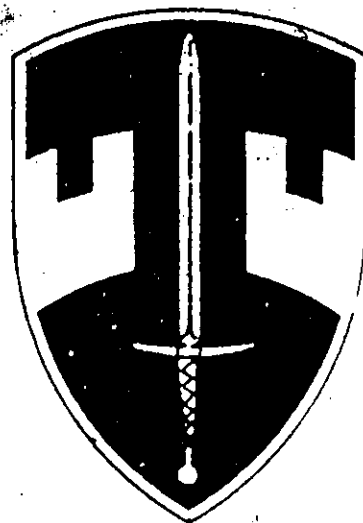
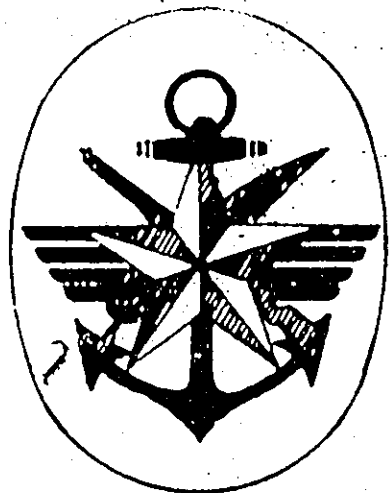


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NEWSLETTER #1

VC POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGIC RESEARCH & ANALYSIS BRANCH

COMBINED INTELLIGENCE CENTER, VIETNAM

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UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
APO San Francisco 96222
Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence

MACJ28

17 January 1968

SUBJECT: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastructure.

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Forwarded for your information is the first edition of the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam, Newsletter on the VC Political Infrastructure. Subsequent editions of this Newsletter will be published periodically as new information, trends, and developments warrant.

2. The purpose of the Newsletter is to provide a medium through which elements of the intelligence community can be kept knowledgeable on a timely basis of the latest trends, capabilities, and vulnerabilities of the VC political infrastructure. The ultimate goal is more effective identification and elimination of the enemy's infrastructure.

3. This first Newsletter includes the history, organization, and mission of the VC infrastructure. Subsequent editions will be oriented toward updating and providing specific information on the infrastructure.

4. Your comments on this and subsequent editions of the Newsletter are invited as means of insuring that the Newsletter accomplishes a meaningful and useful purpose. To achieve the maximum in timeliness, accuracy, and completeness in the production and dissemination of intelligence on the political infrastructure, comments and additional information pertaining to the Newsletters should be submitted to HQ MACV J2, ATTN: MACJ285.

FOR THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, INTELLIGENCE:

Edward V. Halpin

EDWARD V. HALPIN
Colonel, USAF
U.S. Director, CICV

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I. INTRODUCTION.

A. This newsletter is the first of such letters to be published periodically on the subject of the VC political infrastructure. The purpose of the letters is to provide a medium through which various elements, particularly at the sector and sub-sector levels, can be furnished timely information regarding trends, strengths, organization, and vulnerabilities of the VC political infrastructure.

B. This initial newsletter contains a brief history of the infrastructure, definitions of related terms, and a discussion of typical VC political organizations and their missions, from COSVN to the hamlet level. Also included is an explanation of what support the Political Order of Battle (POLOB) Section, Strategic Research and Analysis Branch, CICV, can provide to field elements, along with an outline of what information and materials are available and how to request them.

