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DATE / SUB-CAT.
1/77 - 604

THE VIETNAMESE NAVY: 1/77

NAVAL FORCES INTELLIGENCE STUDY (NAFIS) (U)

VIETNAM

DDI-1200-VM-77

Information Cutoff Date: 1 January 1977

This publication supersedes
Naval Forces Intelligence Study, 1 January 1976,
which should be destroyed

SHIP TYPES IN VIETNAM

FF	Frigate
PF	Patrol Frigate
PCE	Patrol Escort
PCL	Small Submarine Chaser
PTG	Missile Attack Boat
PT	Motor Torpedo Boat
PGM	Motor Gunboat
PB	Patrol Boat
ASPB	Assault Support Patrol Boat
PGR	River Gunboat
PBR	River/Roadstead Patrol Boat
MON	Assault River Monitor
MSB	Minesweeping Boat
MSL	Minesweeping Launch
LST	Tank Landing Ship
LSM	Medium Landing Ship
LFS	Amphibious Fire Support Ship
LSIL	Large Infantry Landing Ship
LCU	Utility Landing Craft
LCM	Mechanized Landing Craft
LCPR	Ramped Personnel Landing Craft
AGFL	Small Command Ship
YAG	Miscellaneous Service Craft
YFR	Refrigerated Lighter
YOG	Gasoline Lighter
YTL	Small Harbor Tug
YWN	Water Barge
AFDL	Small Auxiliary Floating Dry Dock
APL	Barracks Craft

NAVAL FORCES INTELLIGENCE STUDY

VIETNAM

1. GENERAL

(S/NOFORN) Prior to the fall of South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese (NVN) Navy consisted of 39 patrol craft plus the coastal junk/riverine force. The only offensive threat consisted of three Komar guided missile boats.

(S/NOFORN) The Vietnamese Navy, with the acquisition of non-evacuated former South Vietnamese assets, is now the largest navy in Southeast Asia.* The inventory includes 2 principal combatants, 182 patrol units, 50 amphibious warfare ships, 104 landing and 33 auxiliary service craft, plus the river patrol and coastal junk force of approximately 850 vessels. These figures are broad estimates due to insufficient data on the ability of the Vietnamese to repair and maintain former South Vietnamese Navy vessels. Reportedly, approximately one-third of the 182 patrol craft and one-fifth of the 850 river craft were sunk prior to the fall of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

(S/NOFORN) The General Directorate of Coastal Defense, established in 1955, formed the basis for the Navy Operational Command. From this modest beginning, a small naval branch evolved with a mission of patrolling coastal and inland waters; it performed the combined functions of a coast guard, fisheries patrol, and customs control. Since then, the Navy's functions have expanded into those of a coastal defense and surveillance force.

(S/NOFORN) The Naval Directorate is located at Hanoi, with Fleet Headquarters, which acts as Naval Headquarters, located at Haiphong. There are five Naval Region Headquarters, located at Haiphong, Vinh/Ben Thuy, Da Nang, Vung Tau, and Rach Gia. Principal naval bases are located at Haiphong, Saigon, Da Nang, Cam Ranh, Hon Gai, and Port Wallut. There are smaller installations known to be located at Quang Yen, Quang Khe, and Phuc Loi.

* Although Thailand has five more principal combatants, the Vietnamese Navy has considerably more patrol, mine, and auxiliary craft.

2. MISSIONS AND TASKS

(S) The Navy's mission is to provide for the defense and security of territorial waters. In addition to conducting riverine and harbor patrols and preventing unauthorized entries and exits, the Navy also is tasked to support Vietnam presence in islands claimed in the South China Sea.

3. ORGANIZATION

(S/NOFORN) The Navy is an integral branch of the Vietnamese military forces. The Commander of Naval Forces, who also heads the Navy Command at Hanoi, is directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff Directorate.

(S/NOFORN) The naval forces commander exercises direct control over all forces afloat and support facilities ashore. The elements afloat are organized into squadrons, divisions, and flotillas by type or functions. The submarine chasers, although designed primarily for antisubmarine warfare (ASW) operations, are organized as a single patrol squadron. As constituted, the Navy has little use for its ASW capabilities and presumably uses these ships to obtain greater patrol and surveillance range. Vietnam has no naval air arm; however, the Air Force has operated in a ship surveillance role in consonance with the Navy. There have been no indications to date that the Vietnamese Navy has absorbed elements of the former South Vietnamese Marine Corps.

(S/NOFORN) Within Naval Headquarters, there are naval staff, rear services, and political departments which receive operational direction from corresponding directorates of the High Command.

(S/NOFORN) The extent of command and control changes since the reunification of Vietnam is not known; however, the formation of two new flotillas headquartered at Saigon and Da Nang, respectively, indicates organizational changes to incorporate the assets in the south and to enhance the successful accomplishment of the Navy's expanded missions.

4. CAPABILITIES

a. General

(S/NOFORN) The Vietnamese Navy is capable of patrolling and defending coastal territorial waters against incursions by other Southeast Asian countries. It is also capable of modest offensive coastal operations. Within the deep water sphere, Vietnam is capable of maintaining a presence in the Spratly Islands -- at least during the present political environment. The discovery of oil in this area, however, would likely evoke greater determination from the other territorial claimants and severely test Vietnamese capabilities. To the north, the Navy is not capable of seriously challenging the Peoples Republic of China's acquisition of the Vietnamese-claimed Paracel Islands.

