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15. SUMMARY:

(C-Apr 71) This report contains information obtained from an enemy document and concerns Message 300/TK, dated 11 October ((1970)) and classified ((VC/NVA)) Restricted. The message was prepared by Nam ((possibly a member of VC Region 3 Party Committee)) and addressed to Muoi Khang ((possibly NVA General Hoang Van Thai)) and C ((sic)). The message is a three-part assessment of the general situation in K3 ((possibly VC Military Region 3)). The first part of the document reviews enemy ((P/VMAP/RVNAP)) activities in the area from August 1968 to September 1970. The second part deals with the friendly ((VC/NVA)) situation and activities during 1969 and 1970. The third part discusses lessons learned in various fields and how to benefit from these lessons. The document concludes by stating that it would take many years before the balance of power in the region would turn in the friendly ((VC/NVA)) favor.

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No. 300/TK

11/10

Message / CHI DINH / ((possibly Restricted))

3 Khoi ((sic))

To: Muoi Khang ((possibly NVA General Hoang Van Thai)) and C ((sic))  
644 ((sic))

A conference of the Region Party Committee, Western ((Nam Bo)), was held to assess the overall situation, and a resolution ((of the conference)) was sent to Twc ((COSVN)), reporting a number of specific characteristics of the situation:

A. The enemy plans in K3 ((possibly VC Military Region 3)) theater of operations basically remain the same as previously reported, aimed at encroachment upon land. The enemy's plan for pacification of Western ((Nam Bo)) in 1969 could not be implemented. Since Jul ((70)), he has carried out a special pacification program with the same ambitions and objectives as those of the 1969 program which focuses efforts to: (1) Destroy friendly ((VC/NVA)) military and political installations in hamlets and villages under enemy or disputed control; (2) encroach upon liberated penetration bases; (3) reoccupy districts and provinces; and (4) expand control in hamlets and villages. He has proceeded from many directions with the encroachment of U Minh ((Forest)) areas and Ca Mau ((Province)). At the same time, he has strived to conscript and upgrade troops, organize more People's Self-Defense Force units, and develop Puppet ((GVN)) forces. He has established Puppet authorities in local areas, developed espionage networks, intensified psywar activities, propagandized his depraved culture, and resorted to numerous economic measures to exploit ((the people)). The following are some specific characteristics:

1. In Jul-Aug 70, the enemy reestablished posts which had been destroyed by friendly forces and established 95 additional posts in five provinces. (A report from Vinh Long ((Province)) was not available.) He encroached upon bases in Phung Hiep ((possibly District)), Can Tho Province, Chau Thanh and Minh Thanh Loi Districts of Soc Trang ((Province)), Cau Ke and Can Long ((Districts)) of Tra Vinh ((Province)), liberated areas in U Minh and Ca Mau ((Province)), and areas along the Ba Dinh River. In Huyen Su, he successfully encroached upon areas along the Ong Doc River and established three ((posts)) on each ((side)) of the river. He has already encroached upon ((areas along)) the Bay Hao River and has extended his encroachment upon ((communication)) lines in Nam Can. He is also encroaching on the ((communication)) line leading from Ca Mau Province Capital to Nam Can.

The total number of posts amounted to 2,826 in Aug 70, including 334 posts of category C; 1,483 of category B; and 1,009 of category A. This total includes 266 posts in Ca Mau ((Province)), 339 posts in Soc Trang ((Province)), 311 posts in Rach Gia ((Province)),

583 posts in Cần Thơ ((Province)), 507 posts in Vinh Long ((Province)) (incomplete figure), and 760 posts in Trà Vinh ((Province)) ((sic)).

2. The enemy has conducted his sweep operations and encroachments by closely coordinating his military, espionage, and paywar activities. His military activities were designed to carry out his conscription, etc... ((sic)).

The following are some main characteristics of the enemy methods of operation:

a. ((RVN)) regular force units concentrated their efforts on supporting Regional Force units and encroaching upon our strong liberated areas such as U Minh, Ca Mau, Cầu Kê, and Cần Long. Regional Force battalions in sectors were responsible for supporting Regional Force units in sub-sectors in order to encroach upon our penetration bases in districts and provinces. Regional Force inter-units were responsible for supporting Popular Force units in order to expand their encroachment upon each hamlet and village.

During joint operations with Popular Force units, the Regional Force companies in charge of villages and inter-villages played the key role in operations conducted in each village and inter-village. The Popular Force units in each hamlet were responsible for executing thrusts in all directions, for setting ambushes, and for conducting raids to destroy our agents in order to support the People's Self-Defense Force. The Popular Force units were also responsible for conducting patrols and for training People's Self-Defense Force units to enable them to set ambushes, conduct raids, etc... ((sic)). The enemy has expeditiously organized the People's Self-Defense Force into paramilitary forces under Puppet ((GVN)) authorities in hamlets. He will exercise his oppressive control over local inhabitants through these forces and use them as reserve forces for Regional and Popular Forces.