C. Future editions of this newsletter will include discussions of current trends in infrastructure organization, missions, political boundaries, capabilities, vulnerabilities, and other related subjects of value to field personnel.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. General. The present war in Vietnam is really two wars. First, ~~it is a military struggle against the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regular military forces.~~ Second, it is a political struggle against the VC political administrative apparatus or infrastructure, that directs and supports the military forces and Front organizations at all levels -- from military region down to hamlet. The political infrastructure is the "shadow government" of the VC that directs the insurgency in the South and competes with the legal SVN government for control of the people. This very complex organization is manned and operated by thousands of well-trained and dedicated VC political cadre, who seek first to control and then to organize all facets of the South Vietnamese people's lives toward full support of the insurgency. In VC-controlled areas, the infrastructure acts as a civil government. In contested and GVN-controlled areas, it directs a program of intense propaganda mixed with terrorism, aimed at undermining GVN control. In many parts of the country, VC and GVN officials compete openly for the people's support. For example, the GVN may ~~build roads and collect taxes during the day while during the night the~~ VC collect taxes, commit acts of terrorism, and provide the services of a midwife. This critical struggle is going on everywhere in South Vietnam and must be recognized and monitored constantly.

B. History.

1. After the decisive French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Ho Chi Minh, under apparent Sino-Soviet pressure, let it be known that he was ready to

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discuss peace. The resulting negotiations fixed a Provisional Military Demarcation Line roughly along the seventeenth parallel and provided for the total evacuation of North Vietnam by the French forces, and a concurrent evacuation of the area south of the seventeenth parallel by the Viet Minh forces. In addition to the truce agreement, a final declaration, commonly referred to as the Geneva Accord, dated 21 July 1954, provided for the holding of general elections throughout North and South Vietnam in July 1956.

2. In anticipation of the elections, Ho Chi Minh left a number of stay-behind political cadre in the South to maintain and improve his position among the people. As 1956 approached, it became apparent to Ho that the elections would not be held; therefore, he gave the word for the Viet Minh underground, deliberately left behind in the South, to begin building a political infrastructure in preparation for full-scale insurgency. By 1958, this apparatus was well-enough organized to direct small-scale terroristic activities, consisting primarily of assassinations of village and hamlet chiefs recently appointed by Diem, who had abolished local elections in 1956. Toward the end of 1959, guerrilla units were sufficiently organized to conduct actual armed attacks against GVN installations; by mid-1960, the movement had grown large enough to require a formal overt sponsoring organization.

3. In response to the need for a front organization, members of the Southern element of the ruling Lao Dong (Worker's) Communist Party of North Vietnam met to announce the creation of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN). The NFLSVN, or Front, was intended to channel anti-Diem and Southern nationalist feelings and groups into a single broad-based organization in support of the insurgency. At the same time, it was to provide a screen behind which the communists could continue to direct the movement. In a further attempt to disguise communist control of the Front, the Southern branch of the Lao Dong Party changed its name in late 1961 to the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). Soon afterwards, the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) was formed by Hanoi to serve as the political/military command and control headquarters for all its activities in the South. COSVN (currently located in Northern Tay Ninh Province) has the mission of implementing directives and policy decisions passed down from the Reunification Department of the Lao Dong Party.

4. From 1962 until about 1965, the VC infrastructure continued to expand until it included some type of organization in nearly all of South Vietnam's 2,500 villages and 12,000 hamlets. After early 1966, direct US military intervention forced Hanoi and COSVN to shift more emphasis to the military effort at the expense of the continued growth of the political apparatus. Since then, the infrastructure has undergone

considerable change in attempts to adjust to US military pressure. Lately more emphasis has been directed toward consolidation of areas now under VC control.

5. It is important to remember that, while the infrastructure is no longer the largely unfettered, expansion-oriented organization it was in 1965, it is still an extremely well-organized, disciplined, and effective control apparatus that directs the war in the South with great determination in the face of overwhelming pressure from FVMAF operations. Many of its cadre remain convinced of the inevitable triumph of their cause.

C. Definitions.

1. Infrastructure.

a. The official MACV definition of infrastructure is: "The political and administrative organization through which the Viet Cong control or seek control over the South Vietnamese people. It embodies the Party (People's Revolutionary Party) control structure, which includes a command and administrative apparatus (Central Office for South Vietnam) at the national level, and the leadership and administration of a parallel front organization (National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam -- NFLSVN), both of which extend from the national to the hamlet level."

b. For identification and accounting purposes, the Political Order of Battle Section (POLOB) of the Strategic Research and Analysis Branch, Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV), further refines the official definition as follows:

(1) The infrastructure includes:

(a) Membership of the current affairs committee and all subordinate functional elements of each party chapter organization down to and including the hamlets.

