

EFFECTS OF TET OFFENSIVE ON THE CHIEU HOI PROGRAM

I. Summary of General Situation

1. The Returnee Rate: It is now abundantly clear that the effects of the VC Tet offensive began as early as last September - October. The returnee rate was obviously being influenced by pre-campaign planning, tightened security measures, and propaganda dissemination. In the course of the enemy build-up, the numbers of returnees fell off from a total of about 2100 last August to 889 in December. The following table depicts the situation by region but the February figures are known to be incomplete.

<u>Region</u>	<u>Feb 1968</u>	<u>Jan 1968</u>	<u>Jan 1967</u>
I	71	272	234
II	121	221	780
III	150	151	1096
IV	421	535	807
TOTAL	763	1179	2917

It is perhaps most significant in view of the circumstances that rallying continued at all after the attack. It should be noted that the general situation during the period at hand has been dramatically different than that which existed a year ago. A comparison of figures is thus no longer very useful. Intensive combat activity particularly when initiated by the enemy does not create an atmosphere conducive to rallying. It is also clear from the returnee rate that the point of crisis has not been reached.

It would appear at this point that the 1968 goal of 30,000 returnees

would not be achieved, barring some unforeseen very favorable development which could, of course, change the situation radically. Although a quarter of the year has gone by, previous experience has shown that almost one-half of the annual numbers of returnees come in during the first three months because of Tet. The sensitivity of the returnee rate to both military and political influences has been fully demonstrated in the past; therefore only a dramatic upturn in the situation could result in a returnee rate later in the year which might yet approach the goal of 30,000.

2. The Impact upon the Ministry:

The Minister of Chieu Hoi and his immediate staff have weathered the storm with no ill effects. They have been eager to visit critical Provinces whenever transportation could be made available and the Minister has personally visited 17 provinces in the last 25 days. He has presented meritorious service awards to deserving individuals with pronounced good effect. Local GVN TV and Radio coverage has been complete. The Minister continues to exert pressure to improve the performance of his personnel in the field and the management of the program. He has taken an aggressive and imaginative approach in reorienting the thrust of the Chieu Hoi psyops from its earlier Tet-oriented axis to one more in consonance with the dramatic events which have since occurred. Most Chieu Hoi service functions are already back to normal. Political and vocational training programs have been slow in recovering full momentum. Reports and other kinds of administrative action have not

completely recovered as yet. Post-Tet data still continue to be incomplete and inaccurate.

It is at the District level where perhaps the most serious impact of the VC attack continues to be felt. It is in these lower extensions of the Ministry that ralliers are received. The security situation at the District level in most provinces continues to be sufficiently tense to compromise the most effective operation of this initial, vital link in the Chieu Hoi chain. The inability of the District office to function effectively is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the returnee rate fails to improve.

### 3. Personnel Losses:

Personnel losses were not severe, although one Provincial Chieu Hoi Chief, two District chiefs and a number of APT personnel were lost. A more substantial number of ex-Hoi Chanh were simply engulfed by the VC along with the rest of the population as the GVN pulled back from the countryside into the cities. The GVN's augmented military mobilization plan is beginning to have a serious impact upon Chieu Hoi service personnel. Cadre shortages at District levels already number several hundred. They are soon expected to become even greater.

### 4. Physical Damage:

Damage to facilities was not as heavy as expected except in the case of six (6) Provinces:

Quang Tri	- Major damage
Thua Thien	- 60% destroyed

Kontum	- Major damage. One building totally destroyed; one building estimated 50% destroyed. Light damage all others.
Pleiku	- Extensive damage to entire center
Vinh Long	- Major damage. Estimated 700,000\$VN cost of repair.
Kien Hoa	- Total destruction of Chieu Hoi Office; minor damage to Center

Except in Kien Hoa damage was sufficiently serious to require major construction and reduce center capacities although at present the capacity is not required. Specific data on repair costs and reconstruction requirements is being submitted by the Provinces concerned.

Goals for 1968 involve completion of the 1967 Center and Hamlet Program and eventual building of 118 austere District Chieu Hoi offices. The Tet offensive has resulted in failure to date to complete the hold-over center construction from the previous year. In most cases work now continues again. As to the District construction program the Ministry has received replies from only 50% of the Provinces, identifying the specific Districts in which offices are to be built. Actual construction will not begin for at least an additional month, and no U.S. cement and roofing will be used.

##### 5. The Armed Propaganda Teams

The number of Hoi Chanh enrolled in APTs increased following the Tet offensive. The actual strength rose from 2664 to 2919. The performance of these teams has been remarkably good in the face of

earlier disquieting rumors implying untrustworthiness on the part of Hoi Chanh. A record of notable performances of the APTs has been compiled and has been given board dissemination to interested agencies. It is felt that the continuing influx of returnees has come about largely as a result of confidence inspired by the APTs. The Minister continues to emphasize the importance of proper utilization and is carefully supervising those elements in his organization which have a hand in administering the APT Program. In view of the decrease in the numbers of Hoi Chanh there is some doubt that the 1968 goal of 75 companies can be fully met. At the present time  $46\frac{1}{2}$  APT companies have been organized. They are not all at full strength. Since APT members are recruited from Hoi Chanh as they leave the Center, this source of manpower may not be adequate to support the additional APT organizations (but we have some recourse to unemployed ex-Hoi Chanh).