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b. Because of our attacks, the enemy has classified his targets as follows:

(1) When being attacked by guerrillas forces, posts and strategic hamlets were to resist with organic forces; (2) when attacked by district forces, they were to be reinforced by ((RVN)) Regional Force sub-sector inter-units (possibly reinforced companies); (3) when attacked by provincial forces, they were to be reinforced by ((RVN)) Sector Regional Force units; (4) when attacked by ((VC)) Main Force units, especially E2 and E10, they were to be reinforced by ((RVN)) regular force units.

During the final phase of spontaneous attacks, ((RVN)) administrative personnel, spies, and tyrants in the areas attacked by us fled to posts or hid themselves in secret tunnels. Two-thirds of the Popular and Regional Forces laid ambushes around their posts during the night, and the regular force units launched sweep operations. Upon meeting our ((VC)) Main Force units, enemy troops avoided close combat and used air and artillery support to attack our forces. During the night, enemy bivouacking positions were changed to avoid our raids. Those elements which were raided by us had to defend themselves without any reinforcements. Popular and Regional Force units frequently conducted operations during the day and then returned to their posts during the night.

c. The enemy was developing his forces and used Special Forces to conduct operations. He utilized heliborne tactics and Special Forces units disguised as regular squads, platoons, and companies. The enemy activated one disguised Special Forces platoon in each sub-sector and planned to activate one disguised Special Forces squad in each village. Our defectors played a key role in the development of these forces. The enemy selected experimental sites in Cà Mau that created great difficulties for us.

d. In addition, the enemy initiated a separate artillery and air ((offensive)) campaign. Various kinds of armed helicopters and fighters gathered to launch repeated attacks against us from one area to another. The campaigns were aimed at supporting the relocation of the people, Chieu Hoi ((Open-Arms)) activities, appeals to our forces to surrender, development of espionage activities, etc ... ((sic)).

3. Troop replenishment and youth conscription were performed under various forms. For example, the enemy forced the people to join the People's Self-Defense Force. The enemy also launched sweep operations, practiced enticement and bribery, and even captured Group members, guerrillas, soldiers on leave, and cadre's relatives.

Within the first 15 days of July, the enemy launched sweep operations against the liberated areas of Nam Cấn and Dam Cung capturing 310 village and hamlet guerrillas. Through an investigation, these guerrillas were identified, but they were still assigned to ((RVN)) Regional and Regular Forces as replacements.

Within five days after bivouacking in Công Nghiệp Post, Khanh Binh Tây Village and strategic hamlets, the enemy forces captured 100 youths including guerrillas and Group members, etc ... ((sic)). They issued weapons to ((one word illegible)) and deployed one Regional Force platoon to various posts.

Ông Tru Post on the Ông Đốc River had 45 persons. Most of them were youths who were recently captured from liberated areas. Only three Regional Force members controlled them.

A tyrant of Rach Sỏi used espionage tactics to entice 57 youths from a liberated hamlet (Kim Qui Hamlet and An Biên District) to enlist in the ((RVN)) army.

By checking our personnel in Cấn Thỏ Province, we realized that the majority of our cadre, from province Party Committee members to ordinary Party members, had relatives who had joined the ((RVN)) army.

According to our captured documents, F21 ((possibly 21st Division)) has suffered losses of more than 90% since the beginning of the year. It has since received replacements and now has the same strength as it did at the beginning of the year.

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In Aug 70, we completely destroyed đ3/33 ((possibly 3rd Battalion, 33rd Regiment)). Only 12 members of the unit survived. The unit received full replacements five days later and resumed its military activities. Đ4/33 ((4th Battalion, 33rd Regiment)) was in the same situation. With blatant conscription, the enemy had enough troops not only to replace units which had been heavily worn down, but also to reinforce them.

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The total number of Puppet troops ((in this region)) (exclusive of US troops) is 139,000 stand-by troops and 200,000 People's Self-Defense Force members.

This number includes 35,000 stand-by ((sic)) troops, 36,000 regular force members, 33,500 Regional Force members, 4,000 Special Forces members, 4,000 field policemen, 5,000 policemen, 6,000 pacification unit members, and 13,500 reconnaissance and intelligence unit members. If you include 9,200 US advisors, technicians, and members of the Air Force and the Navy, the total is 148,000 men as compared with 125,000 in Dec 69. This strength consists of 14 đ's ((battalions)) and 48 "inter-units" consisting of 440 Regional Force b's ((platoons)), 30 ((unspecified units)), 452 Popular Force b's ((platoons)), 12 Special Force c's ((companies)) and 27 Special Forces b's ((platoons)). (There were only 382 Regional Force c's ((companies)) in Dec 69.) The enemy has paid special attention to developing technical forces. The Puppet forces have 313 ships (not including those belonging to the US) and approximately 315 aircraft. The artillery forces have greatly increased in number. Regional Force đ's ((battalions)) and inter-units were supported by air and artillery fire during their military operations. People's Self-Defense Force units were used to replace Popular Force units to defend posts and hamlets. Meanwhile, Popular Force units replaced Regional Force units, and Regional Force units replaced regular force units in routine activities. This was done in Vinh Long, Khmer religious areas, and areas adjacent to province capitals and communication axes. The enemy made efforts to pacify rural areas where he could recruit young men for his forces. He also recruited troops from workers and students in cities, and trained them to be technical officers, NCO's, and soldiers in order to develop his technical branch. He paid much attention to "modernization" techniques; therefore, the development of urban movements is very important in frustrating the Puppet schemes of Vietnamization and "modernization." However, K3 ((possibly VC Military Region 3)) disregarded this matter.

