

CONFIDENTIAL

in reference to a change in VC propaganda techniques concerning Chieu Hoi.
Of the ten names, only number 6, NGUYEN THI VAN, could recall that the propaganda
and of the VC had in any way changed during the last three months; SHE said
that the VC are now emphasizing the visible withdrawal of American forces.

SECRET

THE PACIFICATION EFFORT

WORKING PAPER

1. Current Assessment - Major Points:

a. The Tactical Setting - During most of 1968 the enemy has concentrated his efforts on a series of major offensives employing main force elements of the North Vietnamese Army and the Liberation Army supported by Local Forces and guerrillas. By so concentrating his efforts he has, up to now, put less emphasis on his local military forces and objectives except as they related to the support of the Main Force War. Having suffered three substantial defeats in three tries, he has recently withdrawn some of his Main Forces to North Vietnam and much of the remainder to the Laotian and Cambodian border areas and sanctuaries. As a consequence, Allied Forces have concentrated their efforts in recent months against local forces, guerrillas and the enemy's so-called infrastructure. Recently these efforts have gained substantial momentum as evidenced by the continued attrition of Viet Cong strength and capabilities - by a sharply increased rate of rallying under the Chieu Hoi program and by an increasingly large number of infrastructure members killed, captured or rallied.

b. Territorial Security - The GVN is maintaining the momentum by improving the territorial security forces. Both the RF and PF have undergone significant expansion in 1968. The RF has grown from 151,000 at the end of 1967 to 217,000 by the end of September 1968, while the PF has expanded from 149,000 to 172,000 in the same period. This represents 161 new RF companies, 378 new PF platoons this year. By the end of September, the RF had activated 1092 of the 1196 RF Cos programmed for FY 1969 and 4,615 of the programmed 4861 PF platoons. Weapons modernization has maintained a similar pace. As of 31 July, 98 percent of the M-2 carbines, 73 percent of the BARs, and 25 percent of the grenade launchers programmed in the first phase of

This document contains information affecting the national defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S. Code, Sections 793 and 794, the transmission or the revelation of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

SECRET

IDA 71-130 762

SECRET

the RF/PF improvement program had been issued. The following percentages of RF/PF units will be equipped with M-16 rifles by the end of FY 69; Command Military District (issue completed, July 68), IV CTZ - 70 percent, I CTZ 60 percent, III CTZ - 50 percent and II CTZ - 40 percent. Additionally, it is expected that 100 percent of the radio improvement program for the RF/PF would be achieved by 30 September.

c. The Political Setting - The enemy since April has made a massive country-wide effort to establish Liberation or Revolutionary Committees in areas under his control and in contested areas. He has also established and widely advertised the urban oriented Alliance of National Democratic and Peace Forces. The GVN, on the other hand, owing to clear cut successes on the battlefield, the opening of negotiations in Paris, and concern with their own political weakness, has placed a high priority on the pacification program and on political organization. Both sides now seem to sense that the political aspects of the war are assuming ever-increasing importance.

d. The Current Status - In October, the Pacification Program for the first time surpassed the security levels which were obtained prior to TET. In other words, the TET regression has slightly been more than offset. October saw the largest gains since the inauguration of the Hamlet Evaluation System. During that month there was a 3 percent gain in population under government control. The largest previous single monthly gain was 1.5 percent. At this time 69.8 percent of the population of South Vietnam lives in relatively secure hamlets, cities, or towns, whereas population living under the Viet Cong control has been reduced to 15.3 percent. 14.9 percent of the population remains contested by the two sides.

SECRET

SECRET

e. In order to exploit the improved tactical situation and in order to avoid the typical year-end lull, the government of Vietnam at the urging of MACV has launched an accelerated program aimed at raising 1,000 contested hamlets into the relatively secure category before TET. Security Forces are now present in some 700 of these 1,000 hamlets. In the last several weeks the GVN has had its attention distracted from this accelerated program at least at the Saigon level. Commanders in the field, however, and province and district chiefs seem to be pressing on.

f. The Chieu Hoi rate is now exceeding that of a year ago and does not seem to have been affected by the recent controversy over peace talks. Approximately 14,000 individuals have rallied to the Government since 1 January with the sharpest increase in the month of October -- 2381 as opposed to average rate of 1130 during preceeding 9 months. This is highest monthly total since May 1967.

g. 11,039 members of the VC infrastructure have been killed, captured or have rallied during the year. The rate showed a significant jump during March, probably due to the infrastructure exposing itself for tactical reasons during TET. Since March elimination has continued at a rate greater than 1100 per month, with another notable increase during October.

h. Self Defense Forces - Goals established for the three month "accelerated Pacification Campaign" were 1,000,000 members of which 800,000 are to be trained and 200,000 trained and armed. To date, 815,216 of population are members of which 330,821 are trained and 85,944 are trained and armed.

