25 September 1964	25 January 1965
25 February 1965	Phong Dinh
Tay Ninh	25 September 1964
25 September 1964	25 February 1965
25 February 1965	Ba Xuyen
Hau Nghia	25 September 1964
25 September 1964	25 February 1965
25 February 1965	Bac Lieu
Long An	25 September 1964
25 September 1964	25 February 1965
25 February 1965	An Xuyen
	25 September 1964
	25 January 1965

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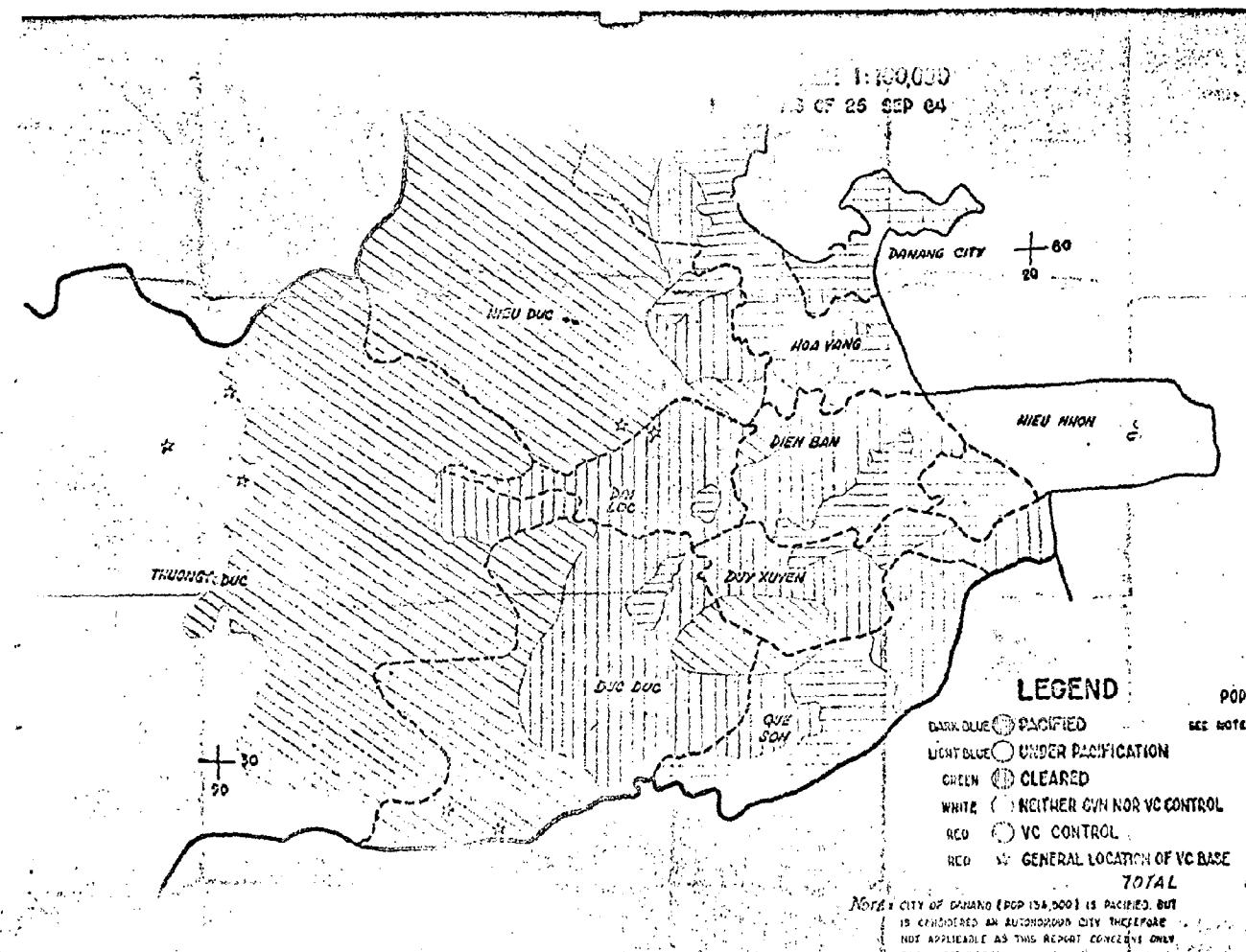
LEGEND

PACIFICATION STATUS



NOTE: This legend applies to the ozalid overl. For the photographic overlays, refer to legend on the overl itself.