4. In K3, the enemy has developed intelligence networks which are jointly composed of agents from the Phường Hoàng and Thiên Nga ((Swan)) intelligence organizations, intensified psywar activities, and spread his depraved culture. He has planted Phường Hoàng intelligence agents in sub-sectors, and if possible, in villages and hamlets. He is intensifying the activities of the Phường Hoàng organization in villages where his intelligence agents have large spheres of operation. In close coordination with local posts and with the support of air and artillery fire, mobile forces, psywar activities, and debauched culture, the enemy has formed a large network that has begun to impose his control upon the people and upset their spiritual and material lives.

The enemy has set specific requirements for proselyting each individual, family, and cadre. He especially tried to create a passive attitude among the people and encouraged them to join People's Self-Defense Force units so they can peacefully carry out their daily activities. Then, by taking advantage of the negative attitudes of relatives of our men, he began to ideologically proselyte our cadre and troops. The enemy has implemented this program with great patience. This has seriously affected our movement, especially in K3, for a long period of time. We adopted rightist attitudes in the destruction of intelligence agents and the oppression of reactionaries, and disregarded political indoctrination, ideological guidance, and activities of popular organizations. This permitted the enemy to intensify his espionage and psywar activities, causing an adverse effect upon our ranks.

5. At present, the enemy is carrying out a very reactionary policy concerning farmlands. We have not yet carefully studied the enemy's schemes, but based on his activities and propaganda methods, we can conclude that the enemy aims are as follows:

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Gradually he has decreased the influence of the direct class ((sic)) and made poor farmers small landowners. However, he still relies on and uses ((big)) landowners and encourages them to develop their farm work and exploit the poor farmers, in the way of wealthy farmers and capitalists.

He has bribed a number of farmers who have not been given land by the Party to force those who have been issued land by the Party to accept his political conditions; otherwise, he could not issue the land titles to them. His purpose is to take back land from those who refuse to yield to his conditions, etc ... ((sic)). He hopes to decrease the Party's influence among the farmers by developing capitalism and eliminating the influence of socialism. By so doing, he will split the farmers' ranks and use one element of farmers to rule another element in an attempt to subjugate all farmers.

The enemy has put into effect policies used by the Diem ((former President of RVN)) government which gave rise to vigorous protests from farmers due to its efforts to restore the landowner class that robbed land and its law that forced farmers to pay retroactive land rent. Now he applies this policy with the hope that he can still rely on and employ the landowners as able henchmen. In so doing, he can pacify and subjugate one class of farmers and, at the same time, exploit the other farmers by such astute methods as direct and indirect taxes, like taxes on credit banks, goods exchanges, fertilizer sales, and farm tools. (The enemy actively killed buffaloes ((possibly to force farmers to buy farm tools)).) By doing this, he transformed the "autonomous economy" of our farmers into a neocolonialist controlled economy.

We are not adept in economy and land problems, but we tried to report all enemy activities concerning these matters at the region Party Committee conference. However, our efforts were not given due consideration. Therefore, we now daringly suggest that higher echelons carefully study the problem and provide proper guidance to promptly cope with the strong enemy activities. It would be dangerous and detrimental to slacken our vigilance.

The enemy activities started in Aug 69. In Sep 69, he implemented his pacification program and aggressively encroached upon a major portion of the western ((possibly western Nam Bộ)) area. From Oct 69 to Jun 70, the enemy pacification activities were impeded and met heavy failures in U Minh and southwest of Cà Mau, and his control in some temporarily controlled areas was loosened. From Jul 70 to Sep 70, the enemy surged forward and implemented his special pacification program to encroach upon land. He succeeded in seizing portions of Cà Mau, U Minh, and penetration bases in districts and provinces. The general enemy scheme remains basically the same, although recently the land policy has been added, but it is now implemented more energetically, more skillfully, and more bluntly.

The enemy strengths and weaknesses on the battlefield were correctly assessed by higher echelon in Directives 26 of CCSVN and 325/R of SVNLA; however, we would like to add the following points:

The present strong points of the enemy are his capability to coordinate his activities in various areas, for instance, the Vietnamization program was simultaneously implemented in various areas which mutually supported one another, and his capability to implement his main schemes such as his pacification program. Therefore, each force, branch, level, village, hamlet, family, and individual is required to make efforts to smash all the enemy's schemes in general and each of his schemes in particular.

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It is regrettable that our efforts in K3 did not meet the requirement of our leadership.

The basic weaknesses of the enemy are the low morale of the Puppet troops and the demoralization of the low-level Puppet government and heterogeneous troops.