6. Kit Carson Scouts:

Kit Carson Scouts have continued to perform most effectively during and following entire Tet campaign. Progress is being made throughout the country in organizing Kit Carson Scout elements in US military units. During the last month there was a modest increase from 247 to 315. The 1968 goal as established by COMUSMACV provides for 100 scouts per Division with an overall total country-wide of 1500. Since Kit Carson Scouts like the APTs are recruited from among Hoi Chanh, this program will likewise be affected by lower returnee rates. The rate of growth will undoubtedly continue to be slow.

## II. Major Actions Being Taken to Restore Program to Pre-Tet Condition

1. In many respects, the Tet offensive had a favorable effect on the Chieu Hoi Program. The APTs have proven themselves worthy of confidence by their consistently fine performance. Even the Hoi Chanh as a group with few exceptions have made good in their commitment to the GVN, giving the program its most acid test. Furthermore, the unsuccessful and very costly VC offensive cannot help but give rise to a new series of broken promises, dashed hopes, and visions of victory gone aglimering, thus creating a new and perhaps even a larger group of individuals who are approaching a point of decision to rally. With the relaxation of controls which must inevitably follow the high intensity of commitment on the part of the enemy which has characterized his offensive, opportunities to rally will inevitably present themselves.

2. Specific actions as outlined in the Chieu Hoi Sub-Program goals are now underway as shown.

### a. Improve the Inducement Program:

(1) A reorientation of the Chieu Hoi Psyops effort to a Post-Tet VC offensive theme has taken place. Information setting forth VC losses and the magnitude of the defeat they suffered is being disseminated by all media, including a concentrated effort to explain the Chieu Hoi Program to the people and to the Military, both ARVN and FWNAF. This effort is primarily designed to remove the cloak of mystery which has obscured many aspects of the Chieu Hoi Program and to counter the carry over to Hoi Chanh



of the anti-VC sentiment incurred in the course of the offensive which could severely compromise the principle of National Reconciliation unless it is checked. Radio and TV programs have already been presented on both GVN and Armed Forces networks. Daily newspapers are continuing to print stories on the accomplishment of the APTs and announcing the continuing returnee rate.

(2) Quick reaction psyops are being emphasized by all 4 CTZs. On 24 March 1968, II CTZ held a combined Psyops and Chieu Hoi conference attended by representatives of Psyops and Chieu Hoi Divisions of CORDS. The operation of the multilith press now available at Province level for quick reaction was a major subject of discussion. The greater effectiveness of locally designed leaflets and improved means of getting quick printing service were also emphasized.

(3) APT Strength: The Minister of Chieu Hoi has already increased authorizations to specific Provinces for additional APTs by spot approvals in the course of his recent field visits. The number of APT members continues to increase since Tet although under the constraint of limited personnel recruiting sources. In addition to the Hoi Chanh in the presently depopulated Centers, Chieu Hoi service personnel are in the process of screening ex-Hoi Chanh as additional sources of recruits for APT. The recently acquired prestige of these teams has resulted in their receiving much more favorable attention from Province Chiefs.

(4) Training and Utilization of APTs: The Chieu Hoi Minister and the Chief, Chieu Hoi Division, CORDS have continued to

emphasize these significant aspects. Advisors have been urged to get the APT over onto the psywar offensive at the District level. Immediate follow-up is taken in all known cases of tardy payment of salaries and allowances to insure that morale is maintained at the present high level. Recent issues of new uniforms and equipment have been promptly sent out in response to requests from the field. The problem of equipping APTs with adequate weapons has largely been solved. A continuing effort to raise the quality of these teams even higher is being vigorously prosecuted.

b. Improving the Reception, Processing and Housing of Hoi Chanh:

(1) Action is again underway to complete the 1967 holdover Center construction as well as to repair damages resulting from the VC attacks. Advantage is being taken of the low returnee rate to complete projects in preparation for larger number of returnees that can be expected in the future.

(2) District construction must wait approval of GVN budget and the final selection of individual Districts in which construction is to take place.

c. Improved Resettlement and Effective Use of Hoi Chanh: Hoi Chanh continue to be recruited for the same range of jobs as in the past. In many respects, the problem of job placement has now been eased because of the smaller numbers of Hoi Chanh for whom positions must be found. Particular effort is being made to encourage qualified



Hoi Chanh to become members of the APT or to enter the Kit Carson Scout Program. Two specific actions have been taken to further improve the follow-up aspect of the Chieu Hoi Program.

(1) Advisors are establishing much improved geographical data on released Hoi Chanh. Bien Hoa Province has taken the lead in this effort by requiring District Advisors to maintain an up-to-date map showing where resettled Hoi Chanh live.

(2) In selected Provinces in III and IV CTZs, Chieu Hoi Division, CORDS, has provided funds for hiring Hoi Chanh assistants whose sole duty will be to maintain contact with other resettled Hoi Chanh. After several months on the job, when the desirability of this approach have been confirmed, GVN authorities will be urged to take over the payment of these personnel.

3. Present Pacification Guidelines and included goals are considered to remain valid in the present Post-offensive environment. From a Chieu Hoi point of view the VC offensive has, more than anything else, resulted in a clarification as to why the returnee rate declined. Inasmuch as 1968 guidelines were drawn up against a backdrop of an already declining rate, the VC offensive in this context did not represent a dramatic change and therefore does not require a major reorientation in program thrust.