(b) Leadership only of the parallel Front organizations.

(c) Leadership only of the Military Party Affairs element of each echelon party committee (at the village and hamlet levels this includes the guerrilla chief).

(2) The infrastructure does not include:

(a) Members of organized military units (except village and hamlet guerrilla chiefs).

(b) Rank and file members of the Front associations.

(c) Persons who are recruited as civilian laborers by the infrastructure to perform a single specific task or to work on an irregular basis.

(d) Members of the population base in VC-controlled areas who do not hold specific positions within the infrastructure.

c. The following guidelines are used by MACCORDS in their Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation for Attack on VC Infrastructure (C), short title ICEX (U), reporting format:

(1) The ICEX reporting format includes as infrastructure:

(a) Members of the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP).

(b) Officers or leading cadre of the NFLSVN down to and including hamlet organizations.

(c) Members of COSVN, PRP region committees, province committees, district committees, village chapters, village administrative committees, and hamlet chiefs and security agents.

(d) Chiefs, deputy chiefs, and full-time workers of the current affairs committee or section and functional sections of the various PRP echelons from COSVN to village levels.

(e) Tax collectors, propagandists, organizers, terrorists, saboteurs, sappers, and agents.

(2) The following are specifically excluded in the ICEX definition:

(a) Rank and file guerrillas.

(b) Rank and file members of Front organizations, such as the Farmer's Association, Women's Association, and Youth League.

(c) Soldiers and members of organized VC military formations.

(d) Persons who pay taxes to the VC or who perform miscellaneous tasks for them.

d. As indicated, there are minor points of difference between the above three definitions reflecting the difficulty of drawing a positive line between infrastructure cadre and all other kinds of insurgent membership. It is particularly difficult to determine whether sappers,

terrorists, organizers, and saboteurs are guerrillas or political cadre. The rule-of-thumb used by ICEX is that if an individual engages in any kind of political activity at all, regardless of his title or position, he is considered part of the infrastructure. The POLOB criteria for infrastructure requires participation in political activities on a frequent or recurring basis. It is important to note that neither ICEX nor POLOB consider rank and file guerrillas and front members as infrastructure.

2. People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). The PRP is the Southern branch of the Lao Dong (Worker's) Communist Party of North Vietnam. It is the guiding organization behind all insurgent activity in South Vietnam.

3. National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN). This is the cover or front organization behind which the PRP carries on the war in South Vietnam. This organization was created by the PRP to act as an agent of the Party in relations with foreign countries and to give the false impression to the South Vietnamese people and to the world that the Viet Cong are sponsored by an indigenous southern nationalist organization, not by the Communist Party of North Vietnam. The Front serves the additional purpose of providing the leadership for a wide variety of Front Associations (such as Farmers', Women's, and Youth Associations), which seek to embrace all age, occupational, or interest groups in South Vietnam under the banner of progressive anti-GVN, anti-American nationalism. In this way, the PRP can organize great numbers of people in support of their cause without showing their true Communist ties.

B. Organization

1. Territorial.

a. The VC have organized South Vietnam into nine military regions (MRs) subordinate to COSVN. These MRs, each having its own political/military headquarters with 200 to 700 cadre, vary considerably in both size and mission. Subordinate to these MRs are 33 VC provinces (in contrast to 44 GVN) and approximately 230 districts, each with its own Party organization. A province headquarters can have between seventy-five and several hundred cadre, while a district organization usually has about fifty. A map indicating VC boundaries and names for the political sub-divisions, down to province level, is attached at Annex A.

b. Below the district level, the infrastructure organization includes some administrative apparatus in most of the 2,500 villages and 12,000 hamlets in South Vietnam. It is at the village and hamlet levels that the infrastructure is most active in fulfilling its primary mission of providing a popular base for the insurgency.