However, we failed to develop our capability or take advantage of these weaknesses, thus allowing the enemy to strengthen his forces.

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B. The region Party Committee has forwarded a full report on the evaluation of the achievements gained by friendly units. Following is additional information on the current situation of our movement, with emphasis placed on mentioning the deficiencies and vulnerabilities prevailing among friendly units which must be overcome in order to advance and accomplish missions.

1. Various friendly activities decreased during the third quarter of 1970 as compared with the first several months of the year.

a. During Apr, May, and Jun 70, friendly units killed approximately 20,000 enemy personnel; annihilated one battalion, 37 companies, 39 platoons, 41 squads, 11 hamlet or village administrative councils, and nine pacification groups. They destroyed two sub-sectors, 23 military posts, three blockhouses, and nine guardposts. In addition, they forced the garrisons of 13 posts to withdraw etc... ((sic)) and captured 1,600 weapons and 72 radio sets.

They also conducted over 900 attacks against strategic hamlets, laid siege to about 300 ((posts)), and expanded control over 121 hamlets. According to incomplete reports, during Jul, Aug, and Sep ((possibly 70)), our forces killed about 8,000 enemy troops; annihilated three battalions, 15 companies, 14 platoons, 12 squads, three pacification groups, and 13 posts; and inflicted heavy casualties on one battalion, nine companies, one sub-sector, and three posts. In addition, they succeeded in forcing four posts to withdraw, captured 421 weapons, encircled 150 guardposts, and conducted 300 attacks on strategic hamlets. (Expansion of friendly control over the areas has not been reported.) The total losses suffered by the enemy were approximately 4,700 killed and two battalions, 13 companies, and 16 posts destroyed by our Main Force units. Seventy-eight of the 300 attacks against strategic hamlets were conducted by friendly Main Force units (according to incomplete figures).

b. From Oct 69 to Jun 70, the enemy plan for encroachment upon the U Minh ((Forest)) area and Ca` Mau was seriously defeated. The enemy's control in his rear areas was somewhat loosened. In Mar 70, the enemy succeeded in encroaching upon a portion of U Minh, especially Ca` Mau. While our forces strived to stay close to his rear areas to break his oppressive control, the enemy made every effort to encroach upon the remaining penetration base areas and the provinces and districts as mentioned in the section on the enemy situation.

Generally speaking, the intensity of attacks of the friendly Main Force units in the region and Rach Già, Trà Vinh, and Vĩnh Long Provinces was still at a high level. Activities of friendly units in Ca` Mau, Sóc Trăng, and Cánh Thơ decreased as compared with the above units. Various units operating in the villages along "crescent" roads subordinate to the Cánh Thơ City Unit further expanded their control over the areas.

2. The population was 30,000 to 40,000 people in liberated areas, 50,000 to 60,000 in disputed areas, and more than 2,000,000 in GVN controlled areas. There were over 1,000 densely populated hamlets having neither Party members nor guerrillas. 2,100 other hamlets had Party members and guerrillas.

According to statistical reports, in Jun 70 there were about 149,000 Farmers' Association members, 88,300 Women's Association members, and 15,000 Youth Group members while in Jun 69 there were 141,600 Farmers' Association members, 85,300 Women's Association members, and 13,800 Youth Group members. About 20% of the Group members participated in routine ((political)) activities.

Political forces in city inner-areas remained unchanged. For instance, in Cánh Thơ City in Jun 70, there were 80 Labor Union members, 136 Women's ((Association members)), 35 Students' ((Association members)), 62 Group members and 42 secret guerrillas. In May 69, there were 143 Labor Union members, 79 Women's ((Association members)), 20 Students' ((Association members)), and 160 secret guerrillas.

In short, our personnel have failed to make considerable progress in the tasks of indoctrinating and grouping the people into political forces to counter the enemy's strategic hamlet policy. Most of the people do not yet thoroughly understand the Party's policy.

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By that time ((Jul 70)), the enemy had resorted to cunning schemes to attack all soldiers and cadre and their families in an attempt to undermine morale. Western ((possibly meaning Western Nam Bộ)) has a high revolutionary spirit. (These points are true.) Although we are armed with US weapons, our hearts are with the Vietnamese people, and if a favorable opportunity arises, our people will rise up, etc ... ((sic)). Because of the above misunderstanding, we failed to indoctrinate the people and could not win them over. At the KU ((possibly region Party Committee)) meeting held in Aug 70, we made an accurate evaluation of this point.