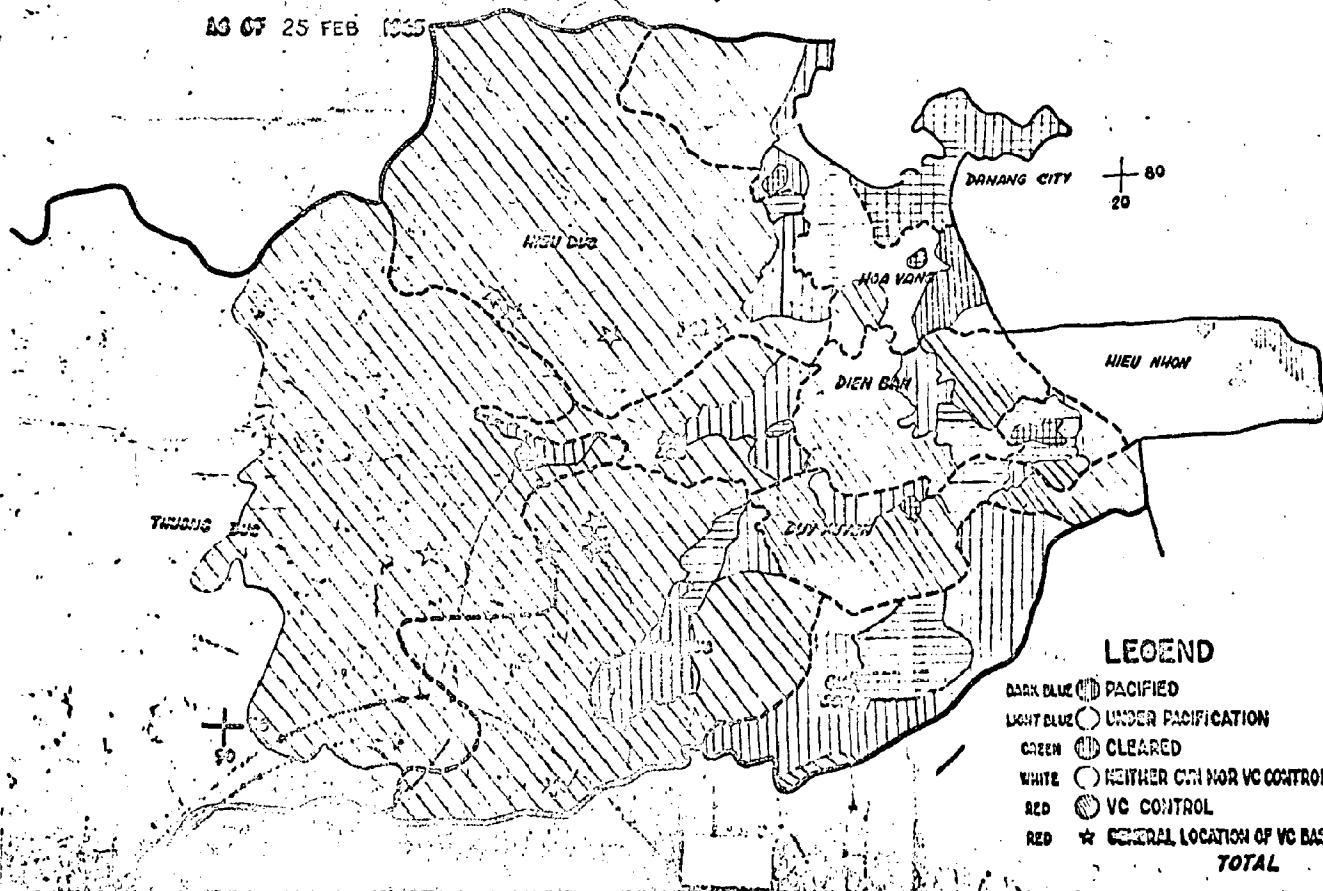
★ GENERAL LOCATION OF VC BASE



## MAP OF QUANG NAM PROVINCE

MAP NODUSIMA 1:100,000, 108E, 108E, 137E&amp;W SCALE 1:100,000

AS OF 25 FEB 1968

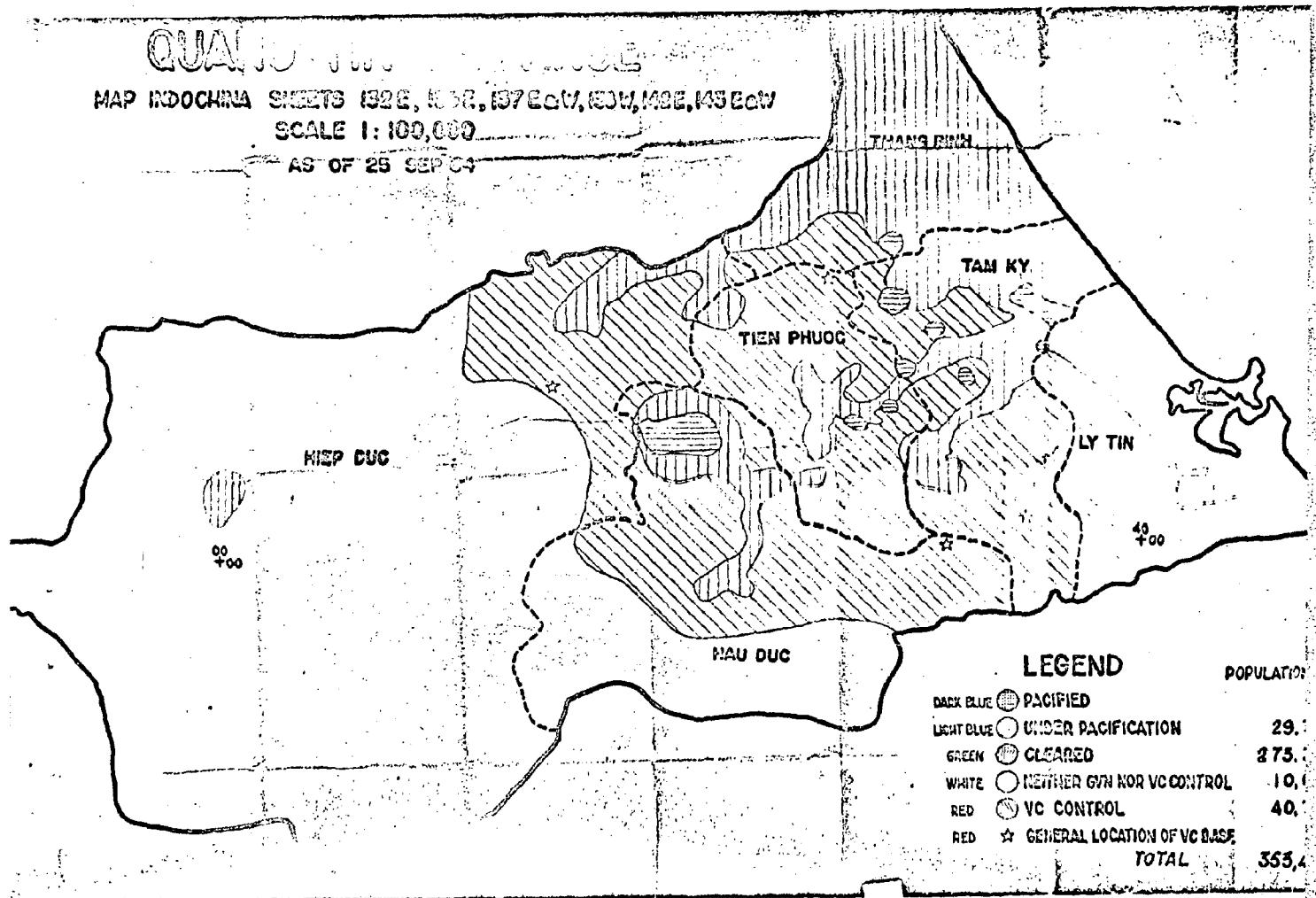


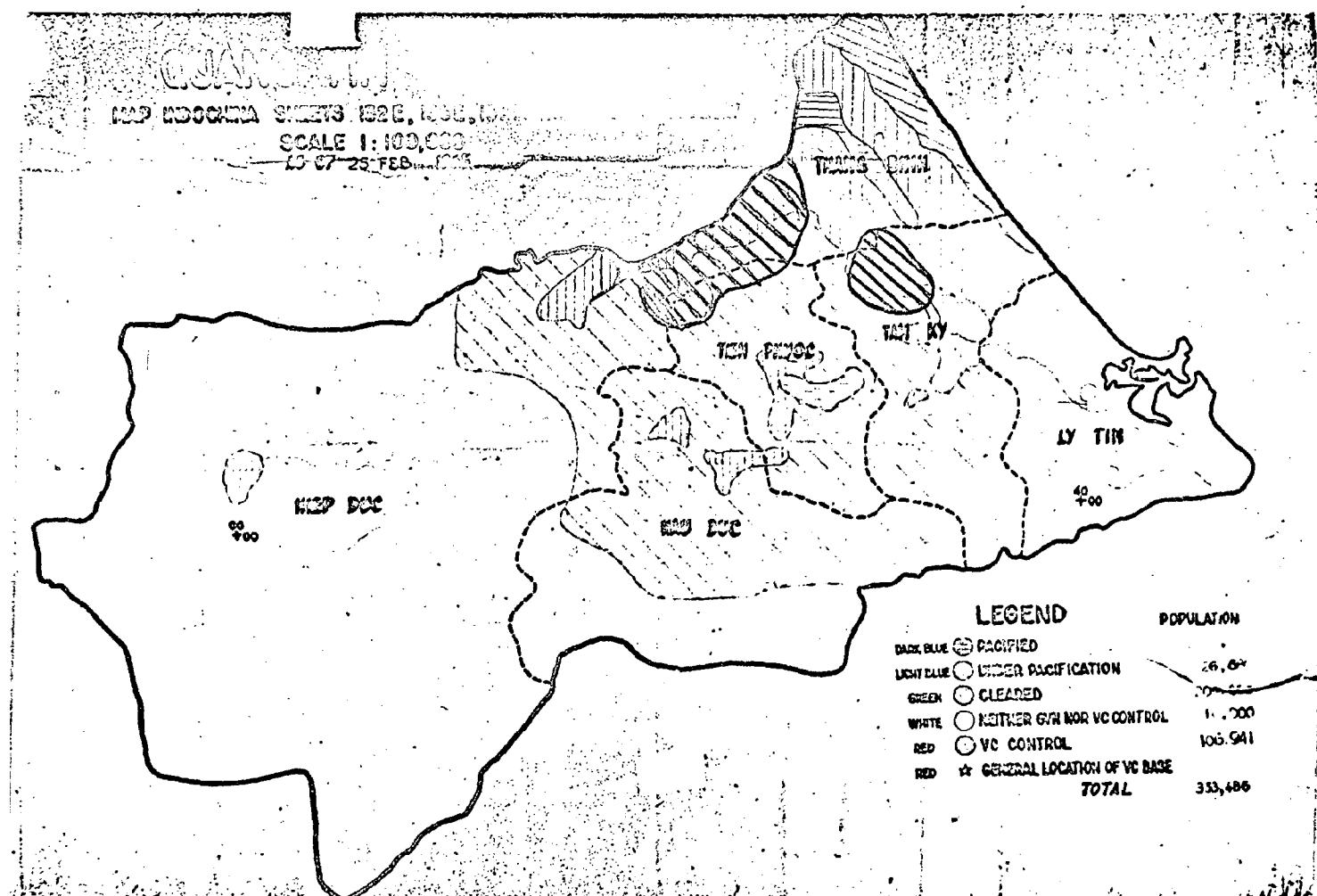
## QUANG BINH

MAP INDOCHINA SHEETS 132E, 133E, 137E&amp;W, 139W, 142E, 143E&amp;W

SCALE 1:100,000

AS OF 25 SEP 64



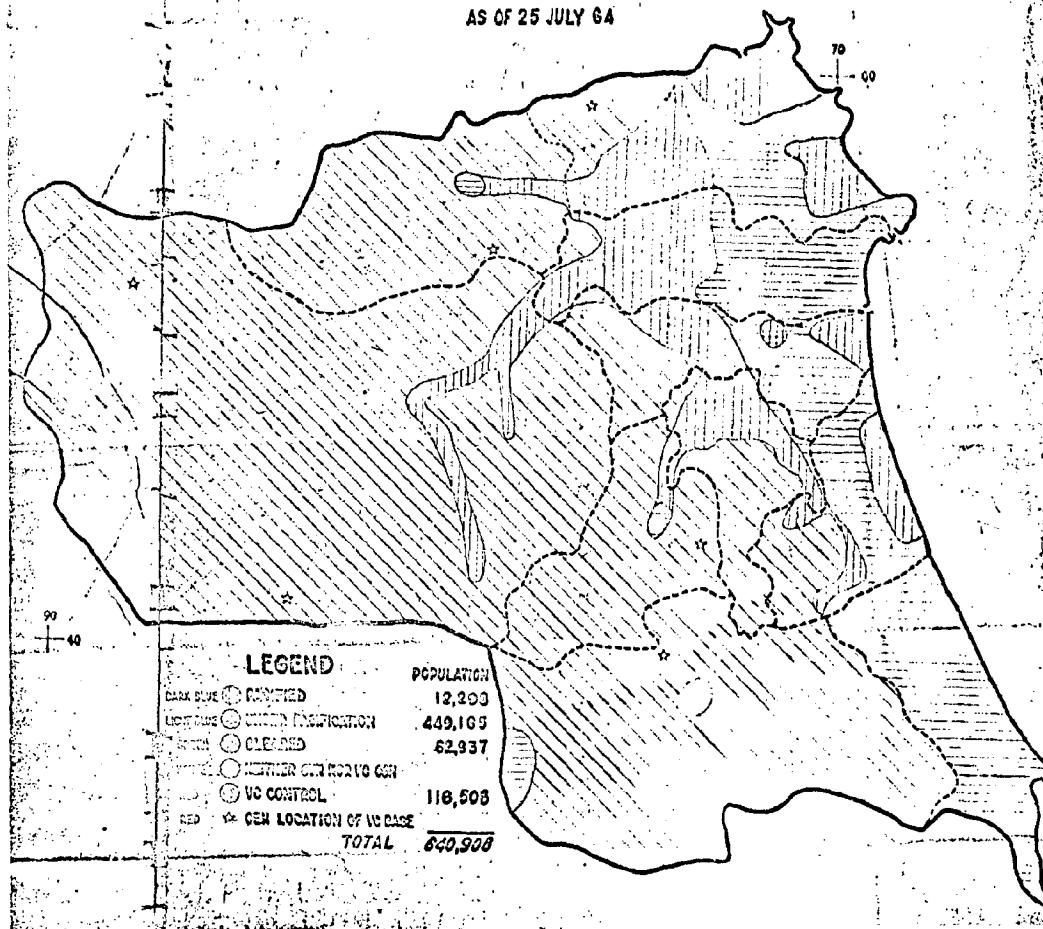


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## QUANG NGAI PROVINCE

MAP INDOCHINA SHEETS 137E, 138W, 143E & W, 144, 149 E & W, 150E & W  
SCALE 1:100,000

AS OF 25 JULY 64

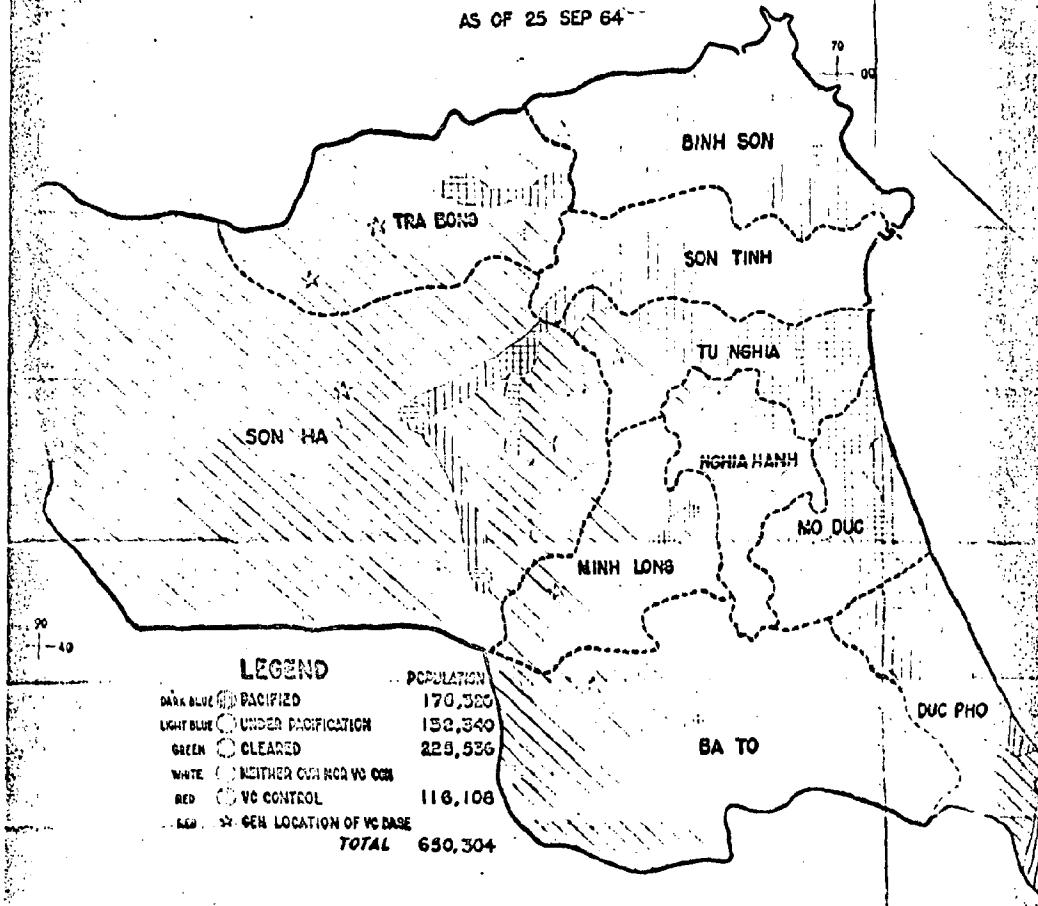


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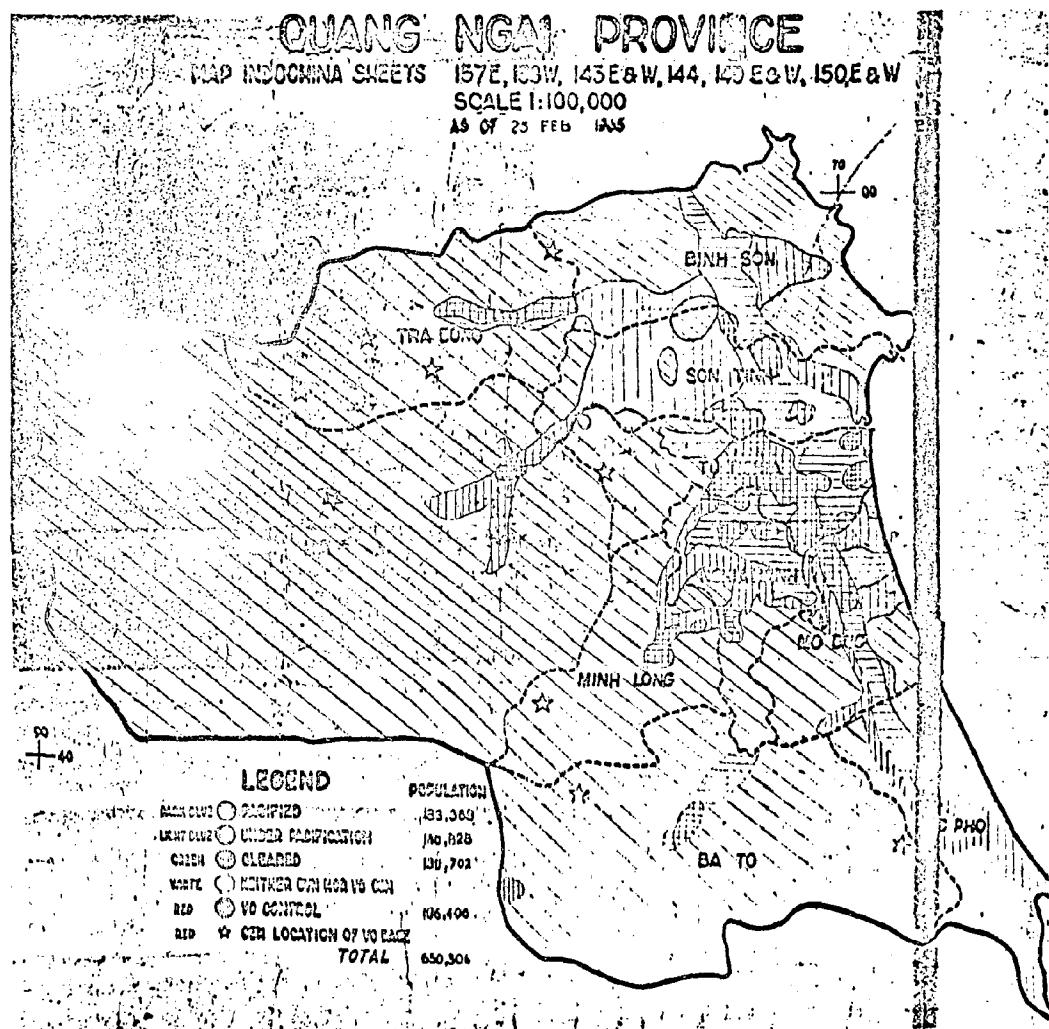
## QUANG NGAI PROVINCE

MAP INDOCHINA SHEETS 137E, 138W, 143E & W, 144, 149 E & W, 150E & W  
SCALE 1:100,000

AS OF 25 SEP 64



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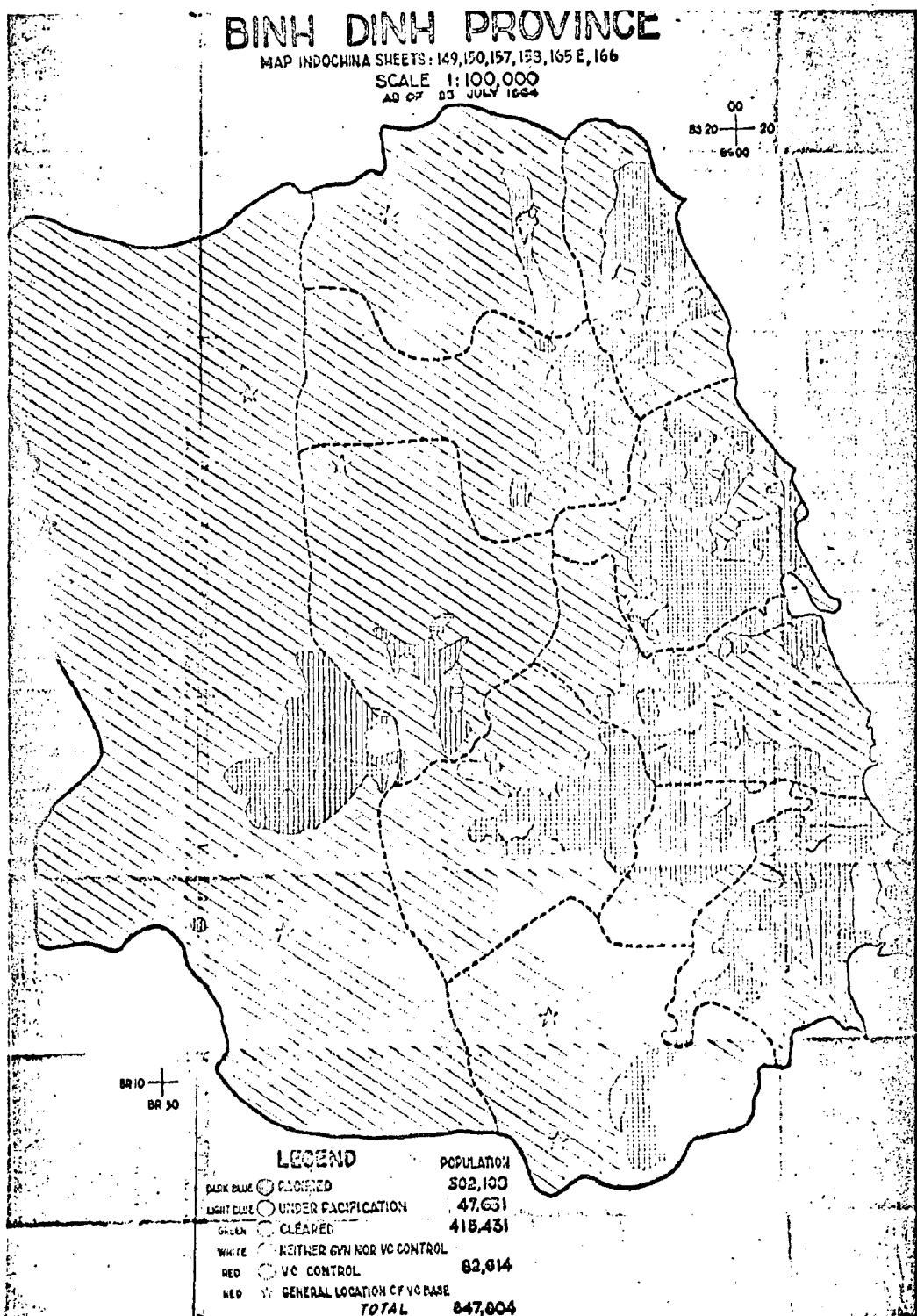
314

## BINH DINH PROVINCE

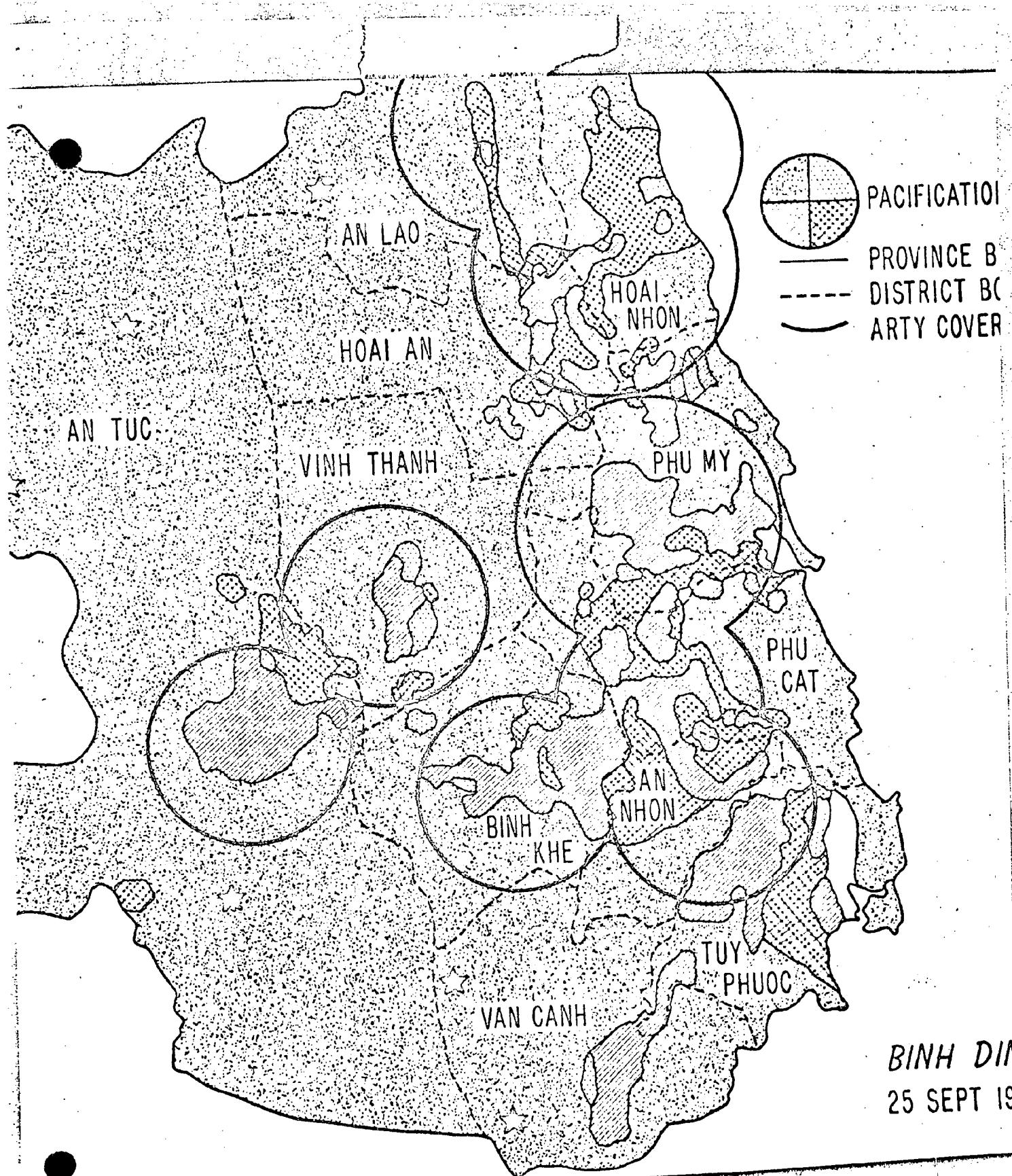
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SCALE 1: 100,000