2. Structural.

a. COSVN and the Military Regions. The organizational structure of COSVN and the MRs is too large and complex for coverage in this

newsletter, but is available from POLOB on request. It is unlikely that contact will be made with high level cadre from these organizations since they carry on their work from secret base areas deep in VC-controlled territory, or even from out-of-country areas. When the VC in-country sanctuaries are penetrated by FVMAF, important political cadre usually leave the area long before the arrival of troops.

b. Province. Each of the 33 provinces is controlled by a Province Party Committee similar to the one shown on the line-and-block chart at Annex B. The Party Committee itself is composed of PRP members, who staff the subordinate functional elements. While not everyone in the various subordinate sections belongs to the Party, all the important positions are filled by Party members.

(1) The Executive Committee meets periodically to make broad policy decisions. It is composed of the Party Secretary and other key Party officials, most of whom also hold jobs elsewhere in the organization.

(2) The Current Affairs Committee carries on the daily business of the Province Committee. Its membership consists of the chiefs of the subordinate functional sections. The Current Affairs Committee meets every day to make specific decisions implementing policy and assigns tasks both to subordinate sections within its own organization and to the districts.

(3) The Organization Section is similar to the adjutant general in our own military. This section keeps personal history statements, makes Party personnel assignments, writes efficiency reports and, since this is a Communist Party organization, has the additional responsibility of maintaining Party discipline.

(4) The Finance and Economy Section is one of the most active. It prepares an annual budget for approval by the Executive Committee, as well as overseeing a complex tax collection and dispersal system which receives, accounts for, and allocates scarce Party resources. These resources include food and war materials as well as money. At the provincial level, this section usually operates a number of production sub-sections to produce goods for use in the insurgency and to bring in non-tax revenues for the Party coffers. For example, in Binh Dinh Province, the Finance and Economy Section runs a blacksmith shop to perform services directly for the Party as well as to produce revenue by commercial operations.

(5) The Military Proselyting Section is responsible for recruiting ARVN soldiers to the VC cause. "Proselyting" is a combination of recruiting, training, and indoctrinating. A common method of operation

is to encourage families in VC-controlled hamlets to write letters to sons and relatives serving in the ARVN, urging them to return home.

(6) The Civilian Proselyting Section provides staff supervision over the District Front Committees within the province. This section decides how to organize unexploited interest and occupational groups into some form that will lend support to the VC, such as the organization of an "Old Monks' Association." Care must be taken to differentiate this Civilian Proselyting Section from the Front Committee or NFLSVN Committee, which in some areas is the popular name for the entire chapter organization. This distinction depends on the degree to which the Party has successfully shrouded itself behind the NFLSVN. For example, in most areas official Party correspondence will be sent on stationery bearing the letterhead of the "National Front for the Liberation of South Viet Nam."

(7) The Propaganda, Training and Indoctrination Section has the mission of developing and disseminating the highly refined VC propaganda to which the population of South Vietnam is constantly subjected. As the name of the section implies, the VC do not draw a clear distinction between indoctrination and training. The "training" is actually political indoctrination. Party members and functionaries are given nearly as much attention as the general population, and they are quickly sent off to "re-training" courses if their enthusiasm for the insurgency shows signs of waning.

(8) The Security Section performs both physical security and counter-intelligence functions. As part of its intelligence responsibilities this Section operates an extensive network of agents both within and without VC-controlled areas.

(9) The Commo-Liaison Section is responsible for communications within the province. The VC have established a labyrinth of commo-liaison stations and routes for carrying messages and guiding personnel from one infrastructure element to another.