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3. We failed to motivate and group the people into organized forces or develop our political struggles against the enemy. While the enemy continued to conscript youths and organize the People's Self-Defense Force, we developed our guerrilla forces slowly and failed to provide replacements for our ((armed)) forces. The total number of hamlet guerrillas ((in the entire region)) was about 7,000. On the average, there were less than two guerrillas in each hamlet. We only had 2,230 hamlet unit cadre. In the total 3,100 hamlets, we had about 700 secret guerrillas and 4,000 village guerrillas. The total strength of district and city units was 2,200 to 2,250 soldiers of various types and that of province units was 2,500 to 2,700 soldiers. On the average, the combat strength of each district was one platoon and that of each province was one combat company and one combat support company. (Because there was a great number of persons who could not participate in combat tasks such as teenagers, females, sick soldiers or soldiers who were going on leave) the replacement of troops for Main Force units was very difficult. From Jun 69 to Sep 70, E273 ((possibly former 273rd, aka 02 Main Force Regiment)) received no replacements. When E10 ((possibly 95A NVA Regiment, 5th VC Division)) first arrived in the area, each of its d's ((battalions)) had 250 men. Now each one has 180 men. During two months of the summer phase, the strength of d303/E1 ((possibly 303rd Battalion, 01 Main Force Regiment)) decreased from 150 to 88 members after killing 70 enemy, etc ... ((sic)).

We paid particular attention to the improvement of the combat capability of our troops, applied the principle of using small forces to engage larger ((enemy)) forces, and tried to inflict heavy losses upon the enemy while we suffered insignificant losses. From the beginning of the year to date, we have made considerable progress. On the average, our losses were 1/15 of enemy losses. The ratio of casualties of Main Force units was 1/11 to 1/15. For example, in the second quarter, our Main Force units killed 6,600 enemy troops and suffered 573 KIA. In the third quarter, they killed 4,700 enemy troops and suffered only 350 KIA. However, their combat capabilities were adversely affected by the fact that they had received no replacements and their strength was greatly reduced. It is obvious that the military situation and the ((combat)) capabilities of our armed forces have greatly improved compared to what they were during the second and third quarters of 1969. However, we still encountered difficulties. The major difficulties were that the number of secret and hamlet guerrillas was low and replacements were poor. To solve these difficulties, it is necessary to develop our political struggle movements and forces, and help them make considerable progress.

4. Since our political struggle movements and forces did not make considerable progress and our armed forces failed to hit the enemy hard, the troop proselyting activities could not be brought to complete success. A great number of Party members were forced to join the People's Self-Defense Force and their sons and relatives were conscripted by the enemy. The number of guerrillas, Group, and association members conscripted by the enemy was considerable. To cope with this situation in the days ahead, we must motivate the entire Party, army, and people to enthusiastically participate in troop proselyting tasks. If we successfully coordinate these tasks with military and political attacks, we will be capable of completely defeating the enemy.

5. Cadre and soldiers displayed stable morale and bravery in the face of the fierceness of combat. However, shirking attitudes, pleasure-seeking, fears of protracted war and hardship, aloofness from the people, and self-interests prevailed among local forces and various civilian Party branches in provinces, districts, and villages. This badly affected the efforts to attack the enemy and strengthen our forces. Through a preliminary report, we learned that in Cần Thơ Province, one-fourth of the province and district Party Committee members had committed errors. One province Party Committee secretary, three district Party Committee secretaries, one battalion commander, and two district unit leaders displayed shirking and pleasure-seeking attitudes. For this reason, we should conduct a political reorientation to heighten their morale and, at the same time, make them understand their mission in this situation. If we do not improve their political attitudes, they will fail to fully understand their mission.

6. Concerning leadership and command, we have made some progress, but the following insurmountable shortcomings remained in our units.

a. Subjectivism, conservatism, authoritarianism, etc... ((sic)) exerted an adverse influence on the movement and the task of developing the Party. For example, at region level, when a cadre recognized shortcomings in the strengthening of our ((struggle)) movement and recommended corrective action or criticized the leadership, the command cadre immediately strongly opposed his suggestion.

They ((cadre and soldiers)) did not study the enemy and friendly situation, so they failed to compare friendly and enemy forces on the battlefield in order to promptly work out plans of attack.

From the beginning to the end, the ((command cadre)) subjectively and persistently asked Main Force units to liberate major parts of Chưởng Thiên and Cần Thơ Provinces and disagreed with the plan of destroying the enemy, conducting piecemeal attacks, and enlarging Ca Mau area first, where we had favorable conditions. Consequently, villages and hamlets in Chưởng Thiên and Cần Thơ Provinces were not liberated, and Ca Mau was occupied by the enemy. It was too late when we realized what had happened, and we had to shift our troops for reinforcements, and we lost our offensive position. These serious shortcomings still existed among cadre at province and district levels.

b. Cadre and soldiers violated the democratic principles of collective command and individual accountability. They did not seek to understand the specialized missions of branches in order to carry out their tasks, and control civilian organizations in order to lead the people, etc... ((sic)). This badly affected the leadership in the internal organization. Members of specialized agencies displayed a negative attitude; therefore, they could not correct their weaknesses.

c. Due to their authoritarianism, they stood aloof from the people.

d. They did not properly conduct three-pronged attacks in lowland and mountainous areas. Only military activities were conducted, but ((command cadre)) were discontented with each other in using Main Force units. They overlooked the task of strengthening our forces and developing political and guerrilla forces. They reported their activities only for the sake of formality.

e. In military leadership, the assessment of the enemy and friendly situations was not proper; the adoption of combat guidelines was not perfect; the recapitulation ((of activities)) and dissemination of activity ((reports)) were not promptly made; discipline was not strict; poor execution of orders and directives often occurred; reports were inaccurately made; and the leadership in the coordination of the three types of troops and in the conduct of three-pronged attacks in the region, as well as in each area of the battlefields, was not consistent. The remarkable fact is that we analyzed and pointed out deficiencies which were prevalent in the movement, especially in the leadership, and have arrived at corrective measures. For this reason, the prospect for the correction of deficiencies is more favorable than before. In addition, the movements in K3 ((possibly VC Military Region 3)) made progress in attacking the enemy, and experiences to strengthen our force were gained.

