

As regards the possibility of bivariate systematic error, it may be more probable that VC/NVA casualties are overstated than VC/NVA attacks. That is, those who report casualties in relation to U.S. actions are more likely to overstate the casualties because of the assumed link between casualties and actions. There may not be such an assumed link, however, between VC/NVA attacks vis à vis U.S. actions. Thus, the reporting of attacks may be more reliable than casualties.

As regards the validity of the measures, there may be more of a problem. A goal is to assess the relative impact of alternative U.S. actions. The fact that small-unit actions and battalion days of operation often occur simultaneously suggests that it is not possible to estimate their separate effects as measures of alternative U.S. actions. That is, one cannot hold constant the small-unit actions and allow battalion days to vary if they take place together. The assumption here is that the impact of the two can be estimated as a function of their relative frequency of occurrence and increases over time vis à vis some independent criterion--VC/NVA attacks. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, the writer feels that this assumption is valid. A further criterion of its validity is the fact that the tentative results fit very well with the theoretical orientation of the study. That is, the author assumes that the relative frequency of small-unit actions reflects the extent to which U.S. strategists viewed the war as a political guerrilla activity rather than a conventional war where battalions may be more appropriate. The relative effectiveness of small-versus large-unit actions accords nicely with the theoretical expectations.

A problem with the political interpretation of small units actions is that the analysis only considers I CTZ rather than the country as a whole.

Of any of the CTZ's, I CTZ appears to be the place where there may be a conventional war. In a related vein, the analyses may be specific to I CTZ because of the fact that 90% of the small-unit actions occur in I CTZ during the 19 months--July, 1966 and January, 1968. The 19 months actually may constitute too brief a time across which to perform the analysis. It may not be possible to make any inferences beyond the short time base to longer periods.

In spite of these caveats, it is refreshing to see that the tentative results are in accord with the expectations of much of the theoretical literature. These results could be the preliminary steps in the construction of a more complete simulation model that could yield forecasts of the likely effects of alternative U.S. actions.

The present study could be preliminary to the construction of the Vietnam Computer Simulation (VCS). The simulation requires the specification of causal models that describe key aspects of the Vietnam war. The present analysis provides evidence regarding the relative impact of alternative U.S. military actions, and thus this inquiry makes progress in the construction of a simulation model.

The tentative results suggest that <sup>increases</sup>~~changes~~ in U.S. small-unit actions are about three to four times as important as <sup>increases</sup>~~changes~~ in U.S. battalion days of operation in decreasing the level of VC/NVA attacks later. These initial results fit well with theoretical expectations and with later field developments in Vietnam. Though the period of analysis covers only 19 months, July, 1966-January, 1968, the ideas and methods of the present study may be applicable to longer periods of time.