(10) The Military Party Affairs Section is one of the most important elements in the infrastructure. Its mission is to direct the activities of the province military unit, usually a battalion. Note that the section (see chart at Annex B) is divided into three sub-sections: political, military staff, and rear service.

(a) The Military Staff Sub-section performs a combination of the S1, S2, and S3 functions of our own military.

(b) The Political Sub-section is headed by the political officer who insures that all military decisions made by the unit commander are

"politically" correct. He is also head of the PRP chapter and cell organization within the province military unit.

(c) The Rear Service Sub-section provides logistical support for the military unit and can be compared with the S4 in our own military.

c. District. At the district level the infrastructure is organized very much like it is at the province, except that it has fewer people and a more compact area of responsibility. The functional elements subordinate to the Current Affairs Committee at provincial level also appear at district level, and their missions and names are similar. This is true even though there is some evidence that the original VC plan for the infrastructure did not include a district echelon. The original intent was for the Province Party Committee to control villages and hamlets directly. This means of control proved to be unworkable, however, and the District Committee was created to improve communication with the people. The important difference between the province and district is that at the higher level, "policy" is formulated by interpreting military region directives. At the district level, this policy is carried out by dividing and assigning tasks among the subordinate villages and hamlets. Because of the District Committee's role as an "action" rather than a "policy" organization, it is particularly vulnerable to manpower shortages and reductions in the quality of its cadre.

d. Village/Hamlet. Because the majority of the South Vietnamese people live in rural villages and hamlets, the VC place a special emphasis on the organization of the infrastructure at these levels. The great majority of infrastructure cadre in South Vietnam are in village and hamlet organizations, of which there are two basic kinds:

(1) GVN-Controlled areas. In GVN-controlled and contested areas, village and hamlet infrastructure is both flexible and covert. It usually includes four or five Party members who operate in the village at night and hide outside the populated area during the day. Emphasis is placed on propaganda, terror, tax collection, and intelligence gathering; the overall purpose being to undermine GVN authority. In areas of particularly strong GVN control, only one or two clandestine cadre will operate, usually under the direct control of the District Party Committee.

(2) VC-Controlled areas. In VC-controlled areas, the infrastructure puts more emphasis on civil government, with the mission of fully involving every man, woman, and child in some activity supporting the insurgency. To take full advantage of natural leaders in the village and hamlet, the VC hold free popular elections for a governing body, which is usually called an Autonomous Administrative Committee (AAC). The elections are, of course, controlled by the Party, but the idea is to install popular leaders in an apparently legitimate government and then bring them under

Party control through intensive indoctrination. The VC prefer to allow the people to govern themselves, with a minimum of background Party guidance, thereby releasing Party cadre for other tasks. At the same time, the people's sense of participation in their own government lends legitimacy to the AAC as a legal civil organ and reduces the Party's apparent role in the insurgency.

(a) AACs perform all the roles of a normal civil government, plus a few additional ones necessary to support the war. According to a captured VC document, their overall mission is divided into three broad areas:

(1) Mobilization of manpower and material resources for the war effort.