C ((sic)). A number of experiences:

1. The best experience we gained in K3 is that we failed to fully understand the ideas of short-term and long-term ((meaning to wage a protracted war to gain victory in short time)). We failed to fully understand the key points of the leadership of war which are to attack the enemy and strive to turn the balance of power in our favor at the same time, and the principle: "The more we attack the enemy, the stronger we become." For the above reasons we paid less attention to political and ideological consolidation, strengthening forces, and improving cadre and soldiers.

In turning the balance of power, the key factor is that we must turn the balance of power in hamlets and villages where we have enough force to take the initiative from the enemy.

For the past year we have attained success in killing the enemy and defeating his great plans. He is seriously demoralized, but the balance of power has not turned in our favor because we failed to fully understand this key factor.

2. Concerning the assessment of the enemy and friendly situations, especially the friendly situation and victories, we failed to control our individual sentiments; therefore, our assessment was not objective and proper, our policy and plans were improperly worked out, and their implementation was not specific.

3. In addition to the two above experiences, many useful experiences were not disseminated. For example, in ten hamlets which are located in the area surrounding Cán Thọ City, we gained control by using secret guerrillas in coordination with overt guerrilla forces to kill spies and ringleaders. Enemy administrative personnel and spies were captured by the overt guerrilla forces, warned before the people, and placed under the control of the people. Their movements were conducted only when the people in the hamlet permitted. In addition, the encirclement of the enemy posts by planting mines around them and the disorganization of the enemy People's Self-Defense Force were also conducted. Upon the above basis, guerrilla forces must be developed and indoctrination must be provided for the people to gain greater control in areas where the guerrilla ((warfare)) movements and the political forces are relatively strong, such as in five villages of Long My ((District)), four villages of Ké'Sách ((District)).

30 villages of Trà Vinh ((Province)), and the province capital. In many hamlets and areas, three-pronged attacks were conducted; encirclements of posts by planting mines and spikes around them were established; combat villages were established between two enemy posts; and the annihilation of enemy secret spies and administrative personnel was carried out. In some areas, guerrilla forces conducted military proselyting to relocate the people.

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In order to carry out the above missions, we have to maintain the people's struggles with legal and revolutionary status and concurrently prevent the tendency toward coexistence and a shirking attitude.

It is evident that these lessons have a great strategic significance for all villages and hamlets to enable us to change the balance of forces between the enemy and us and lessen the role of the people's forces in local areas.

a. In areas occupied by the enemy, we have to attack his sweep operations day and night and make him shrink back in order to create favorable conditions for us to consolidate and develop our local political forces, thus helping the local movement kill tyrants, break the enemy's oppressive control, and encircle enemy posts. We should increase the fighting capabilities of the three forces against enemy posts by coordinating with military proselyting activities. Guerrillas and all units, however, have to develop their military proselyting agents by themselves and should not rely on the military proselyting branch. They have to coordinate with sapper units in attacking enemy posts. In the past, we used 10 to 12 ((comrades)) to attack a separate post, 18 to 21 to attack a post at a bridge, and from 40 to 60 ((comrades)) to attack an ((RVN)) sub-sector or an enemy d ((battalion)) position. (We completely destroyed d3/33 in Cái Nua using only 36 comrades, destroyed the Phước' Long Sub-Sector with 46 comrades, the Gia Ngân Sub-Sector with 60 comrades, and the Cái Vơn Sub-Sector with 36, not sappers, but infantrymen.) Infantry troops closed in on enemy posts, using explosive charges, DK ((RR)), and B-40's to open a breach for an assault.

By this method of attack, El, Soc Trang, and Can Tho d's ((possibly battalions)), and a number of district units have achieved good results and sustained light casualties.

We are making preparations for a raid in superior force to put the enemy in horror and overrun important targets in each area, thus forcing a number of enemy posts to surrender. Good accomplishments will be reported to you later.