AD OF 85 JULY 1964

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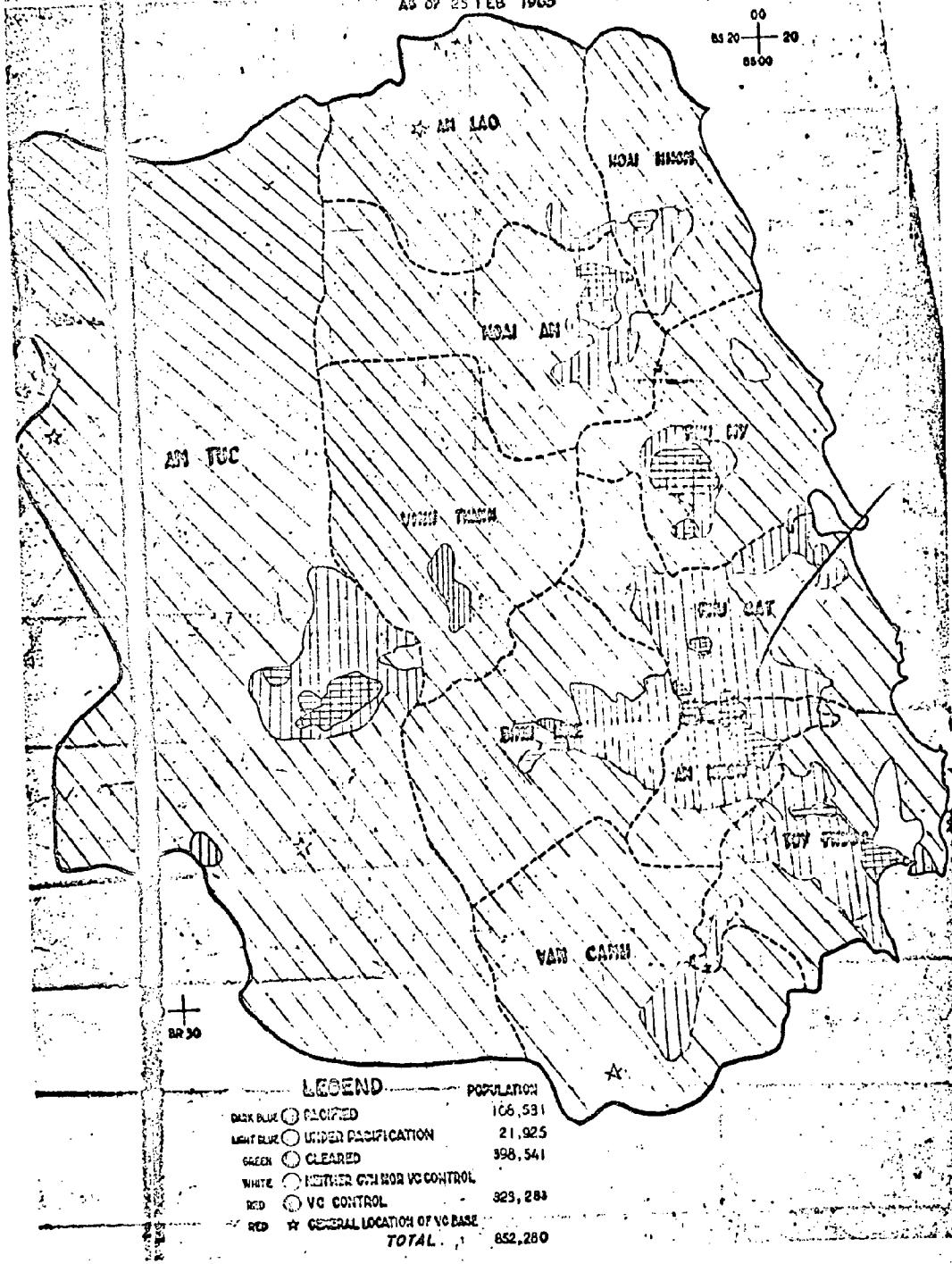
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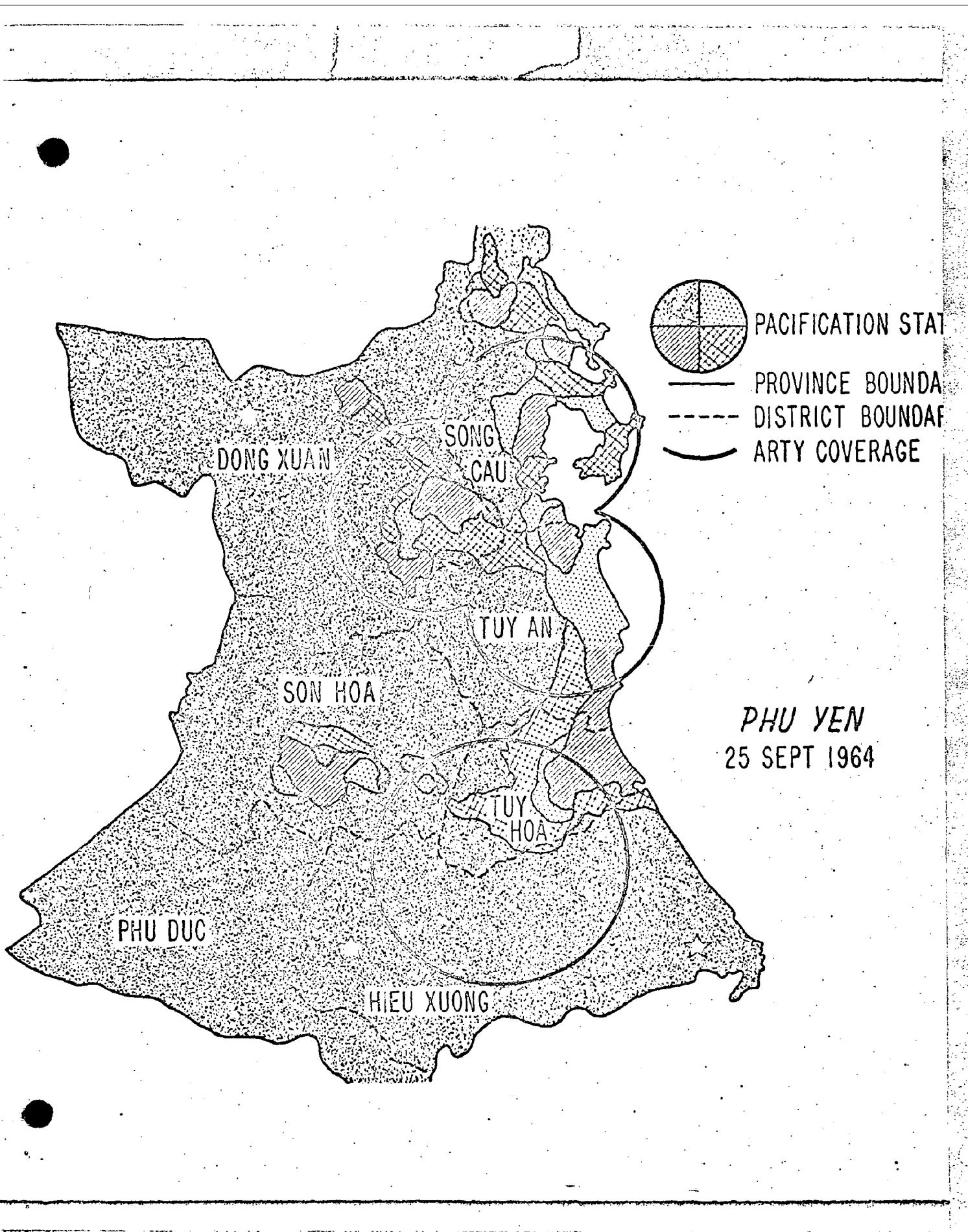
## BINH DINH PROVINCE

MAP INDOCHINA SHEETS: 149, 150, 157, 158, 165 E, 166

SCALE 1:100,000

AB 07 25 FEB 1965

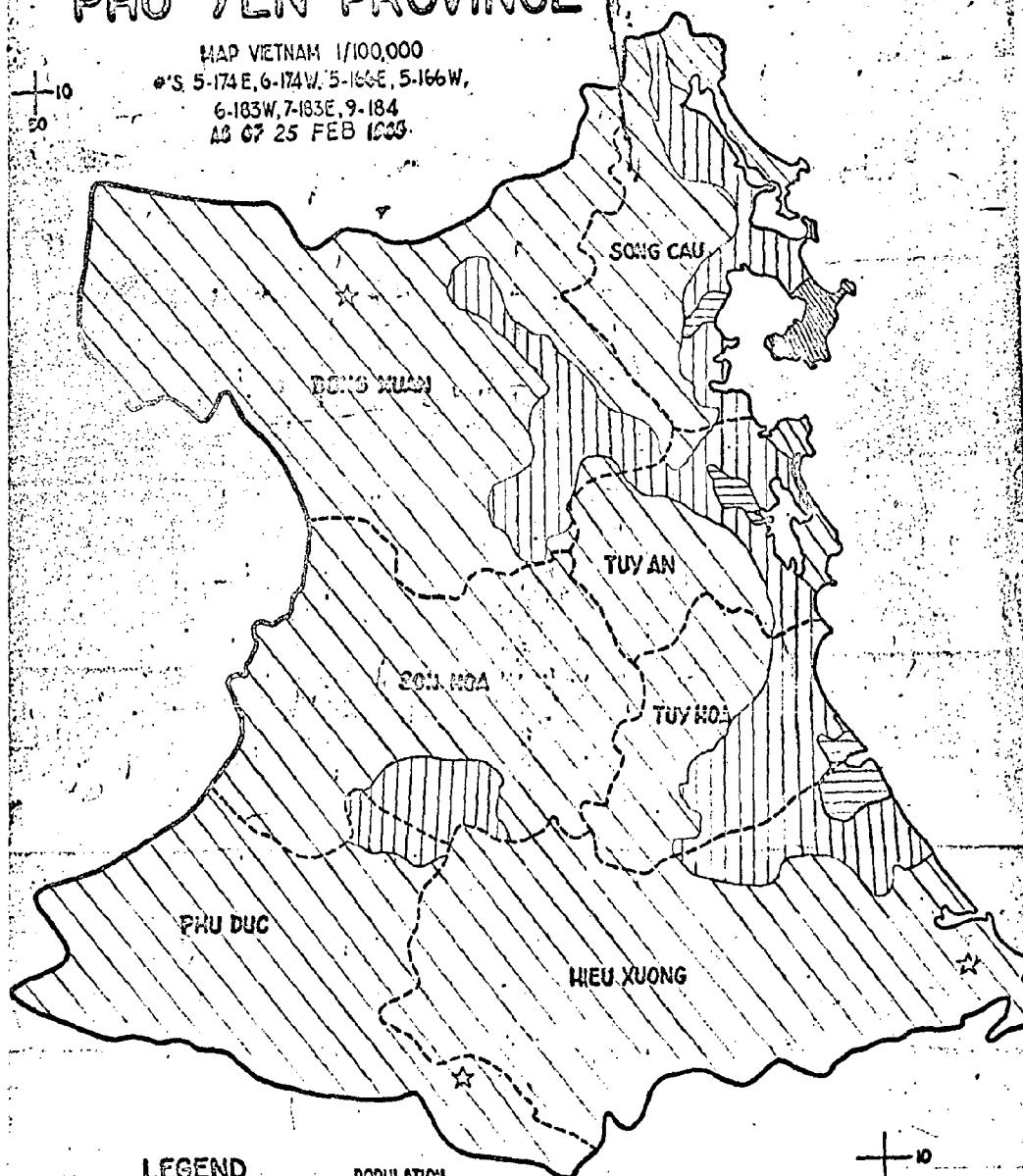
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348

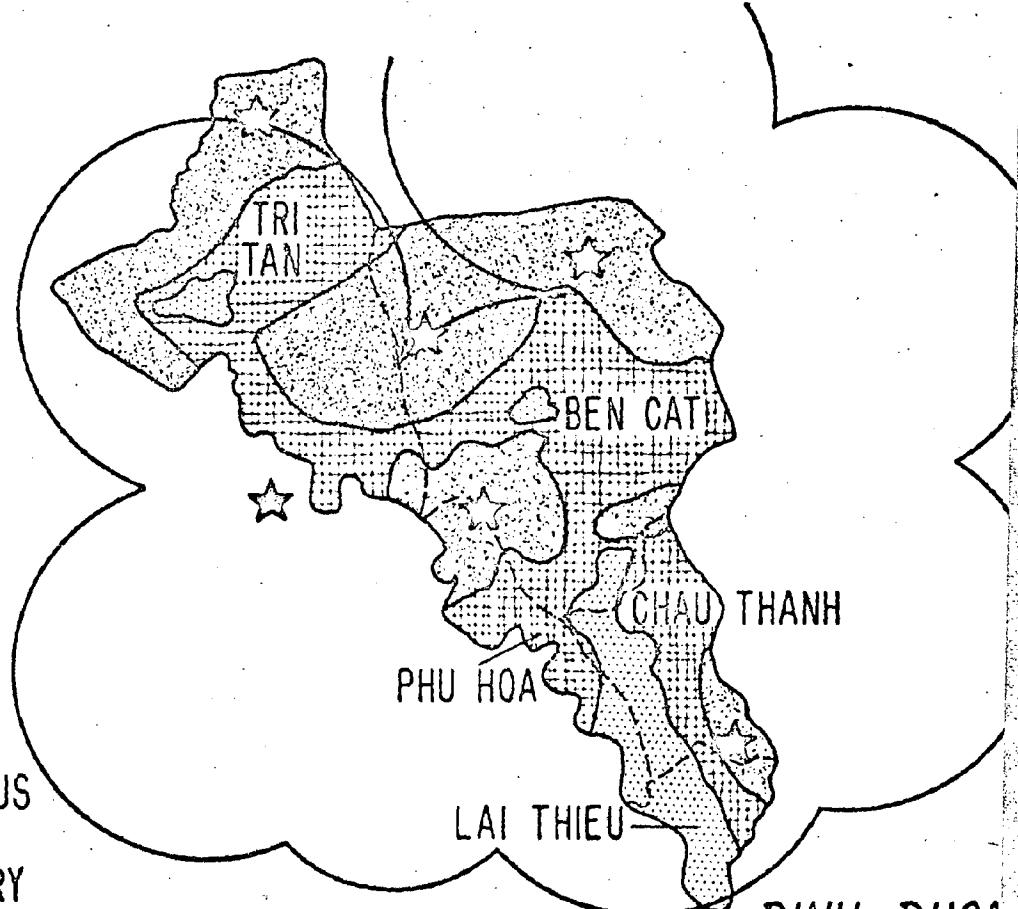
## PHU YEN PROVINCE

MAP VIETNAM 1/100,000  
 0°S. 5-174E, 6-174W, 5-165E, 5-166W,  
 6-163W, 7-163E, 9-184  
 AS 67 25 FEB 1968



## LEGEND

		POPULATION
DARK BLUE	● PACIFIED	0
LIGHT BLUE	● UNDER PACIFICATION	42,431
GREEN	● CLEARED	178,477
WHITE	● NEITHER GVN NOR VC CONTROL	
RED	● VC CONTROL	97,974
RED	★ GENERAL LOCATION OF VC BASE	
		TOTAL 318,862



PACIFICATION STATUS

PROVINCE BOUNDARY

DISTRICT BOUNDARY

ARTY COVERAGE

BINH DUON  
25 SEPT 1968

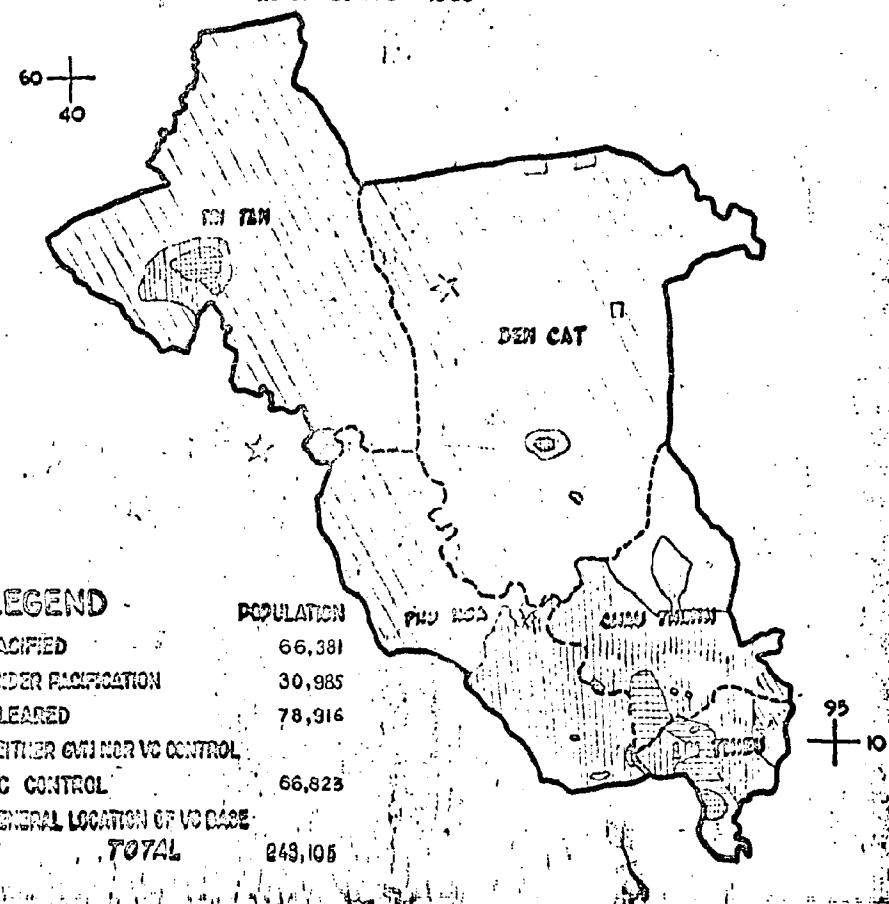
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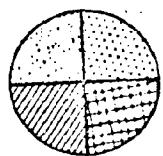
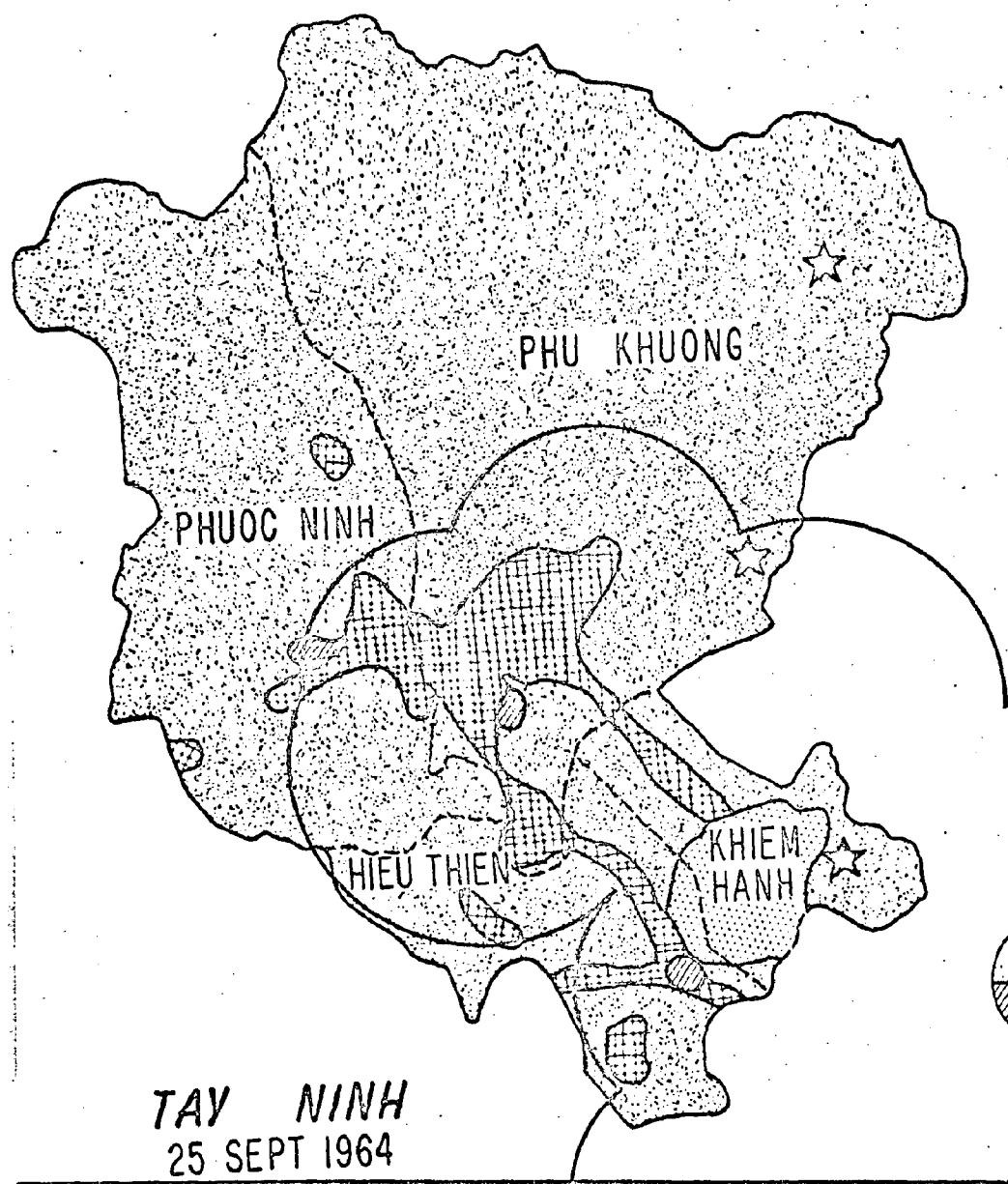
## BINH DUONG PROVINCE