2. Future. There is evidence that the enemy is now preparing for further military and political activity. We can expect that he will employ his main forces in an effort to divert allied forces from their attack on his guerrillas, his local

SECRET

SECRET

forces and his infrastructure. There is additional evidence that he plans to emphasize the importance of guerrilla forces and to upgrade their strength and capabilities. In short, we can expect him to meet our attack against his political structure with vigorous countermeasures. It is too early to tell what impact this will have on future pacification progress. However, Ambassador Komer seems to believe that we may see a favorable snowball effect.

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

a. Concept for pacification in Vietnam continues to emphasize:

- Self-Defense
- Self-Government
- Self-Help.

The idea is to instill a sense of involvement on the part of all citizens to counter a communist people's war. Guidelines for 1969 are spelled out in the Combined Operations Plan (AB 144) and focus along both functional and geographic lines.

b. In 1969 the Revolutionary Development Program will focus on the village rather than the hamlet. It is believed that this change will add to the validity of the current program. In this connection, RD Cadre teams are to be assigned permanently to villages rather than the former six-month assignments to hamlets. This will enable the permanently assigned RD Cadre to move among the village hamlets as needed. To ease the effects of the RD Cadre shortage, Popular Force (PF) platoons will become involved in developmental activities in the village to which assigned, performing as quasi-RD Cadre teams. Four of the ten weeks of PF platoon training will be devoted to RD Cadre-type developmental training.

c. Strategy for pacification of priority areas for 1969 will be derived primarily from information provided by the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) concerning the location of critical population and economic resources. Support of these priority areas will be provided by new pacification assets rather than the shifting of existing assets from other areas.

d. Self-Defense

(1) Self-Defense will be improved country-wide with the upgrading of territorial forces (RF/PF). This not only places emphasis on the administrative improvement, such as equipment modernization, but more on the improvement of operation and employment of these forces. These forces are expected to provide the required security in the country side to enable the RD Cadre and the population to advance developmental projects. Hopefully, the ARVN battalions now employed in support of RD activities can be replaced completely by improved RF/PF.

CONFIDENTIAL

(2) Concomitant with improvement of the RF/PF will be continued efforts to improve the civilian self-defense elements--RD People's Groups (RDPG) for rural and People's Self-Defense (PSD) groups for urban populations. These self-defense elements are not intended to be ersatz RF/PF units. Rather, they are to be the armed citizenry; armed solely for self-protection and hamlet defense. Recent efforts by GVN and enthusiastic response from the people have done much to advance the program.

(3) Corollary with self-defense will be the orchestrated effort by the GVN to eliminate VC infrastructure (VCI). There are 200 odd District Intelligence and Operations Control Centers (DIOCC) country-wide which comprise the major operating arm of the PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG VC elimination program. With the official GVN sanction of this program in July, there has been slow but steady improvement since. The earlier concern over a VC infrastructure increase during the latter part of 1968 may well have been the result of additional identifications at the district level due to the continued emphasis and improvement of effort since Tet in seeking out these VC infrastructure personnel.

e. An important step in furthering self-help will be the institution of a GVN program whereby the village council will decide what programs the village would like accomplished which require economic assistance. These requests will be forwarded to the Central RD Council who will, upon approval, allocate funds to other ministries who in turn will give economic credit to the villages concerned for carrying out these programs. Thus, instead of centralized decision of developmental programming, village councils now have the responsibility and opportunity for the planning and programming of these activities which require outside funding aid.

f. Self-government will be part of the continuum of all these programs for 1969; and all will contribute to its development, with emphasis at the village level. The RD Cadre team within a village will be placed under the authority of the village council, who will determine in which hamlets the team will be employed and for how long. The council will exercise some degree of authority over local self-defense units and will decide on self-help projects for

CONFIDENTIAL

economic development. By these means the village councils should develop greater prestige and authority, thereby strengthening the overall status of the GVN at the grass roots level.

CONFIDENTIAL