After strategic hamlets have been attacked, the next important problem is to firmly remain there and deploy troops to destroy the enemy's mobile reinforcements who come to counterattack us (x ((sic))). We must lure enemy mobile forces in another direction to successfully destroy the hamlet. This is a decisive factor for our success. As in An Trường (Trà Vinh), we could not overrun the enemy post, but successfully defeated enemy ((mobile)) reinforcements and

thus forced the enemy to withdraw from the post three times. On the road between Vinh Tuy and Ba Dinh, we conducted an attack against the enemy post ((along this road)), but failed to destroy the mobile reinforcements; the enemy, as a result, still held the post and did not withdraw.

b. In countering enemy encroachment of liberated areas, the best method is to mobilize all village and hamlet forces, ((all personnel)) of agencies, depots, hospitals, and local forces to conduct guerrilla activities on a large scale and wipe out enemy pacification and land encroachment support units. We try by all means to destroy or heavily damage the combined command posts of enemy operation forces. We must conduct sustained attacks which last months to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy, turning the balance of forces in our favor and forcing him to yield to us. In villages and hamlets, we must set up solid ((revolutionary)) installations to proceed towards enlarging liberated areas. K3 has recently not only applied this lesson with effectiveness but also set good examples by committing troops to strategic hamlets to kill tyrants, break the oppressive enemy control, and destroy the People's Self-Defense Force.

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Even if a unit has previously destroyed a number of enemy units, but fails to kill tyrants and break the oppressive enemy control, it will be considered as neglecting the main political mission of the Party which is to counter enemy pacification activities.

E273 ((possibly 273rd, aka B2 Main Force Regiment)) committed the same error.

1 ((sic)). To perform the role as the main support for the people's uprisings against tyrants and oppressive enemy control for power, units and concentrated guerrilla forces must thoroughly decimate enemy units, posts, and sub-sectors. In areas where the oppressive enemy control is tight and our agents are not planted for operation and the people's revolutionary awareness still leaves much to be desired, units should focus their efforts on the elimination of tyrants and breaking the enemy control to create conditions favorable for our agents to operate and for the people to stand up against the enemy. Afterwards, units will continue to destroy enemy strength. In addition to forcing the enemy to surrender, depleting enemy strength, and breaking his aggressive control, our units must also make every effort to win over the people. K3 ((possibly VC MR 3)), in the fourth quarter of 1969 and the second quarter of 1970, adopted the above experiences and successfully attained great victories. In the third quarter of 1970, it failed to do this. Therefore, the enemy, although his strength was less than half of that employed in the previous quarter, still succeeded in occupying Ca Mau and the area adjacent to the U Minh Forest.

It ((K3)) thought that we did not have the prescribed pacification targets nor did we have a thorough grasp of our principal task when we decided to attack the enemy during his two occupations of the U Minh Forest. ((The Vietnamese sentence is very ambiguous)). Accordingly, we would like to incorporate experiences learned from past activities so that we will have standardized methods of operation.

c. Attack and overrun the US and Puppet naval forces which are occupying Nãm Cánh. Emphasis should be placed on destroying their ships by using underwater demolition forces, guerrillas, artillery units, support forces, and the force of Brother Hai Dia.

From October 1969 to date, we wrecked over 200 enemy ships, including more than ten escort patrol craft APD, 93 meters in length. (They were equipped with 127mm artillery guns, and each had 200 crewmen aboard). We attained this successful achievement because we exercised good command and always motivated our soldiers to uphold their determination to destroy US ships.

d. Heavily demoralized, the enemy ground troops always relied on air strikes and artillery fire in their sweep operations or counterattacks. They even marched in open fields.

Our most urgent mission is to pursue and destroy the enemy in these open fields.

Consequently, our units and guerrilla forces must:

Eliminate aberrant thoughts and scrupulously assess the enemy and friendly situations.

Practice the tactic of firing while running.

Categorize objectives and make proper mission assignments.

Organize anti-helicopter teams.

Determine the direction of withdrawal and set up breastworks for each a ((squad)) and b ((platoon)) for deployment in withdrawal or support of friendly units.

E1, E2, and E10 district units, and guerrilla forces of Ké Sach ((sic)) successfully applied this tactic. Other units still hesitated to act upon the above instructions.

c ((sic)). In the current balance of forces, if a regiment of friendly Main Force units is committed to a populated area to expand our control, it is not certain that these forces can occupy a large area, but only cause violent attacks between friendly and enemy forces, thus confusing the existing ((political)) movement in that area. Therefore, in areas under enemy control, when conducting an attack to occupy a small area, we must make use of the in-place political and armed forces, district units, and province units. If necessary, a well trained element from a Main Force unit may reinforce the above forces. The major element of the Main Force units must launch the attack from an advantageous direction. We must try to destroy the enemy's local force units on the spot. We must also destroy the enemy's mobile forces (mobile regular force units and Regional Force units) and restrict their activities for several days, thus enabling friendly units to liberate areas and establish penetration bases. When friendly units in different areas succeed in occupying small areas and establishing penetration bases, friendly Main Force units will have conditions to destroy the enemy, occupy small areas, and establish penetration bases. In K3, it was planned that Main Force units were to be transferred to Chuong Thien and Cán Thó to expand their control over small areas, and that these forces were to be broken down into d's ((battalions)) and c's ((companies)) to conduct counterpacification activities, and establish penetration bases in their areas ((Chuong Thien and Cán Thó)).