MAP INDO CHINA SHEETS 210E, 211W, 220E, 221W

SCALE 1:100,000

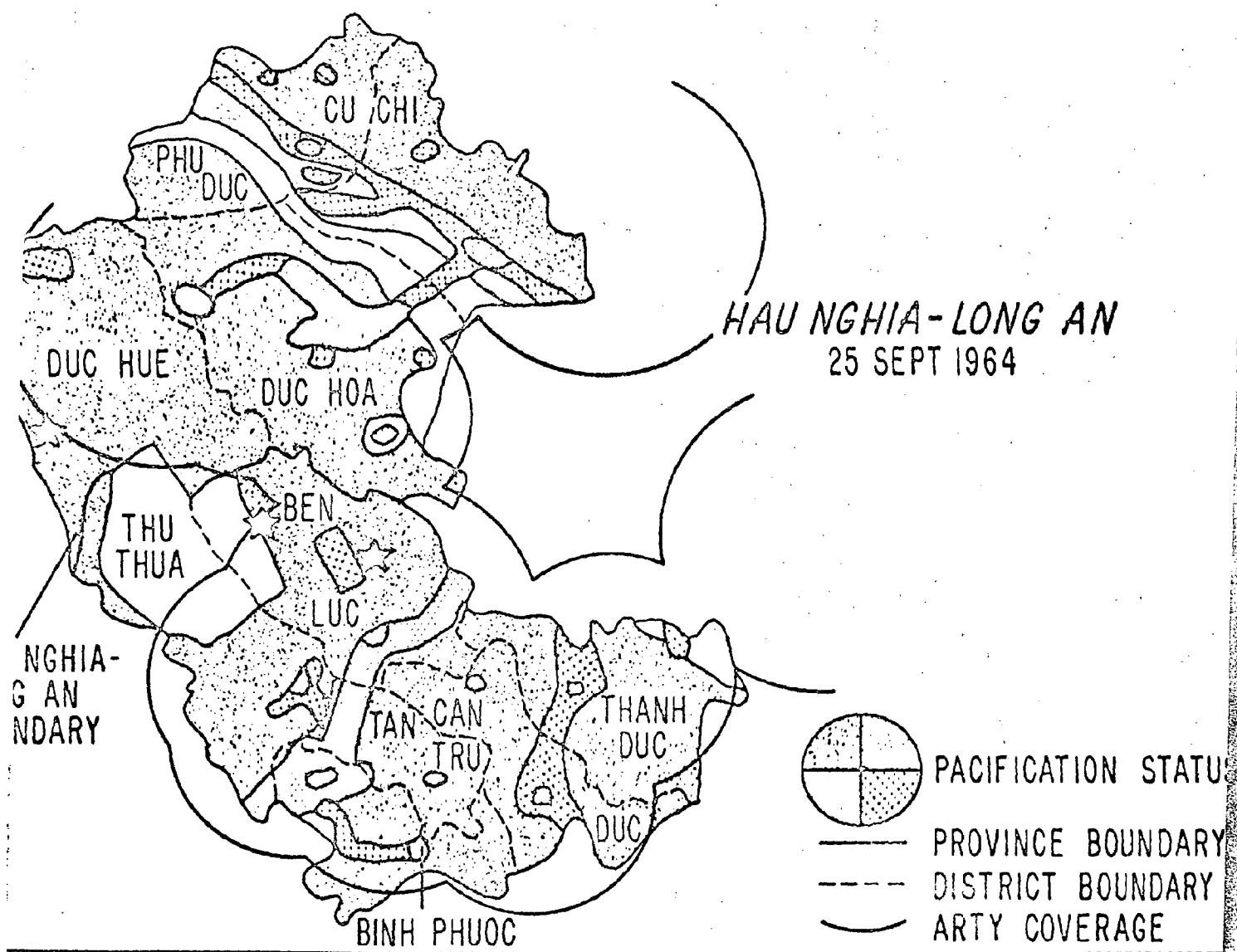
AB 67 25 FEB 1965





PACIFICATION STATUS  
— PROVINCE BOUNDARY  
- - - DISTRICT BOUNDARY  
— ARTY COVERAGE





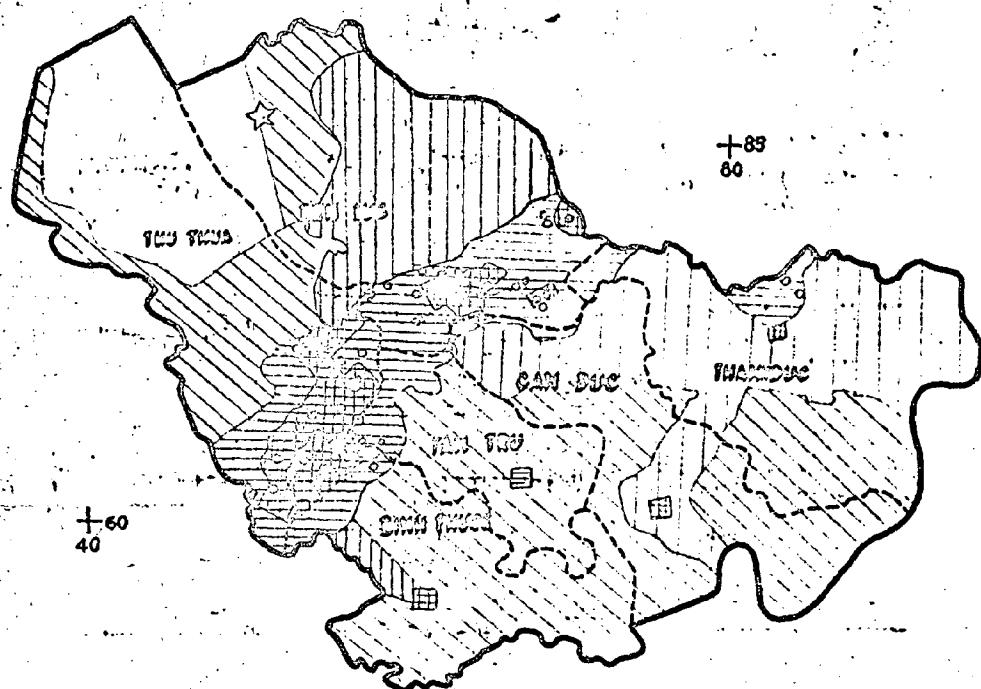
354

## LONG AN PROVINCE

MAP VIETNAM SHEETS 220E, 221W, 229E, 230W

SCALE 1:100,000

AS OF 25 FEB. 1965



## LEGEND

## POPULATION

DARK BLUE	● PACIFIED	58,010
LIGHT BLUE	● UNDER PACIFICATION	24,679
GREEN	● CLEARED	132,618
WHITE	● NEITHER GVN NOR VC CONTROL	3,829
RED	● VC CONTROL	
RED	★ GENERAL LOCATION OF VC BASE	
	TOTAL	154,326

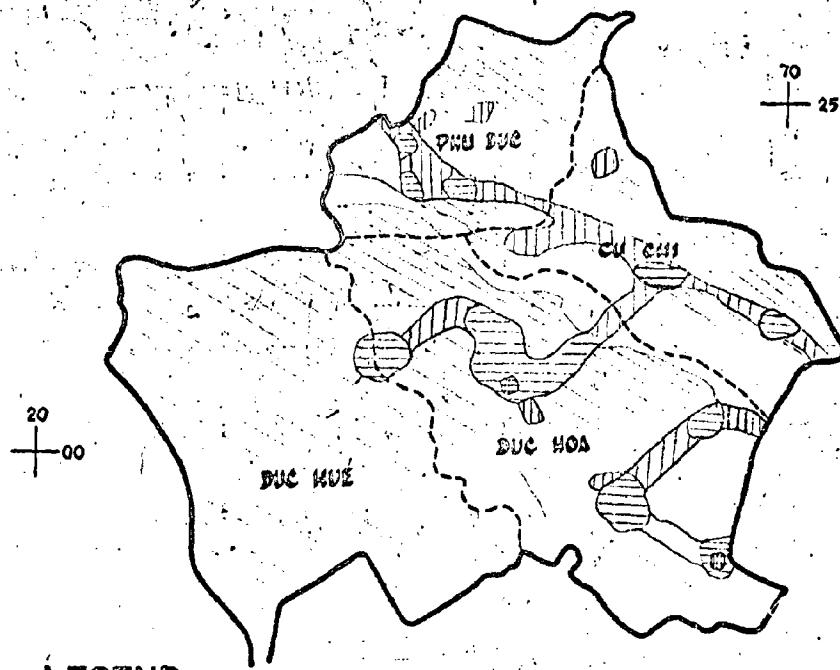
355

## HAU NGHIA PROVINCE

MAPS: 220E TRANG BANG, 229E MY THO, 221W SAIGON, 230W CHOLON

SCALE 1:100,000

AS OF 25 FEB 1965



## LEGEND

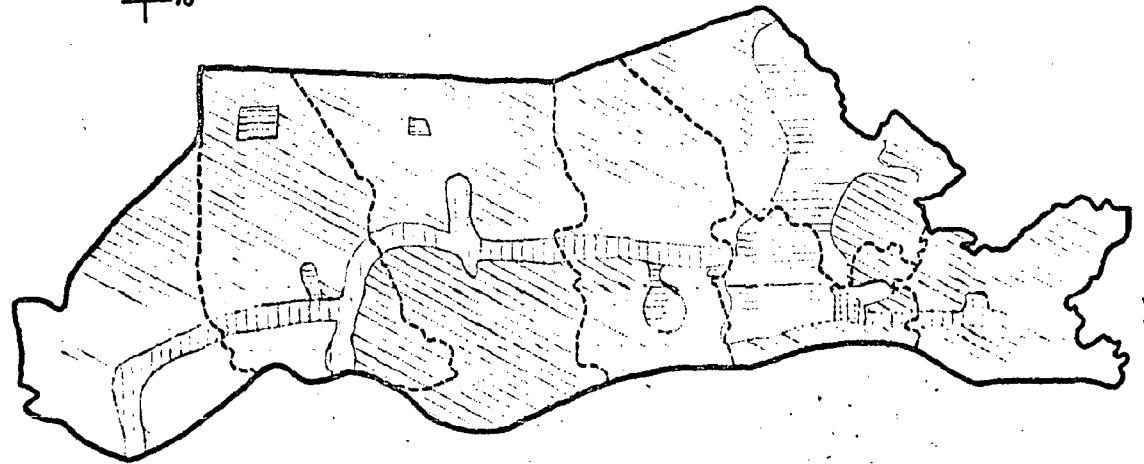
## POPULATION

DARK BLUE	● PACIFIED	4,037
LIGHT BLUE	● UNDER PACIFICATION	58,625
GREEN	● CLEARED	43,070
WHITE	● NEITHER GVN NOR VC CONTROL	0
RED	● VC CONTROL	122,675
RED	★ GENERAL LOCATION OF VC BASE	
	TOTAL	228,407

## DINH TUONG PROVINCE

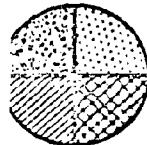
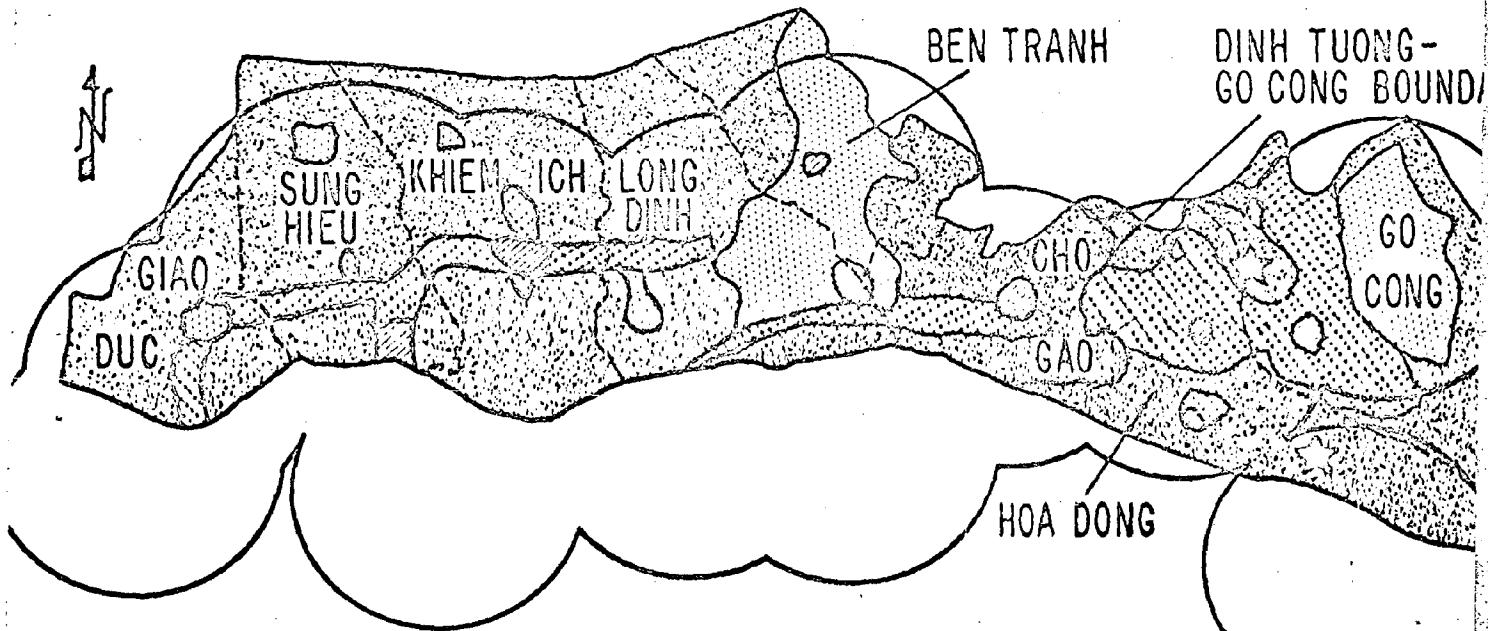
60  
+  
70

AS OF: 25 JUNE 64

30  
+  
70

## LEGEND

		POPULATION
DARK BLUE	● PACIFIED	78,587
LIGHT BLUE	● UNDER PACIFICATION	73,349
GREEN	● CLEARED	89,067
WHITE	● NEITHER GVN NOR VC CONTROL	
RED	● VC CONTROL	282,900
RED	★ GENERAL LOCATION OF VC BASE	
	TOTAL	523,903