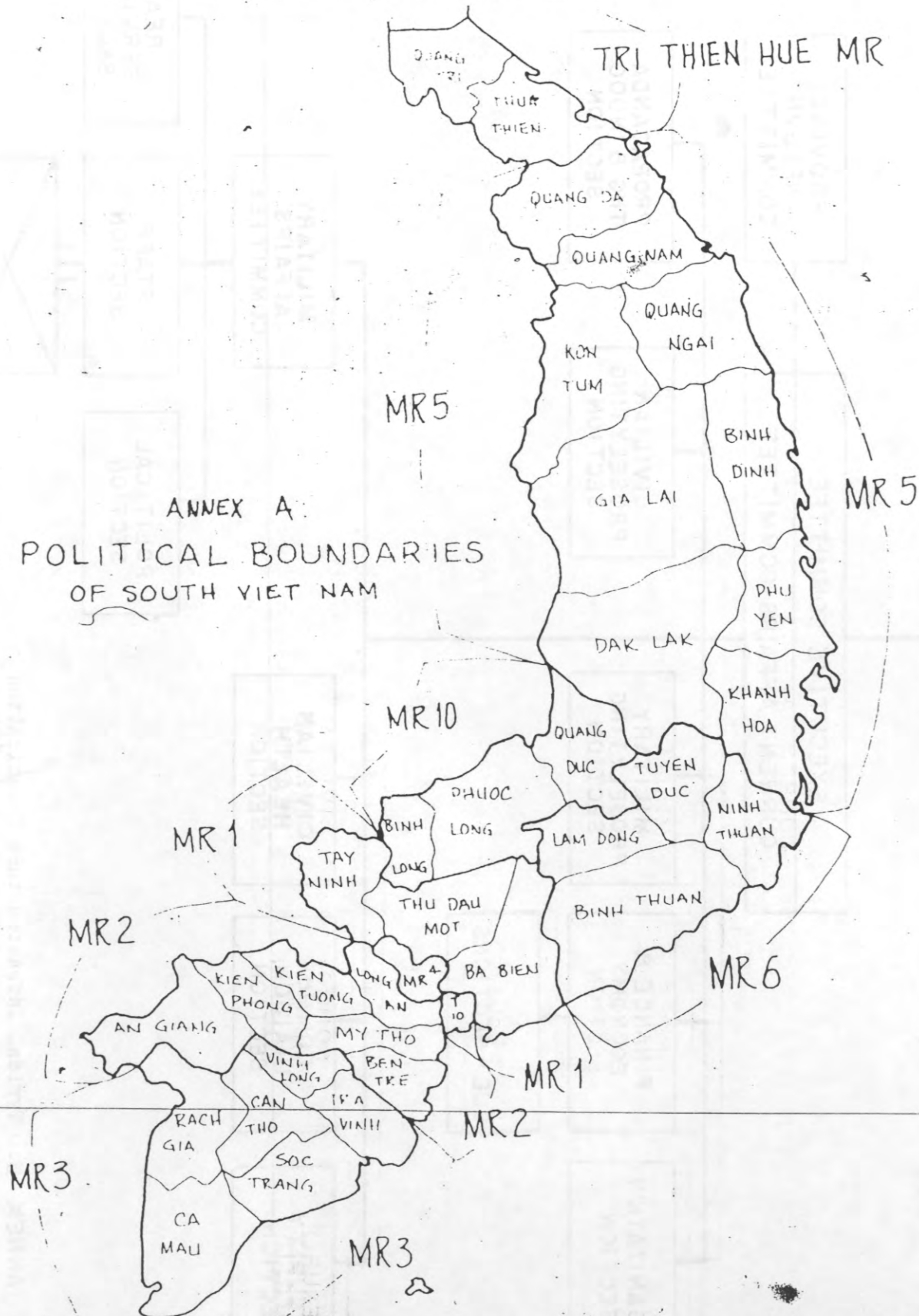
(2) Maintenance of security and order in villages and hamlets.