Of course, when there is a change in the balance of power or when the major element of the enemy's regular force is reassigned to another area, we will assign more Main Force units to Cán Thó to destroy the enemy in order to liberate a major part of Cán Thó. To be successful, we must make careful preparations in the local area.

5. We realize that we do not have much experience. But we know that in order to succeed in frustrating ((the enemy's)) pacification program, we must double our efforts and regularly conduct counterpacification activities. We must struggle against the enemy every day and every week. On this basis we should make more efforts to prepare for a climaxing activity phase. We must be very strong so that we can repeatedly attack the enemy during this phase and ensure success. If our activities are frequently effective in K3, we can manage our forces while waiting for a new activity phase. We must renew activity phases every month and make careful preparations, especially for the phase of opening fire planned for two or three nights. The enemy will take preventive measures during these nights. Although our attacks apparently are conducted against hundreds of strategic hamlets, in reality we will only search for tyrants and administrative personnel to destroy. Upon completion of such activities, we will rest and make preparations for the climaxing activity phase which will take place in the following month. This method of operation appears to be less effective. We recommend that ((friendly forces)) in different areas operate simultaneously to inflict more casualties ((upon the enemy)). We also recommend that more careful preparations be made and guidance be provided for the conduct of frequent attacks.

We will make every effort to learn lessons and recapitulate them in reports. Many friends asked us to provide them with lessons on combined leadership employing the three types of forces and the conduct of three-pronged attacks. It is regrettable that we cannot satisfy their demands because we do not have much experience in this matter. However, we will do our best to make improvements.

d ((sic)). Concerning the assessment of situations and planning for the dry season activities, we have already started our work upon receipt of R's ((COSVN)) directives.

By assessing friendly and enemy forces on the K3 battlefield, friendly and enemy strengths and weaknesses are as follows:

Enemy weaknesses are tangible and are increasing.

Friendly weaknesses are also numerous and will take a long time to improve.

To fully develop our forces we must make tremendous efforts. In this connection, we propose the following combat plan for K3:

1. We must energetically build up political forces and step up the political movement and people's guerrilla warfare movement. In conjunction with the above movements, we must increase concentrated attacks to destroy the enemy's forces and war facilities.

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We must annihilate enemy tyrants, break the enemy's oppressive control of the population, disrupt the People's Self-Defense Force organization, and seize control of a large area. We must expand our control, consolidate and develop our strength, build our bases, and gradually turn the balance of forces in our favor to create fundamental conditions for us to dash forward. We must transform the situation on the battlefield, meet the requirement of frustrating the enemy pacification program, and liberate the majority of our key agencies in rural areas to create the foundation for the uprising movement.

2. Theater of operations:

a. The area from the Saigon River through Phu<sup>33</sup>oc Long District, Ca Mau Province, and the entire region of the upper and lower U Minh Forest is our main theater of operations. Our immediate task is to draw many of the enemy's troops there and wear down his potential. We will destroy battalions, task forces, regiments, and Puppet troop divisions in this area. We will eliminate units of Regional and Popular Forces and most personnel of the local Puppet administration, expand the liberated areas, consolidate our bases in local areas, and strengthen our forces in order to seize control in other areas.

b. In the area from north of the Cai Lon<sup>2</sup> River through Vinh Long and Tra Vinh Provinces, our mission covers the following activities. Immediately, we must step up the uprising and guerrilla warfare movements, conduct small but frequent attacks, strengthen our forces to seize control of the area and hamlets, create a foundation for the uprising movement, and prepare conditions for us to move forward to expand the controlled area. Not counting the local forces of various provinces, E1 and E3 ((1st and 3rd VC Regiments)) are stationed permanently in this area with other service branches of the Region. Sometimes, when we had the necessary factors, E2 and E10 have conducted attacks northward to support the revolutionary movement and prepare the battlefield to completely defeat the enemy there. In "a" ((sic)) month, we will greatly expand our controlled area. Therefore, different activity plans should be worked out, and when good opportunities arise, we will launch attacks in a flexible manner.

3. Considering the present situation of the movement and the level of leadership capability, we think that it will take us years to turn the situation on the battlefield ((in our favor)). During this time, R is required to provide replacements and reinforcements to various Main Force regiments to enable them to speed up the development of the movement. In 1971 there will be requests for 2,000 replacements; in 1972, 1,500 replacements; and in 1973,... ((sic)). The request can vary with the situation and time. Possibly, no requests will be made. The amount of weapons and ammunition to be requested is projected to be about 200 tons per year. Nevertheless, we will try to seize as much enemy equipment as possible.

The regrettable thing is that though the potential on the K3 battlefield is great and though K3 has the capability to move troops and maneuver to launch small, medium, and large-scale destructive attacks, it failed to rapidly solve its difficulties and had to request replacements and reinforcements. This is an unpardonable fact, but we are forced to report the truth.

In case the US withdraws their infantry troops, the friendly forces gain successes on other battlefields, and the Puppet regular force troops in the western area ((possibly Western Nam Bó)) withdraw a majority of their strength, K3 will certainly take advantage of these opportunities offered to shorten the period of coordinated activities in order to gain victories.

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True copy.

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