PACIFICATION STATUS

PROVINCE BOUNDARY

DISTRICT BOUNDARY

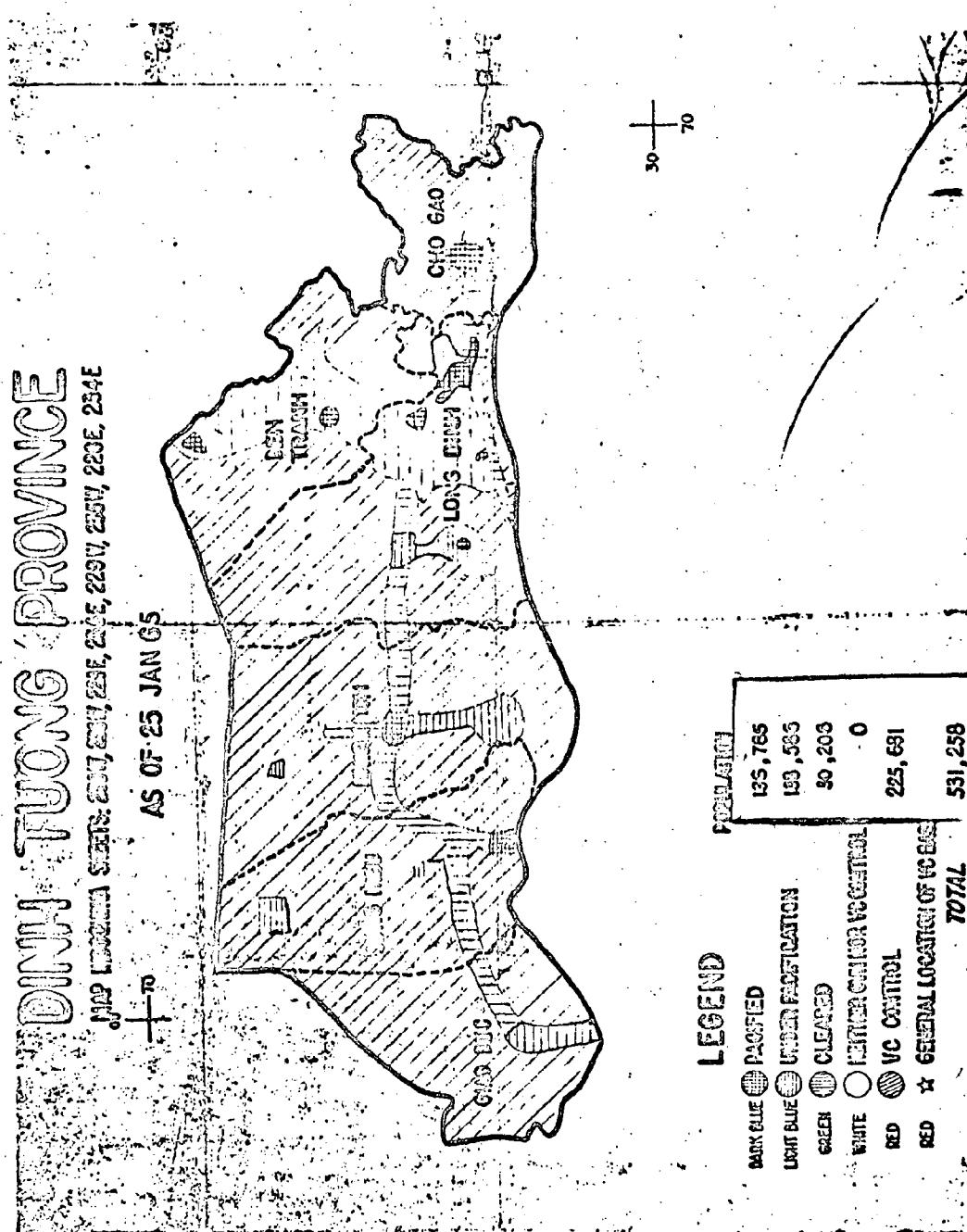
ARTY COVERAGE

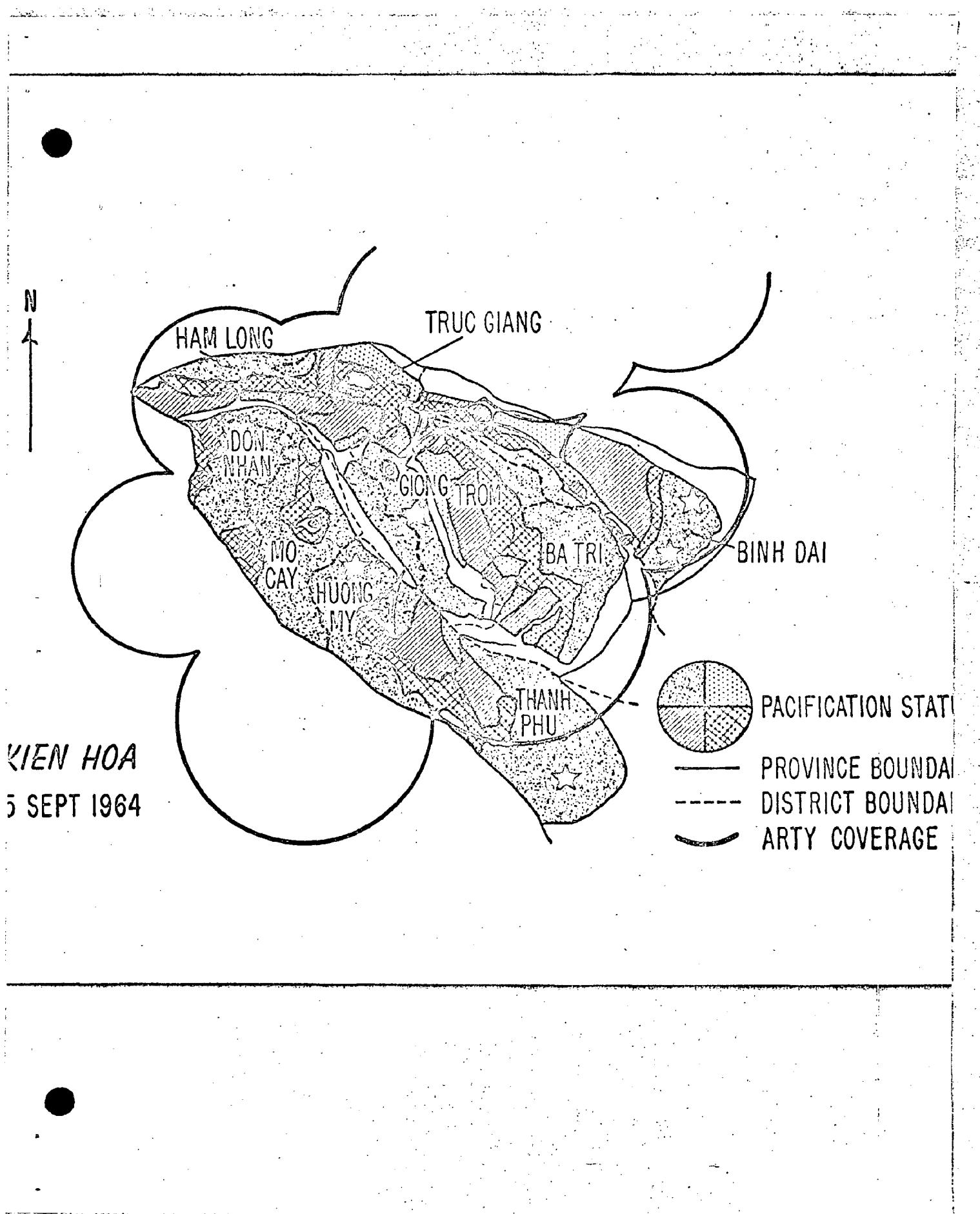
DINH TUONG - GO CONG  
25 SEPT 1964

358

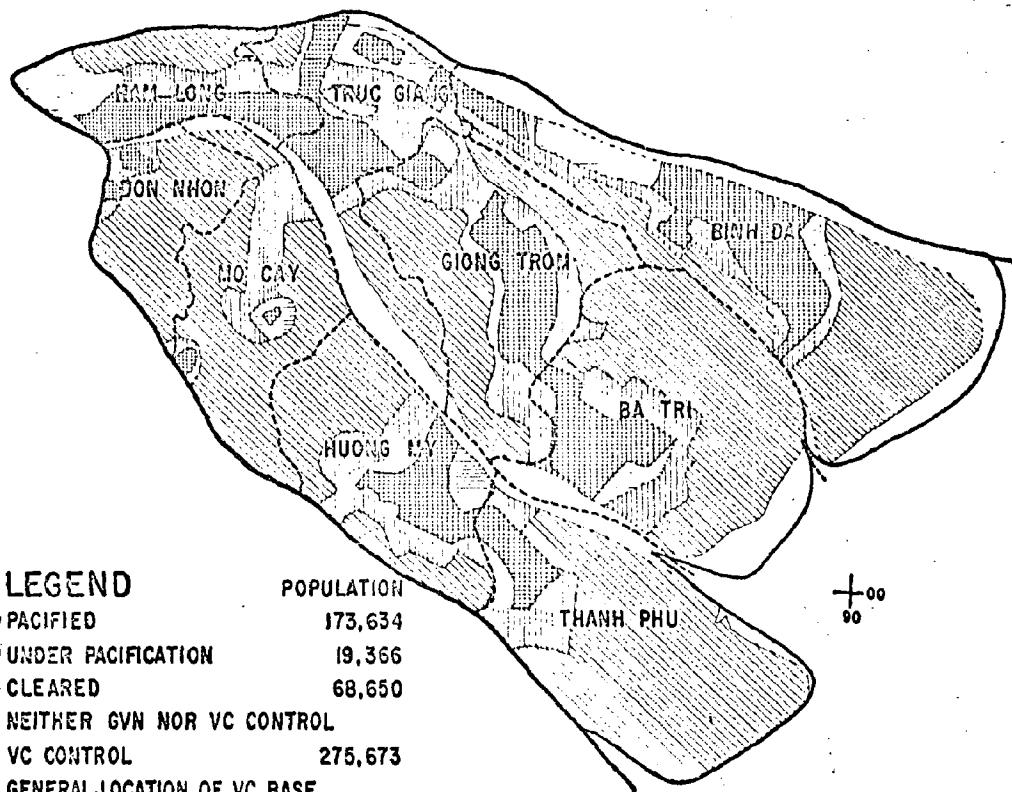
DINH TUONG PROVINCE  
MAP 1:250,000 SECTS. 017, 018, 205, 229, 237, 239, 240, 244

