

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : VN/IDFO, Vincent Puritano

DATE: August 28, 1967

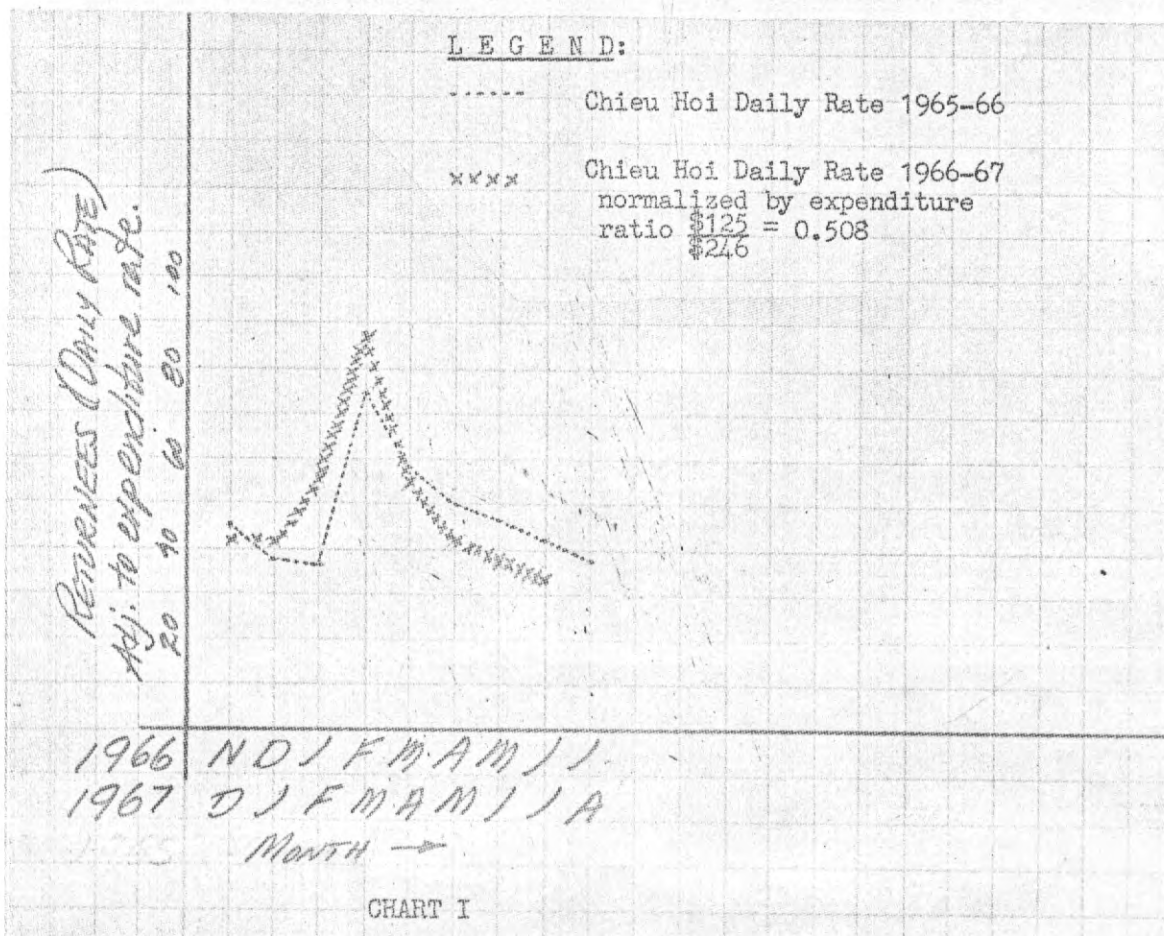
THRU : VN/IDFO, Roger Darling

FROM : VN/IDFO, Paul Wankowicz *PW*

SUBJECT:

The Chieu Hoi Program is one of our more successful and productive programs in Vietnam. It would be erroneous, however, to think of it beyond the bounds of what it is accomplishing, and to use it as a general indicator on the progress of the political war.