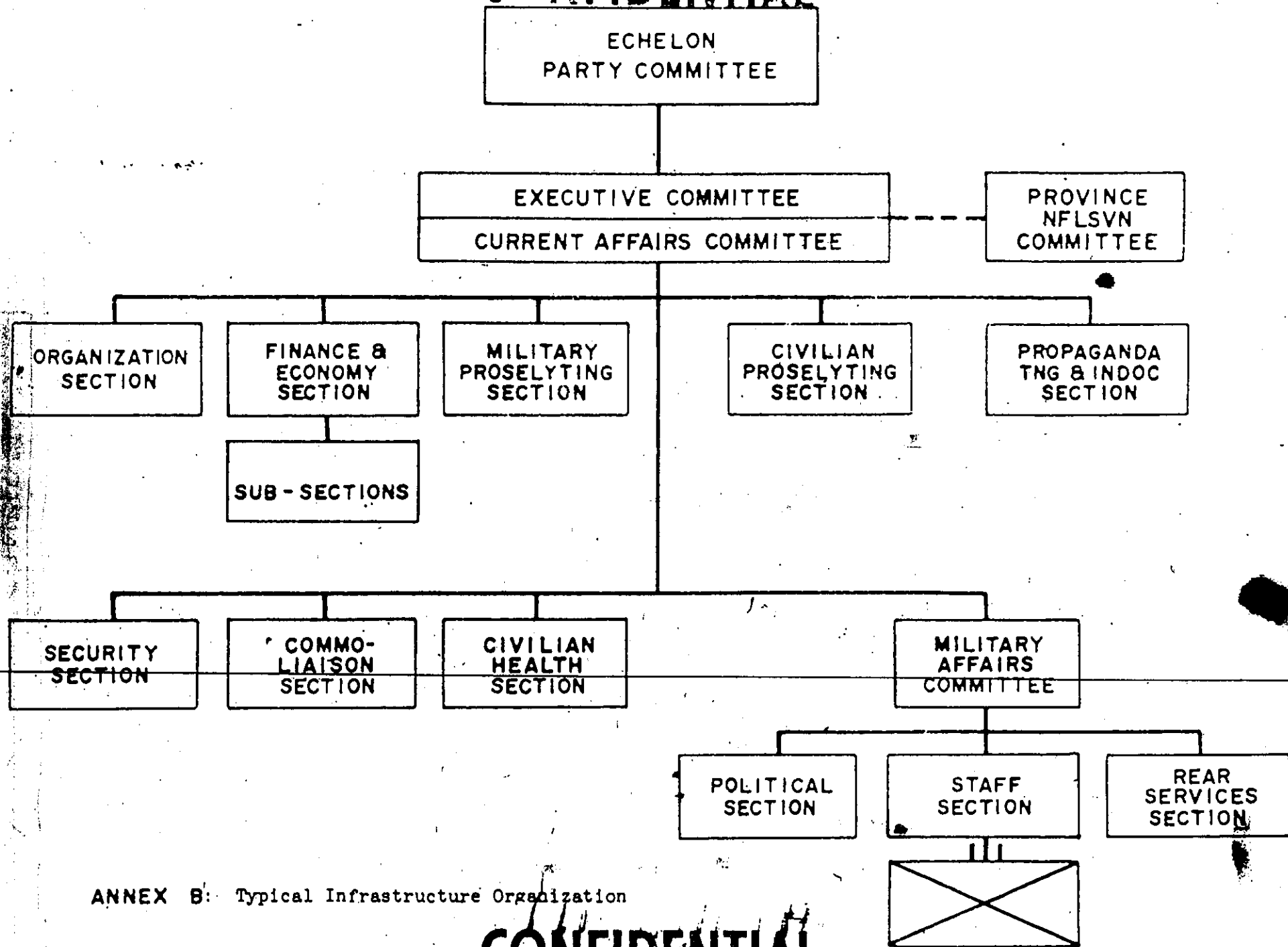
(3) Provision for services in public health, education, culture, and social welfare activities.

(b) In addition to the AAC, VC-controlled villages and hamlets have a Liberation Front Committee, usually headed by a Party member, under which virtually the entire population is organized into a broad range of "liberation associations" to which the people are more or less compelled to belong. For example, the Farmers' Association usually controls the market place, which only members are allowed to use.

III. CONCLUSION. Because the VC political infrastructure provides both control and support of all VC military activities, knowledge of its organization and capabilities is vital to the success of FVMAF efforts. In fact, only through the concurrent destruction of the enemy's political and military forces can the insurgency be terminated. To attempt to destroy the VC military units without destroying the infrastructure that directs and supports them is like arresting the symptoms of a disease, but failing to remove or cure the cause.