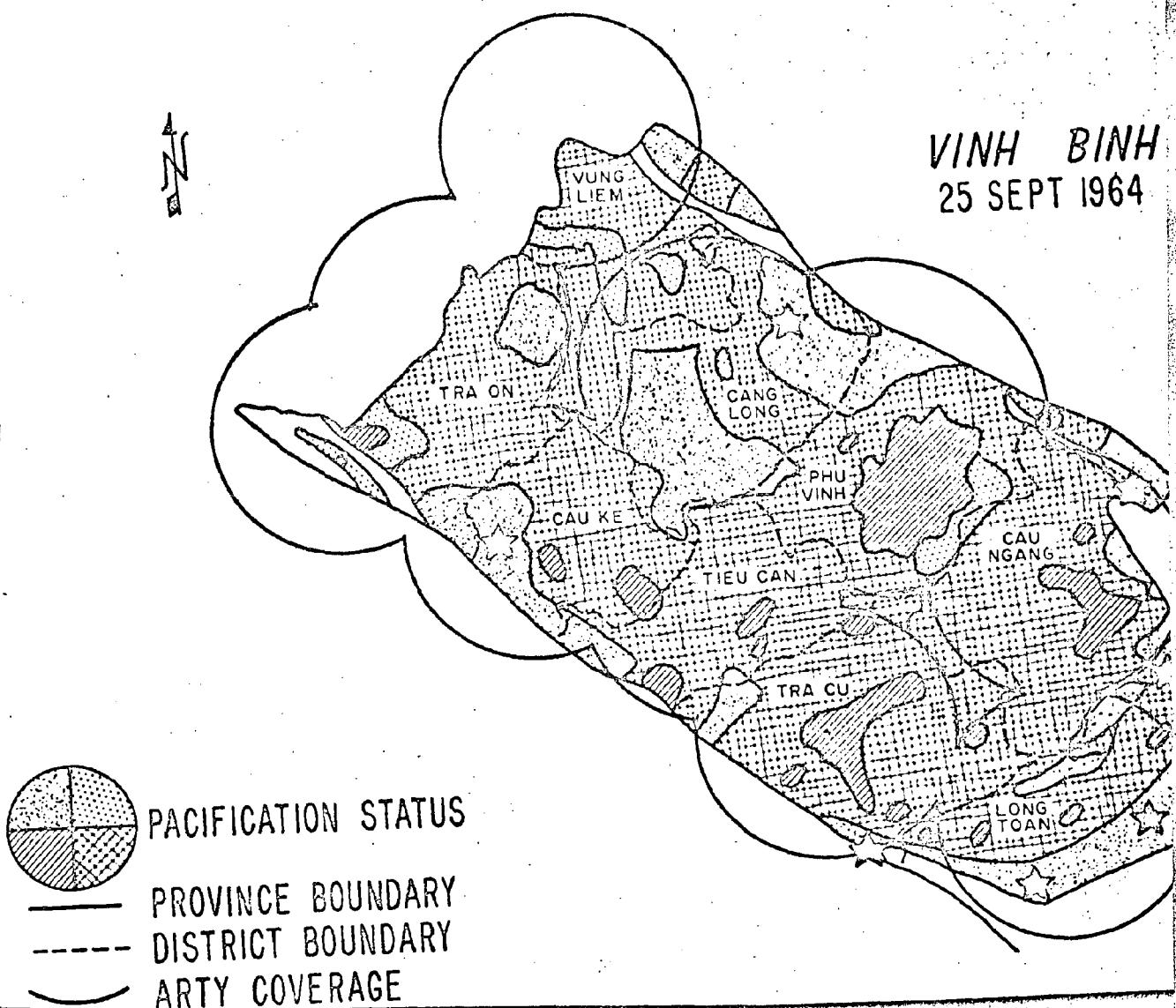
AS OF 25 JAN 65

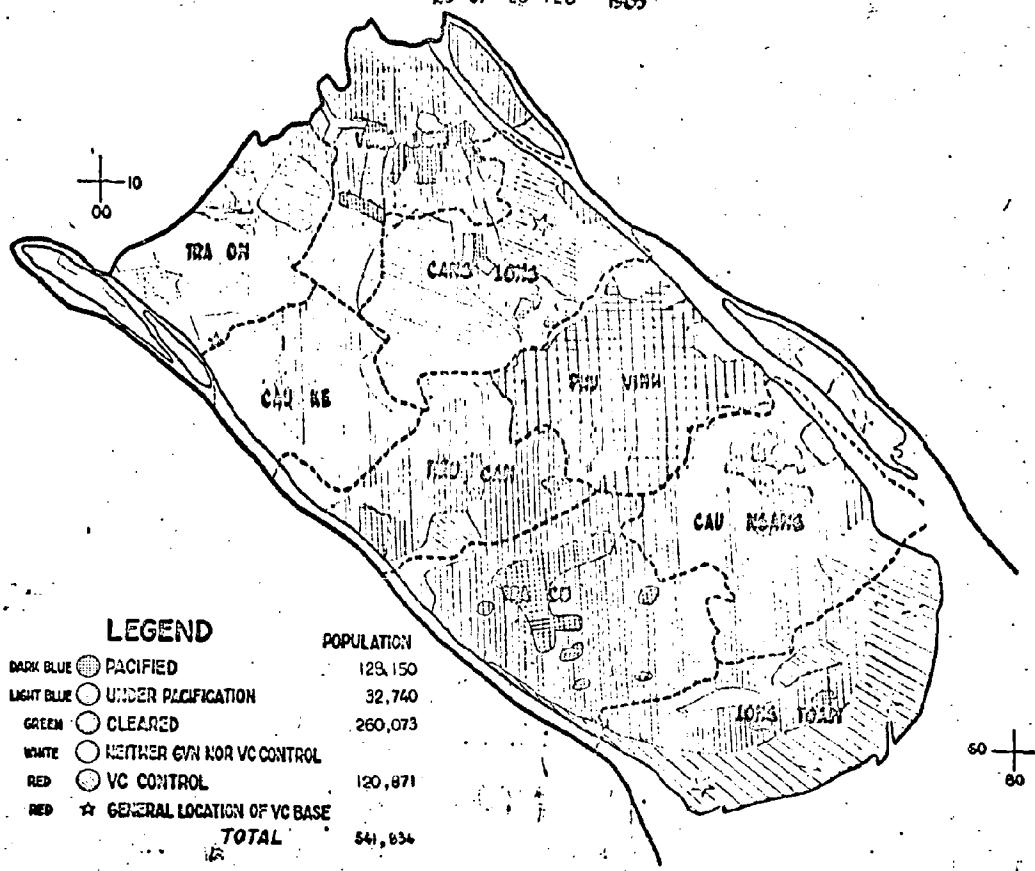


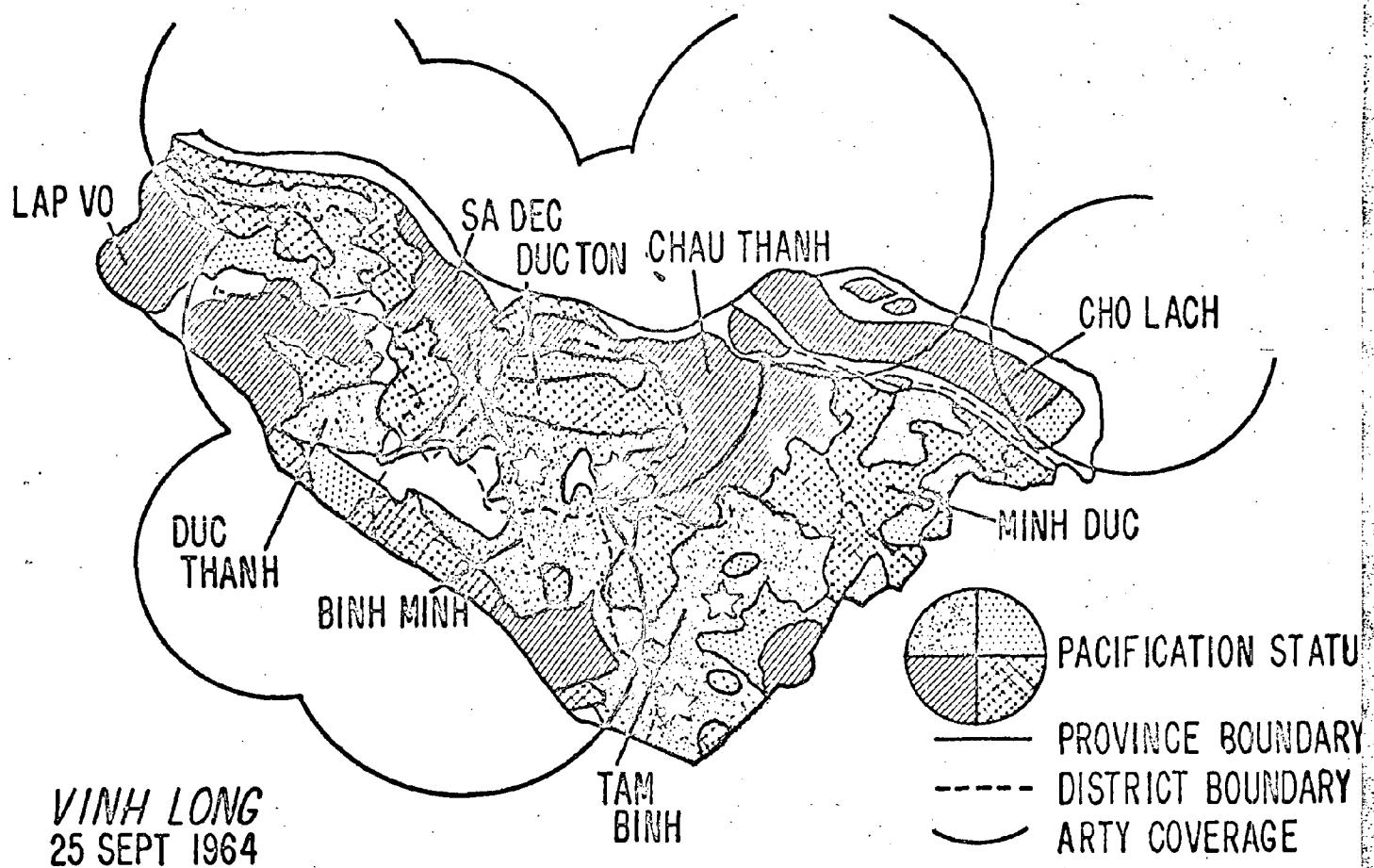


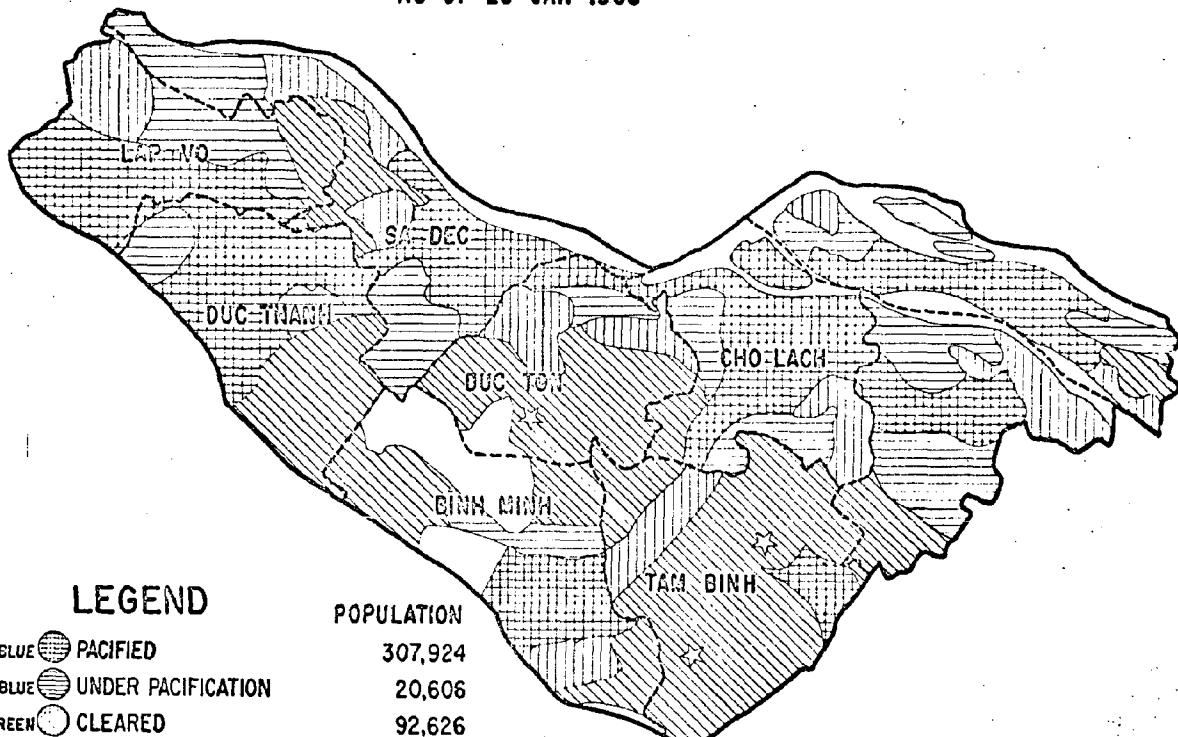
## KIEN HOA PROVINCE

SCALE 1:100,000  
AS OF 25 JAN 1965

VINH BINH  
25 SEPT 1964

VINH BINH PROVINCE  
MAP INDO CHINA SHEETS 235E & W, 239E & WSCALE: 1:100,000  
13 OF 25 FEB 1965



VINH LONG PROVINCE  
AS OF 25 JAN 1965

## LEGEND

POPULATION	
DARK BLUE	PACIFIED
LIGHT BLUE	UNDER PACIFICATION
GREEN	CLEARED
WHITE	NEITHER GVN NOR VC CONTROL
RED	VC CONTROL
RED	GENERAL LOCATION OF VC BASE
TOTAL	

307,924

20,606

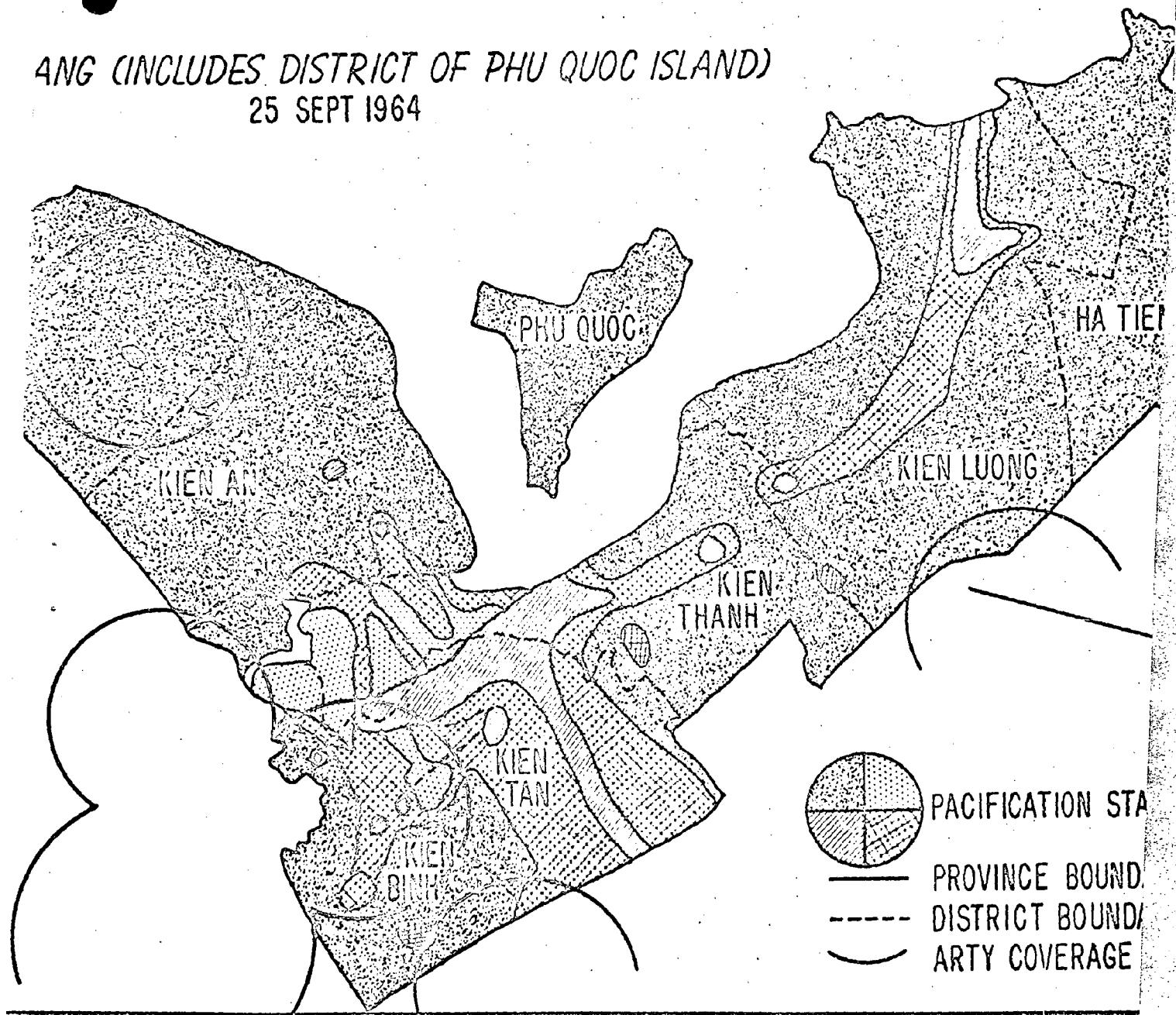
92,626

6,163

120,237

447,556

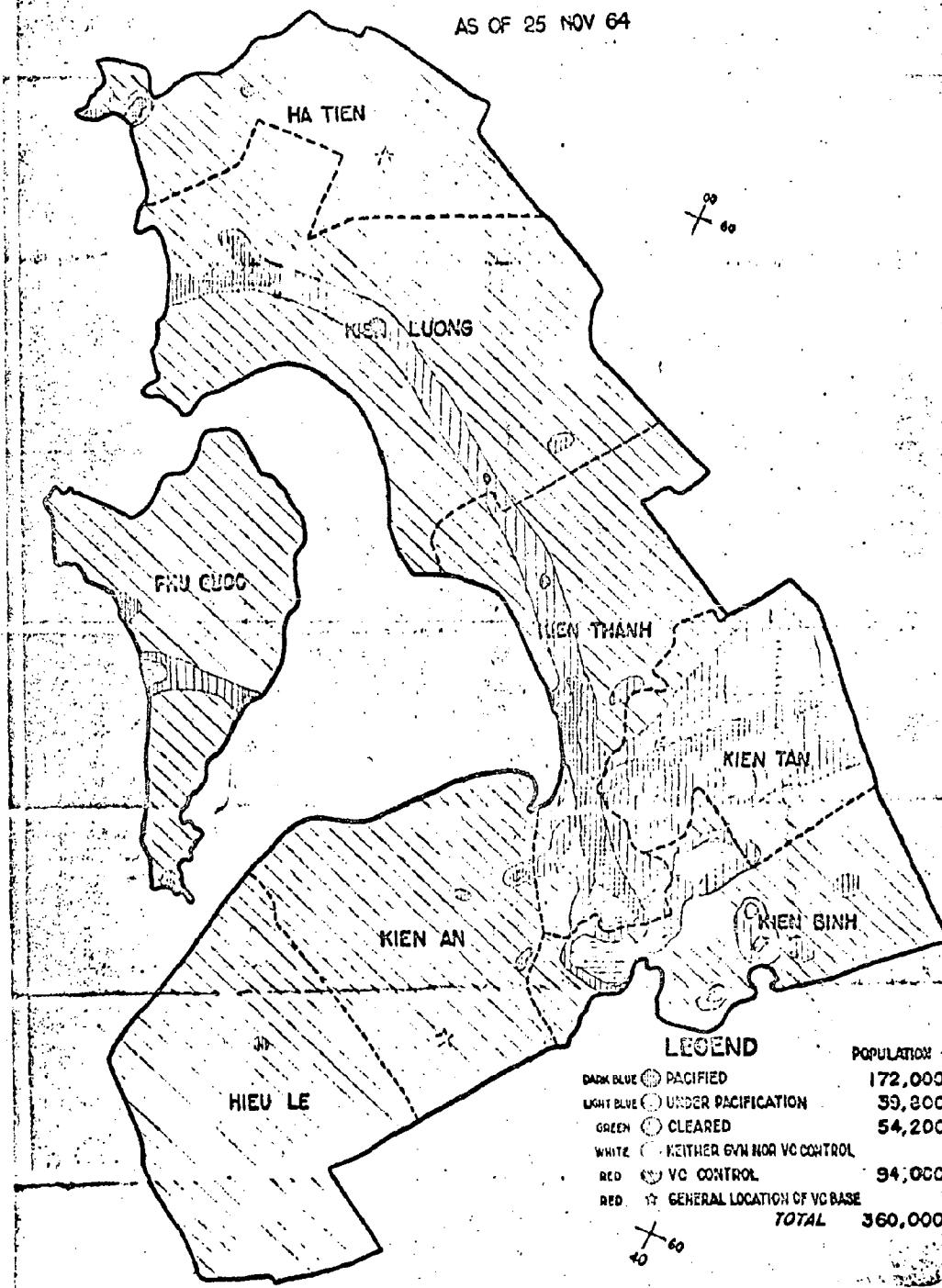
ANG (INCLUDES DISTRICT OF PHU QUOC ISLAND)  
25 SEPT 1964



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## KIEN GIANG PROVINCE

AS OF 25 NOV 64

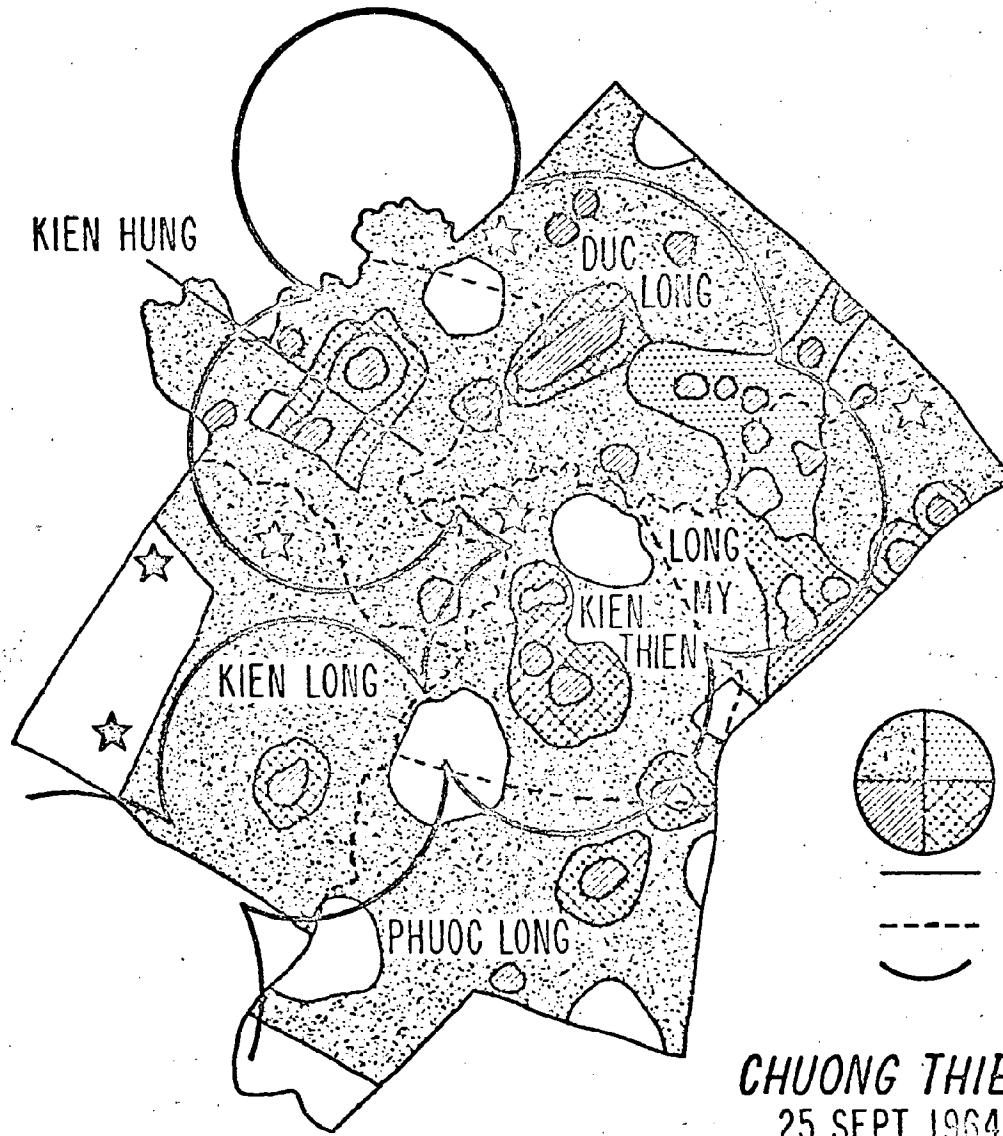


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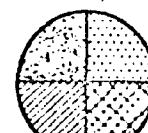
CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