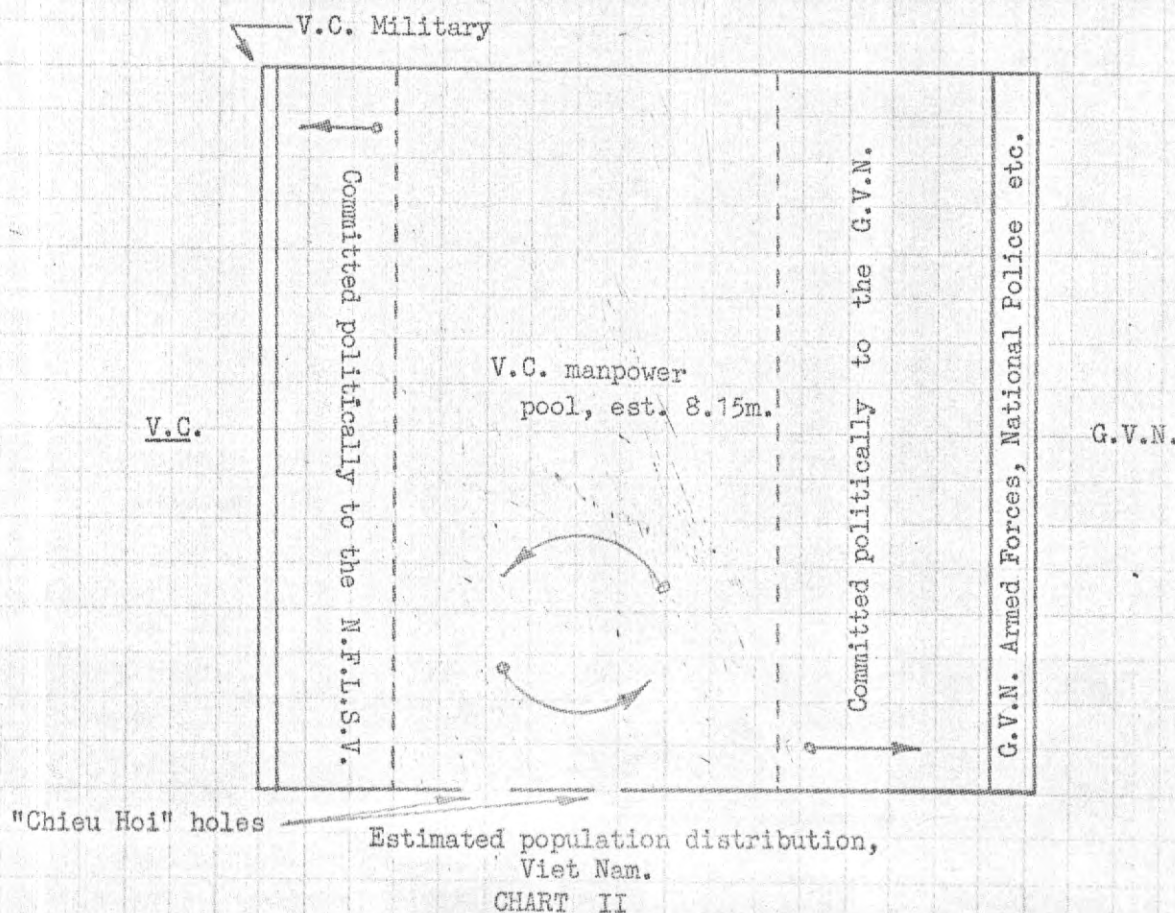
There has been a certain tendency, especially in the CIA reports, to equate increased Chieu Hoi rates with failure of VC Cadre morale. The fact that this has not been borne out by any success with the Doan Ket program, the program designed to bring about the defection of higher ranking cadre, tends to indicate this conclusion as not necessarily the correct one. I have a growing suspicion that our increase in ralliers under the Chieu Hoi program depends not as much on the fact that VC morale is decreasing as it depends on the fact that through increase in centers, advisors, psywar expenditures, and similar actions we have become twice as available to the prospective defector.



That we are 'twice as available' in 1967 as we were in 1966 is indicated by comparing the cost of one returnee in '66: \$125.12 as against the estimated cost of a '67 returnee": \$246.10. (The returnee figures used in this estimate are the most reasonable optimistic guess generated from '65-66 experience on 8-17-67.) Chart I shows a plot of our "cost effectiveness" on a monthly basis in 1966 and 1967. The calendar months have been shifted as shown to make '66 and '67 "Tet" coincide; "Tet" is obviously the period around which such social actions as Chieu Hoi revolve. In terms of cost effectiveness, our efficiency in gathering returnees is steadily going down.

It is interesting that the 1966 plot and the 1967 "normalized" curve hold very similar shapes -- indicating a strong calendar-social component as part of "Chieu Hoi" motivation.

Where do these Hoi Chan come from? Chart II suggests that their source is the 'in-between' population that has not really taken over the ideal of one side or the other. The seasonal fluctuations and the non-productivity of the Doan Ket program would tend to reinforce this analysis. This 'in-between' population is generally a NFLSV manpower pool, by tapping it with our "Chieu Hoi Holes" we are denying them manpower but we are not affecting their cadre.



In connection with the Chieu Hoi and the Doan Ket programs it must be remembered that the building of a cadre does not start with ideological grounds. Prospective cadres are recruited from the poor, or middle poor class of farmer's families, the lowest socio-economic classes. The NLFSV turns to this peasantry precisely because these classes need and desire training and are dazzled by the promise of an 'executive' job. This training is the first reward that the NLFSV can give to assure themselves of the man's continuing loyalty, a more desirable trait in a cadre than ability.

The initial training given to a prospective cadre is designed to show him how the world "really is" -- NLFSV style. He is introduced to a much broader world than he's ever realized existed before, the workings and appearance of this new world are explained to him in Marxian or Maoist terms. The reward implicit in this training is, of course, the feeling of much broader knowledge and importance, plus the eventual graduation into the ranks of the cadres. He has become a functioning member of a movement that is "the salvation of the world" and he has joined "the stream of history". Thus, although the prospective cadre is not recruited for ideological reasons, he is conditioned to remain part of the organization through the force of ideology. He has been fitted into the framework.

Because of this psychological conditioning, it takes much more than a tactical reverse, hard living conditions, or Chieu Hoi appeals to force this man to give up the only world he knows (and believes in) for the unknown of a Chieu Hoi Center. His whole personality is as bound up with service to the revolutionary cause as was the personality of the medieval Jesuit monk with service to his religion.

The above analysis forces me to draw the following conclusions:

1. The number of returnees cannot be taken as an indication of a general breakdown of the VC infrastructure. It is only somewhat of a measure of our availability.
2. The number of returnees can be taken as an indication of increasing difficulties that the VC are experiencing with their manpower pool. The low price per returnee makes this method of weakening their ability to obtain warm bodies very "cost effective" when measured against the cost of deactivating a man by military means.
3. Our increasing cost per returnee, however, may be taken as an indication that the NLFSV is strengthening themselves and developing counter-techniques against our Chieu Hoi program. As such it can be read as a compliment to its achievements.