ANNEX A:
VC POLITICAL BOUNDARIES
OF SOUTH VIET NAM





ANNEX B: Typical Infrastructure Organization

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ANNEX C: Responsibility and Functions of POLOB, SRA, CICV

1. Responsibility. To develop full and timely intelligence on VC infrastructure boundaries, locations, structure, strength, vulnerabilities, personalities, and activities.

2. Functions.

- a. Maintain up-to-date intelligence on Viet Cong political personalities.
- b. Provide information on the historical development of the VC infrastructure.
- c. Research, extract, and study source data for analysis of the mission, activities, and subordination of the VC functional elements.
- d. Prepare briefings and studies on the VC infrastructure.
- e. Maintain and update the Automated Data Processing (ADP) Infrastructure Biographic format.
- f. Identify current VC political subdivisions and headquarters element locations down to district level throughout South Vietnam.
- g. Identify VC infrastructure capabilities and vulnerabilities.
- h. Provide related information on VC infrastructure as required.

3. Methodology.

a. CICV/POLOB receives reports from more than twenty diverse sources, including the National Interrogation Center, the Combined Military Interrogation Center, the Office of Special Assistant, and the Provincial Interrogation Centers throughout South Vietnam. The latter, which are operated by the GVN National Police, provide many physical descriptions of low level VC political cadre. CICV/POLOB also receives a wide variety of Agent Reports through both military and civilian channels, as well as Rand Interviews, Rallier Reports, and other military field inputs such as INTSUMS, PERINTREPS, and Intelligence Estimates. These sources are augmented by field collection trips and CORRAL, a country-wide collection program that requires bimonthly reports on all aspects of the infrastructure from province intelligence advisors.

b. All input materials are read, analyzed, and topically indexed by intelligence analysts. Information is filed into the analysts' work-books by location and organization, using VC boundaries and place names rather than GVN boundaries and names.

ANNEX C: Responsibility and Functions of POLOB, SRA, CICV (Cont)

(1) Automated Data Processing (ADP): Data on infrastructure personalities is extracted for input into an automated infrastructure biographics format designed to accommodate a maximum of 50 specific categories of information and a remarks section. Some of the more important items included are:

- (a) Name (including diacritical marks when available).
- (b) Location by VC and GVN Sub-division.
- (c) Specific title, functional committee, and structural echelon.
- (d) Physical description when available.
- (e) Remarks:
 - 1. Aliases, pseudonyms and code names.
 - 2. Personal habits.
 - 3. Physical deformities.
 - 4. Family relations and residences.

(2) Line-and-block Charts: CICV/POLOB has models of "type" VC organizations for all echelons peculiar to each major VC area of SVN, as well as specific line and block charts down to district level for each actual organization, showing all identified functional elements.

(3) Maps and Overlays: CICV/POLOB can provide, on request, matching maps for any area of the country: one with VC place names and boundaries and one with GVN; or, we can furnish overlays showing VC place names and boundaries down to district level.

ANNEX D: How to Request Information from POLOB, SRA, CICV

1. CICV/POLOB can supply any of the information outlined in Para 2, ANNEX C, and will try to answer any other specific questions within the purview of its mission statement. For the next sixty days, however, some delay can be expected in response to requests for ADP printouts, due to a current consolidation and improvement of the data base and the installation of new equipment.

2. Requests for VC infrastructure information should contain the following in order to insure timely and accurate response:

a. Either the VC or GVN name of the area (district, province, village and hamlet).

b. A clear indication of whose terminology is used. (The VC and GVN use the same names for different areas.)

c. The four coordinates bracketing the area of interest.

3. Address all inquiries and requests to:

a. By letter:

U.S. Director, CICV

ATTN: OPERATIONS BRANCH

APO 96307

b. By message:

UUMSEF/MACJ281/CICV/TSN