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CHUONG THIEN  
25 SEPT 1964



PACIFICATION STATUS

— Province Boundary

--- District Boundary

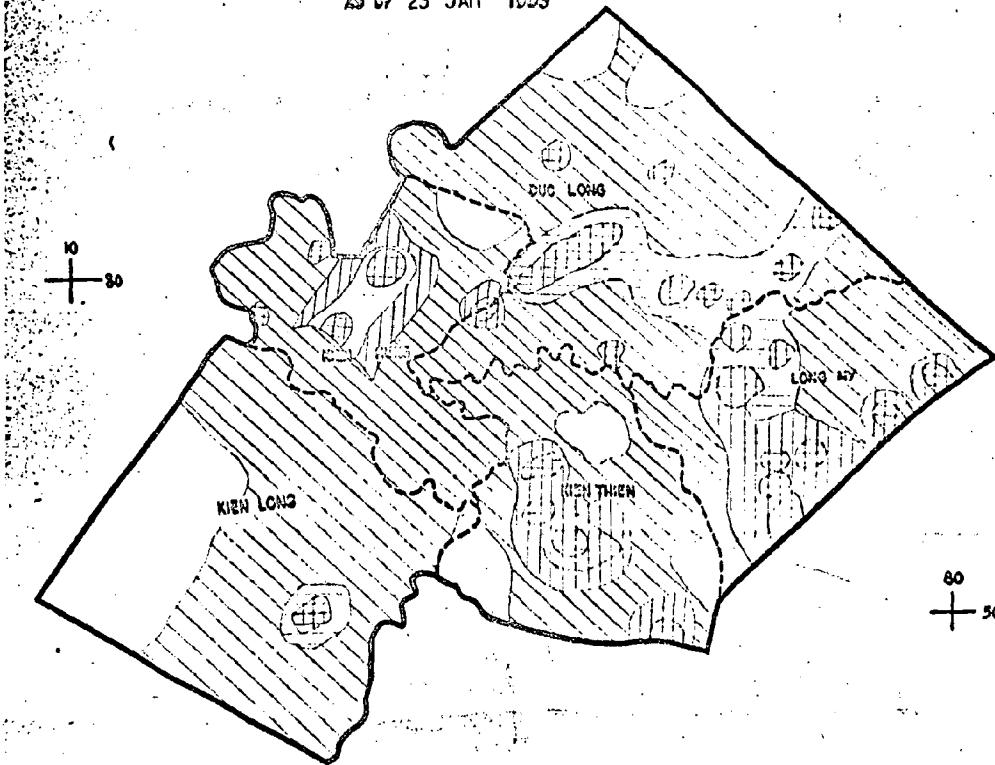
) ARTY COVERAGE

## CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE

MAP INDO CHINA SHEETS 234E&amp;W, 238E&amp;W, 241E, 242 E&amp;W

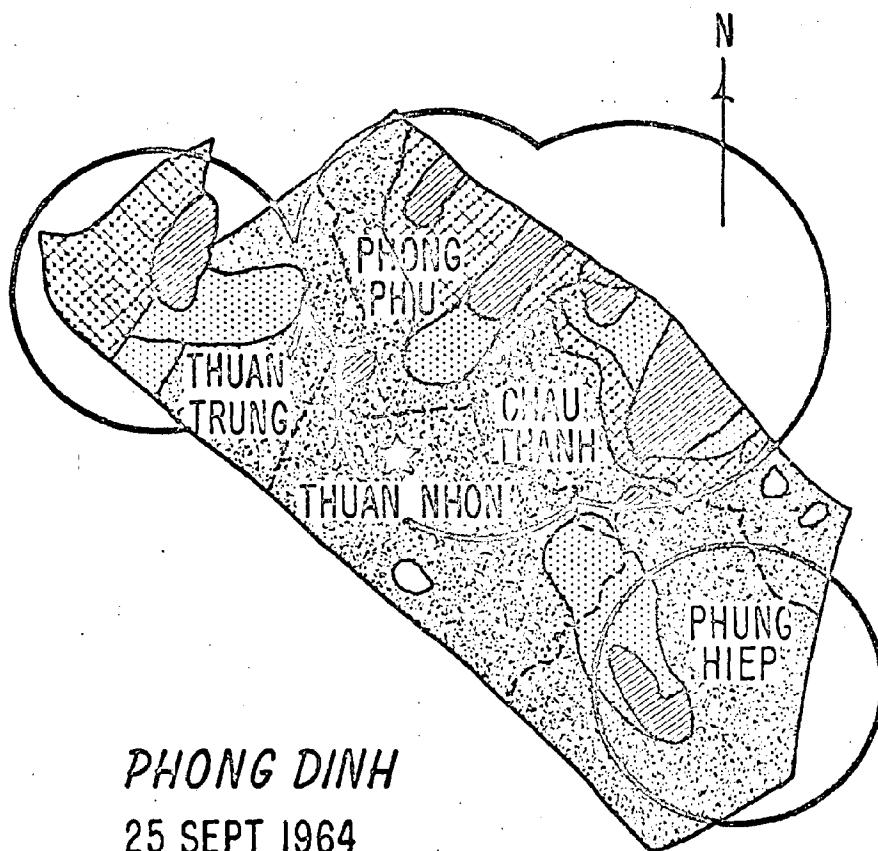
SCALE 1:100,000

AS OF 25 JAN 1965

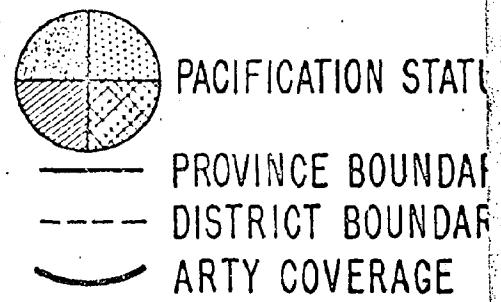


## LEGEND

		POPULATION
DARK BLUE	● PACIFIED	54,061
LIGHT BLUE	○ UNDER PACIFICATION	40,610
GREEN	○ CLEARED	32,030
WHITE	○ NEITHER CNR NOR VC CONTROL	
RED	○ VC CONTROL	116,790
RED	★ GENERAL LOCATION OF VC BASE	
	TOTAL	248,437

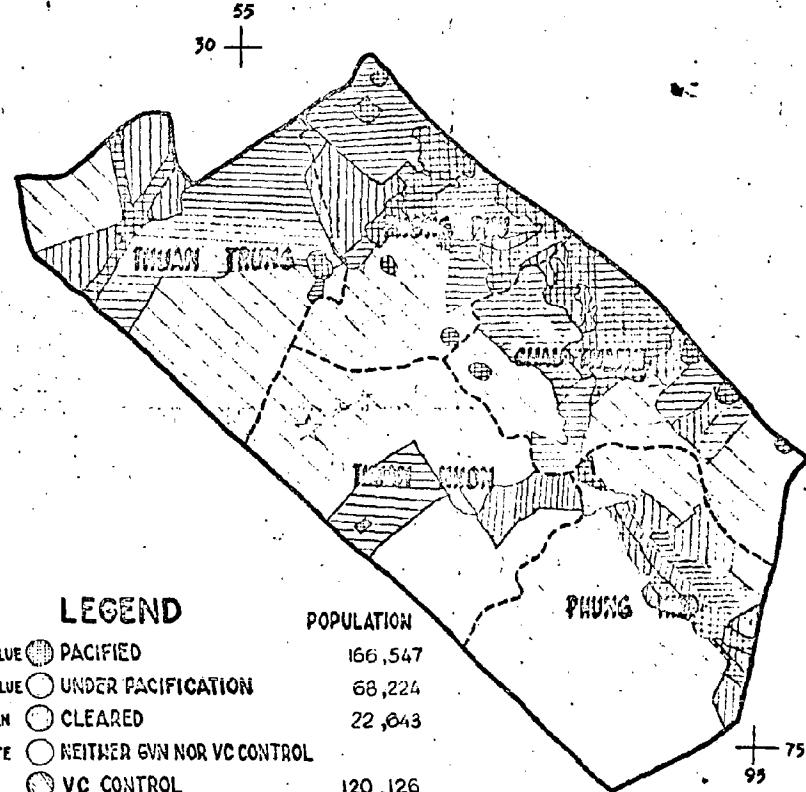


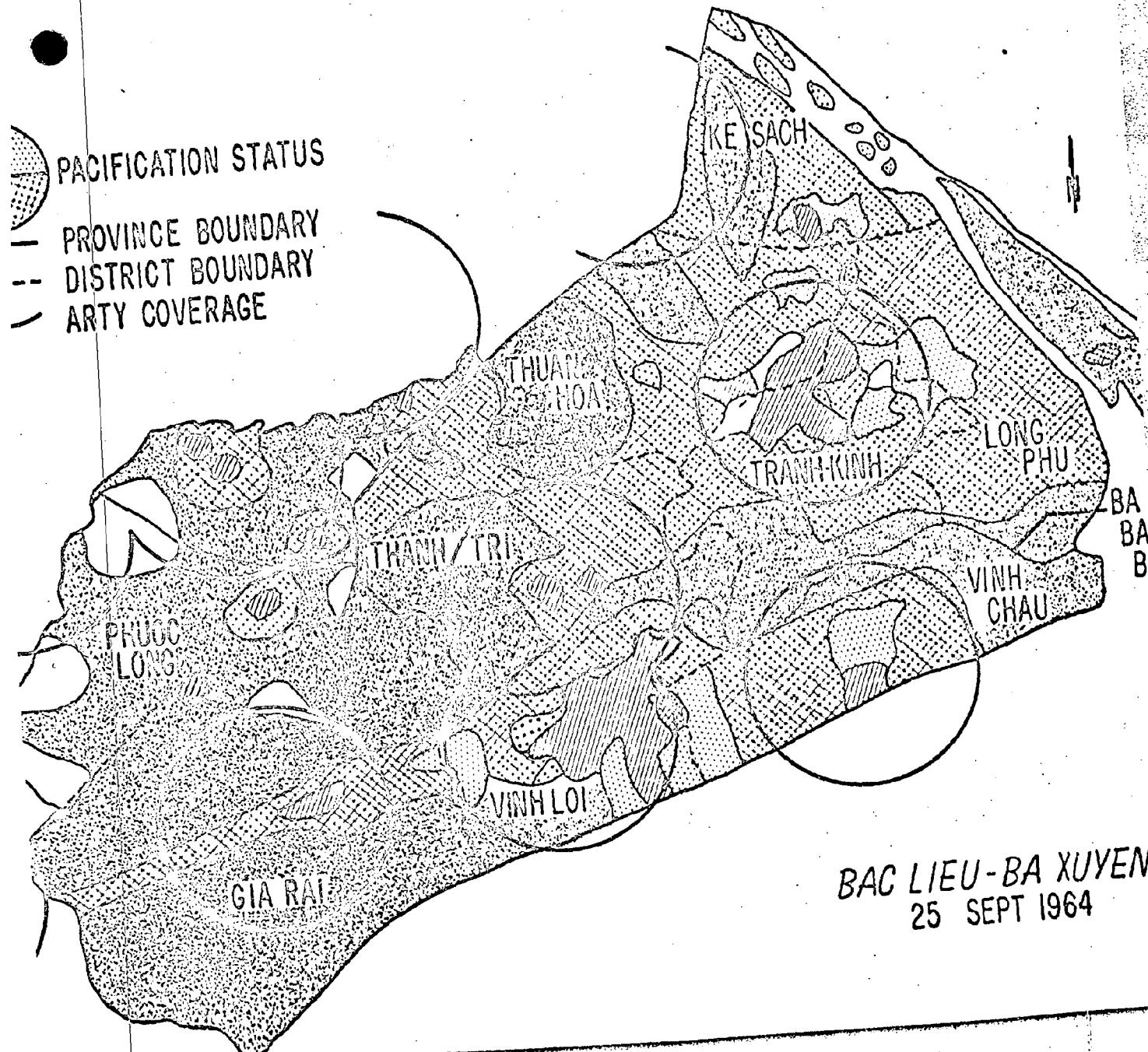
PHONG DINH  
25 SEPT 1964

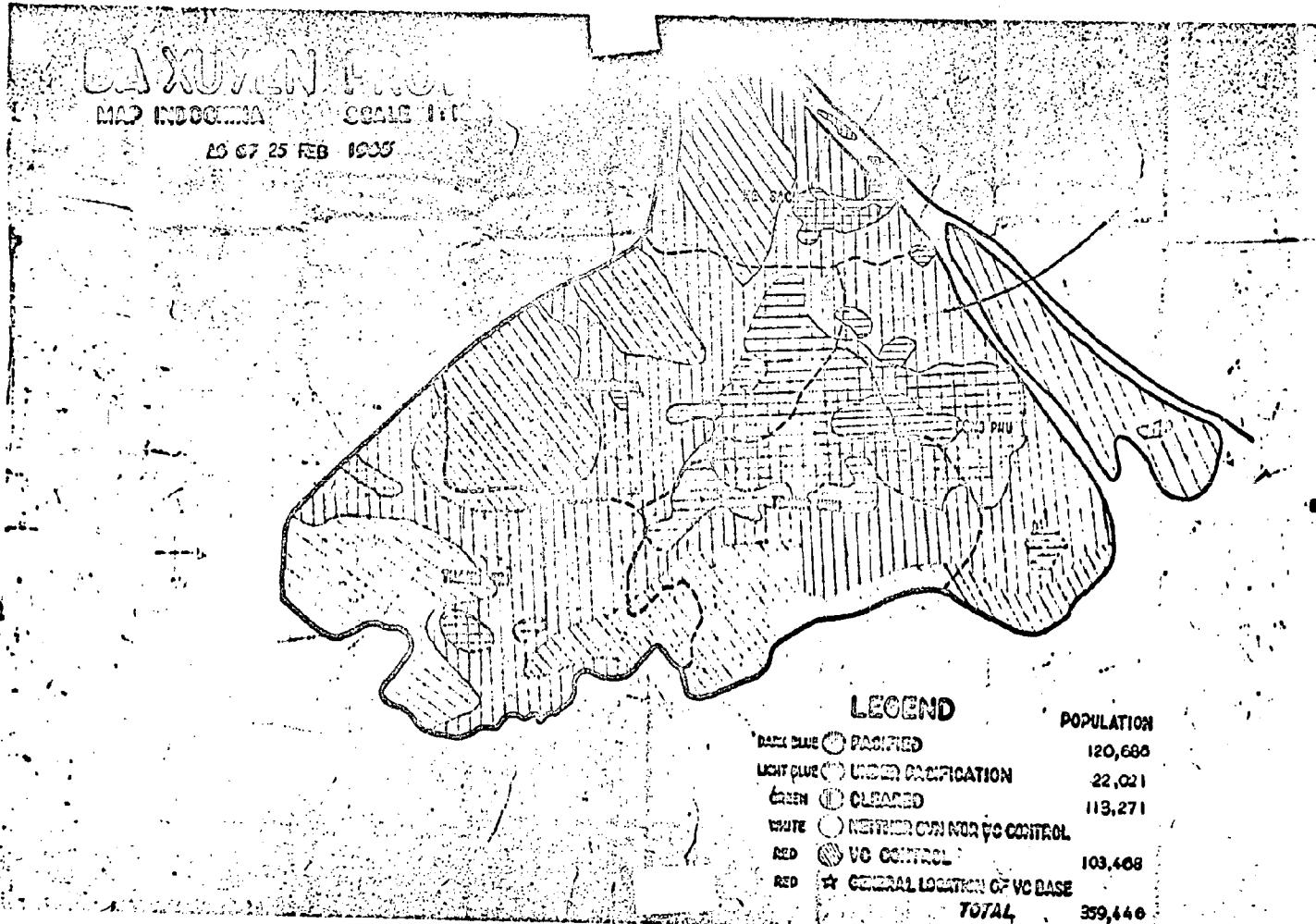


## PHONG DINH PROVINCE

AS OF 25 FEB 1965



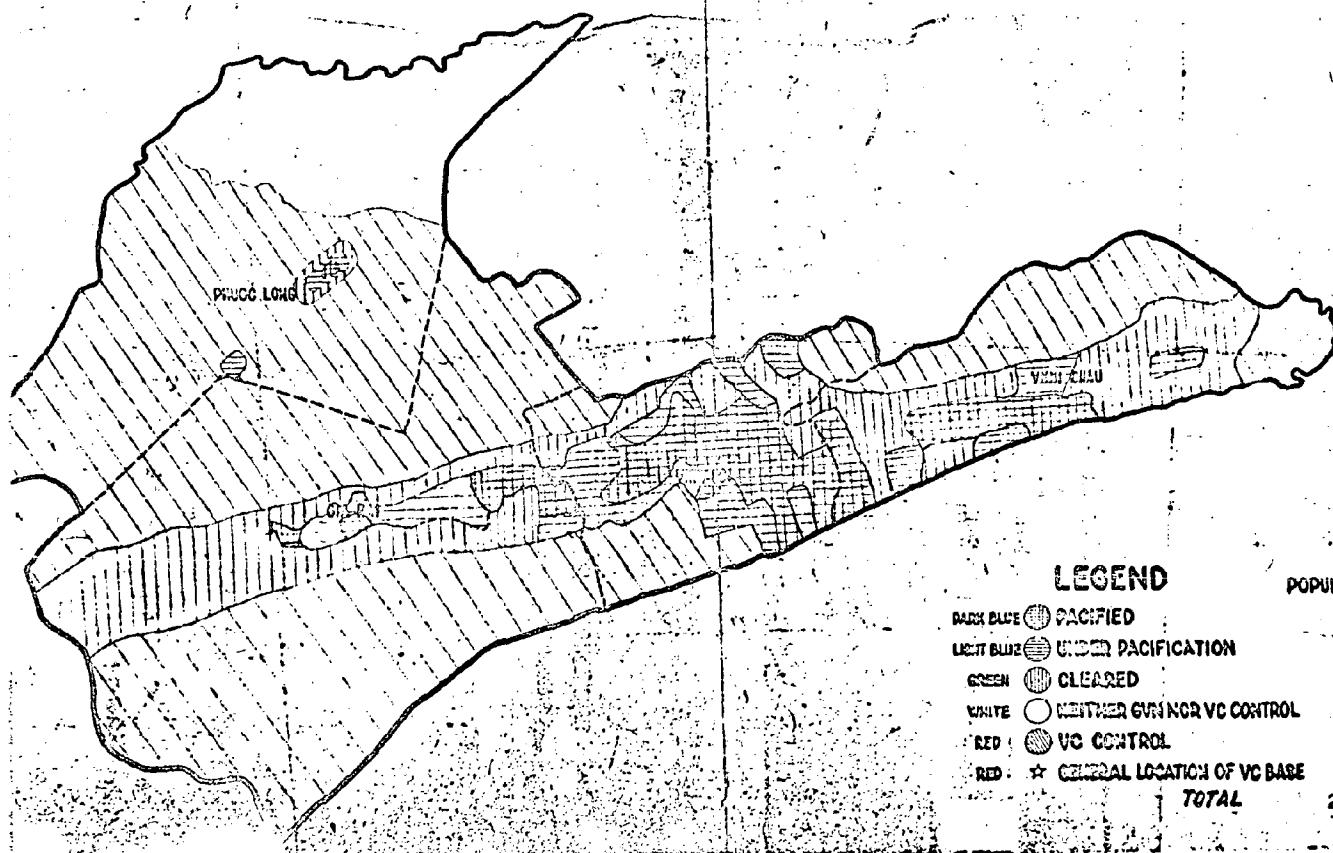


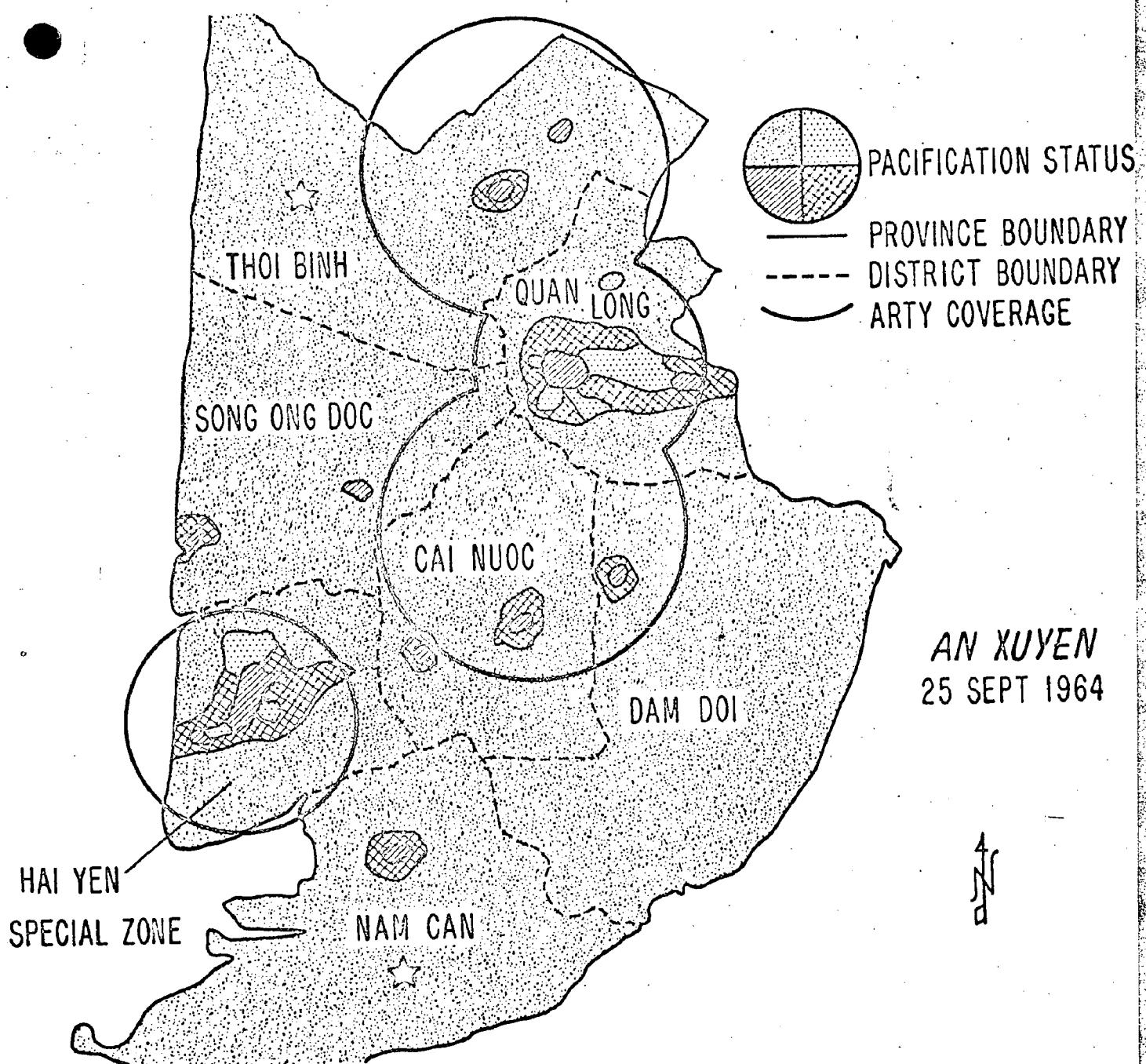


## BAC LIEU PROVINCE

MAP INDOCINA SCALE 1:100,000

AS OF 25 FEB 1969



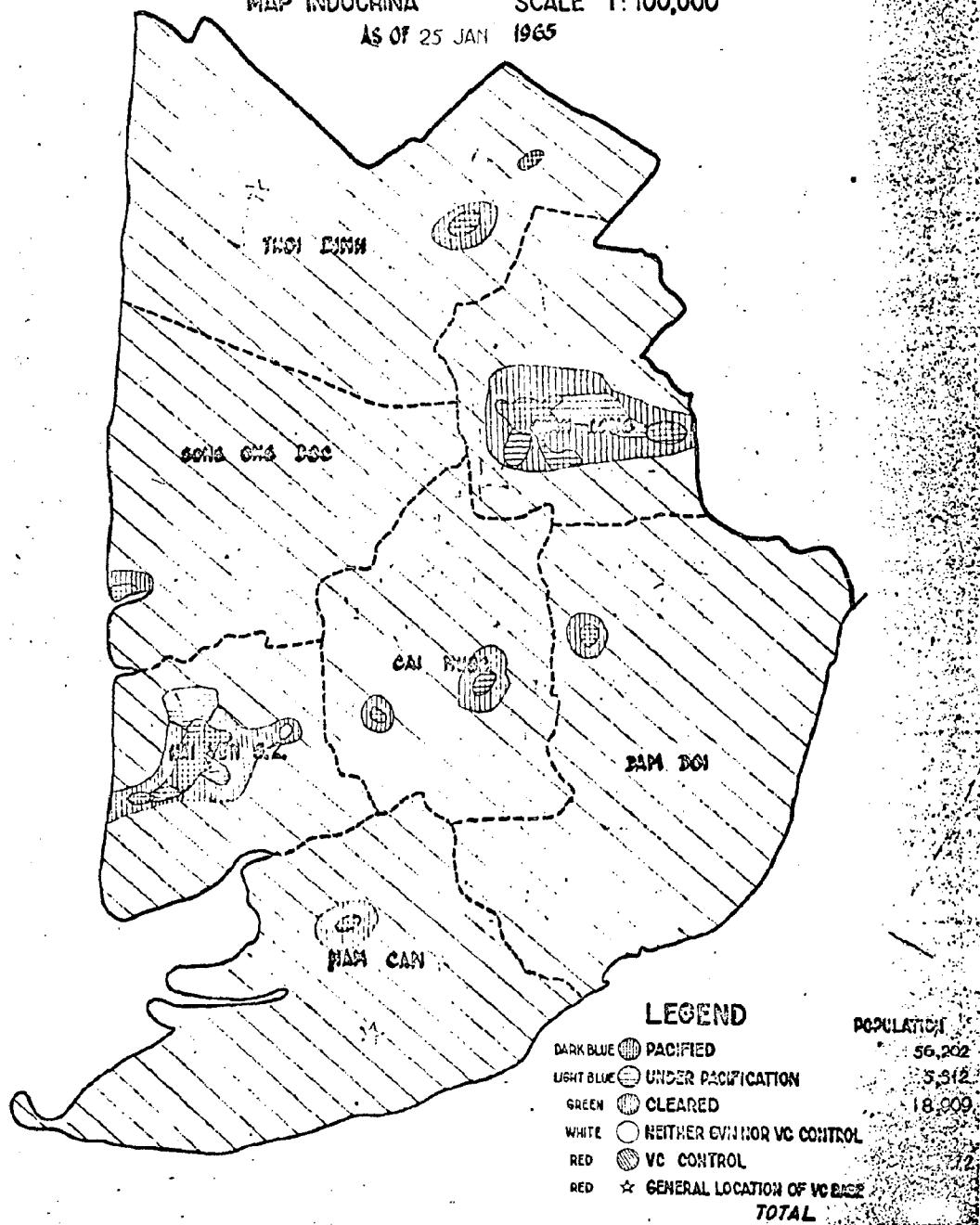


## AN XUYEN PROVINCE

MAP INDOCHINA

SCALE 1:100,000

AS OF 25 JAN 1965



## CHAPTER VII

## CONCLUSION

Both sides behave badly. The Viet Cong often threaten the people, but the GVN soldiers passing through my village stole chickens. The villagers think it is wise to take sides with the winning party.--Viet Cong captive

The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master, unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty.--Rousseau

The conquest of political power having been embarked upon by the Viet Cong, their fundamental task was that of overcoming the incoherence and lethargy of a loosely-structured society and a conservative peasantry. The Viet Cong solution to this problem was to develop an organization capable of controlling the villages and mobilizing the energies of the peasantry--especially the youth--for a struggle against the Government. The gossamer fabric of Government authority in the countryside was destroyed and displaced by the Viet Cong apparatus. Then transformation of the manpower and material resources of the peasantry into political and military power commenced.

The Viet Cong organizational weapon consisted of a system of interlocking and functionally related suborganizations. The political organization of the party was the motive force which formulated policy and directed operations. The mass or front organizations were the party's link to the masses, enhancing population control by embracing

the peasantry in an organization responsive to the party dictate. The embryonic, mid-1965, administrative organization served to relieve the local party committees of routine functions, thereby enabling the cadre to concentrate on more important activities. The military organization, village and hamlet guerrillas and Local Force units, served the primary purpose of securing the resources of the Viet Cong-controlled areas for the benefit of the insurgency.

The Viet Cong strategy was to expand their population control and narrow the resource base of the Government, all the while building their forces to change the balance of political and military power. The lodestar of the insurgency was the mobilization of resources. This meant, in particular, the mobilization of food and manpower. A corollary to this was the adoption of preclusive food and manpower policies, designed to deprive the Government of these resources.

The mobilization of resources by the Viet Cong apparatus was a systematic process, machine-like in its precision. It proceeded according to known, established rules and procedures, bureaucratically promulgated and bureaucratically implemented. This was not the ad hoc requisitioning of a guevarist band. It was, instead, economic war potential in being.

The Viet Cong apparatus is not, however, without limitations and vulnerabilities. A chronic shortage of trained cadres limits the articulation of more highly diversified and specialized organs. For the same reason, existing cadres are overworked, and handicapped by training and administrative burdens. Military success cannot be followed automatically by extension of the apparatus to newly won areas. Instead, time is needed--time for consolidation, time for training cadres, time for getting the system organized and operating.

Without time, without cadres, without the apparatus, expansion to new areas is meaningless; for substantial benefits do not accrue to the insurgency until the population is organized.

In a situation where it is desirable to have at least two or three battalions for every battalion of the enemy, an increase in the insurgent force imposes a multiplied force requirement on the friendly side if the enemy augmentation is to be offset. It follows from this that every youth prevented from joining the Viet Cong--whether or not he joins the Government--constitutes a net gain to the friendly side. Consequently, investment in programs to attract youth to constructive tasks, in order to preclude their joining the Viet Cong, seems to merit serious consideration in the present situation in South Vietnam.

In July 1964 the Viet Cong launched the Dong Khoi or "general uprising" phase of the insurgency, the goal of which was to bring victory in 1965. As part of this strategy, the Viet Cong embarked upon an accelerated build-up of their military forces, particularly their Main Forces.

The extent of the Viet Cong build-up is revealed in the Order of Battle reports discussed in Chapter IV. These disclose that between 31 March 1964 and 31 March 1965 the combat strength of confirmed Main and Local Force units increased 36.6 percent. The combat strength of Main Force units alone increased 49 percent. The suddenness of the intrusion of this factor into the war is accentuated by the fact that most of this build-up was confirmed during the first quarter of 1965. Furthermore, additional units that were undoubtedly levied and trained in late 1964 and early 1965 continued to be confirmed throughout 1965. By 1 October 1965, Viet Cong Main Force battalions had increased 59 percent, and the combat strength of Main and Local Force units had

increased 58 percent, over the figure for 31 December 1964.

The increase in Main Forces was particularly significant, as it augured an escalation of the war above the guerrilla stage. The Viet Cong had indeed determined upon this course, as the statements of their policy clearly indicate, and as subsequent events at An Lao, Binh Gia, Viet An, and Binh Dinh bear out. Furthermore, the battalions of the regular army--the backbone of the Government's military establishment--were now regularly engaged by Viet Cong battalions.

The Viet Cong could not have advanced to this stage of warfare without confidence that they could replenish their manpower losses and provide sustenance for their forces in the field. The problems were solved by their apparatus of population control. Conscription was introduced to solve the manpower problem. In the Mekong delta, the peasant was taxed up to forty percent of his rice production to provide the food and financial resources needed to support the growing military arm.

The Chien Thang plan was prepared after three years of experience with guerrilla warfare, and it was consequently tailored to deal with this threat. The assumption that guerrilla warfare would continue to remain the primary threat was basic to the Chien Thang plan. Clearing and securing operations, area saturation, and the methodical expansion of Government control from a number of oilspots were concepts perfectly adapted to the guerrilla warfare stage of the insurgency.

The utilization of mobile forces for clearing and securing operations in the vicinity of the oilspots not only reduced Government operations against the Viet Cong-controlled areas; it also dispersed Government strength over a number of battlefields, most of which were not mutually supporting. Furthermore, the possibility of shifting

forces from one oilspot to another was inhibited by the principle of not removing forces from a pacification area except for short periods.

Not only were the mobile forces dispersed, but their area of influence was localized by the restricted mobility implicit in the support of pacification under the Chien Thang plan. In addition, the forces soon found themselves unable to continue the expansion of the oilspot. This was partly because the Viet Cong had increased their strength, and partly because of the failure to recruit sufficient paramilitary forces to relieve the mobile forces of their population security mission. It was this problem, more than any other that caused the Hop Tac plan for pacification of the top priority provinces to slow down considerably in the first half of 1965. If the clearing forces attempted to expand the pacification area without adequate security to the rear, the Viet Cong were presented with an opportunity to attack the formerly secured areas.

In short, Government troops--regular, regional, and popular--had the capability of absorbing and securing only a limited area. Once that limit was reached, only the injection of additional resources could permit further expansion.

Under the Chien Thang plan, the military posture which confronted the enemy was that of a number of separate enclaves, each with its own complement of forces, each unlikely to be reinforced by the forces of another enclave. There could have been no better inducement to the initiation of mobile warfare, if one were needed. The enemy was not only able to build up his forces with relatively little interference, due to the highly localized activity of Government mobile forces; he was also presented with the opportunity of concentrating superior force on the field of his choice.

The conclusions of this study are as follows:

- (1) Viet Cong mobilization potential in South Vietnam is a prime source of Viet Cong military power. Unless that potential is destroyed or disrupted, the Viet Cong possess the capability of mobilizing the manpower needed to sustain their military arm indefinitely.
- (2) The Viet Cong need time to further consolidate and develop their population control apparatus. They can be deprived of time by continual exertion of military pressure against the areas that furnish their greatest resources of food and manpower.
- (3) Once mobile warfare has begun, the use of mobile combat troops for population security missions is ill-advised unless adequate paramilitary forces can be made available within a reasonable time to assume the securing mission.

DECLASSIFIED

U. S. ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE  
FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS

9 June 1966

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This study contains no material of a classification higher than SECRET. The Chien Thang plan, which is indicated in the bibliography to have a classification of TOP SECRET, contains sections which have a classification of SECRET and CONFIDENTIAL. Only the sections having a classification of SECRET and CONFIDENTIAL were used in the preparation of this study.

*Paul E. Suplizio*  
PAUL E. SUPLIZIO  
Major, Arty

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