(S) Although Hanoi radio reported the successful repair of the two frigate/patrol frigate-size ships captured from the former South Vietnamese Navy, it is doubtful that the Vietnamese have the capability to maintain them fully operational.

(S/NOFORN) Fundamental to the capability of the Vietnamese Navy is the success of its effort to integrate the captured equipment into the Navy as well as recruit former RVN Navy personnel with the proper technical skills to operate and maintain the new assets. Reportedly, personnel of the former North Vietnamese Navy are receiving technical training under the instruction of former RVN Navy personnel.

(S) Capabilities will tend to be limited by dependence on the PRC and the USSR for equipment and the acquisition of repair/replacement parts for the captured equipment--possibly from European sources.

b. Amphibious Warfare

(S/NOFORN) The acquisition of nine former RVN major amphibious warfare ships and numerous lesser landing craft gives the Vietnamese Navy a modest amphibious warfare potential (simultaneous troop lift of approximately 6,000 troops) that can be realized with successful recruitment of former RVN naval personnel for operations and repair of these vessels. Amphibious operations against the Spratly Islands and Cambodia have given the Vietnamese an opportunity to test their amphibious doctrine and capabilities.

c. Antisubmarine Warfare

(S) Antisubmarine warfare capabilities, essentially nonexistent prior to the capture of former RVN equipment, are still negligible.

d. Mine Countermeasures

(S) The Vietnamese Navy can have a modest riverine mine clearing capability with the captured equipment, provided that the repair and personnel resources can be acquired.

e. Logistics

(S/NOFORN) The Vietnamese Navy must find a source for replacement parts and develop repair capability for the captured equipment. Efforts to acquire repair parts have already been reported, but to date there is no indication of much success.

(S) Other logistic factors are reliance upon the USSR and the PRC for equipment and repair of the vessels supplied by them.

(S/NOFORN) The capability to produce small patrol craft has been enhanced by the integration of the former RVN Navy shipyards into the Vietnamese shipbuilding industry; however, the necessity of importing all complex components makes the importation of complete units more practical.

5. PERSONNEL

a. General

(S) Physical and mental recruitment standards for the Vietnamese Navy have been higher than those for the Army but lower than that of the Air Force. Estimated Navy personnel strength is 3,000 with 1,700 serving afloat. The Navy has recruited an unknown number of former Republic of Vietnam (RVN) naval personnel.

b. (S) Key Personnel

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Chief, Naval Command Commander, Naval Forces	Ta Xuan <u>THU</u>	Major General
Chief of Navy Staff	Nguyen Ba <u>PHAT</u>	Senior Colonel
Chief, Rear Services	Tran Thanh <u>TU</u>	Colonel
Asst. Chief, Rear Services	Le Tha <u>CHUNG</u>	Colonel
	Nguyen Cong <u>TRONG</u>	Major

c. Procurement and Retention

(S) Recruits are assigned to the Navy without their cognizance and, after receiving specialized training, are usually assigned to a ship.

(S) In 1975, a small notice in the Saigon Liberation Daily encouraged former RVN Navy enlisted personnel and junior officers to volunteer for service in the new naval forces. The success of this recruitment campaign is not known.

d. Training

(S) Most of the naval schools are located in the Haiphong area. They include the officers' training school northeast of the city of Quang Yen and the Naval Recruit Training Center at Tien Yen, northwest of Van Hoa. Basic training, as well as political-military indoctrination courses, are also conducted at various camps in the Haiphong area. Former RVN naval training centers at Saigon, Cat Lai, Nha Trang, and Cam Ranh are being used.

(S) Generally, officer candidates receive 3 to 3 1/2 years of training. Courses are given in communications, gunnery and small arms, torpedo firing, navigation, sapper techniques (involving the emplacement of explosives), and diesel maintenance. Officers and petty officers have been sent for postgraduate work at naval training schools in the Peoples Republic of China and the USSR. All officer candidates must have at least a grammar school education. Instructors at the naval schools have been trained for extended periods in the USSR, Poland, East Germany, and the Peoples Republic of China.

(S) Basic training for enlisted personnel varies from 6 months to 1 year. Courses are similar to those for the officers, but the level of study is lower. Draftees selected for naval service must have at least 4 years of civilian schooling.

6. MOBILIZATION

(U) No information is available on Vietnamese Navy reserves.

7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

(S) In terms of future activity, the Vietnamese Navy will try to integrate the captured naval assets into a viable expanded naval force, recruit sufficient skilled personnel to operate this force, consolidate offshore acquisitions, and develop sufficient repair and supply resources to support the new naval force.

MERCHANT SHIP MILITARY ASSESSMENT

(C) The Vietnamese merchant fleet could provide modest logistics support and troop lift with its fleet of 61 ships, 26 of which are greater than 1,000 gross register tons (GRT). The 41 dry-cargo ships have a cargo capacity of about 76,000 deadweight tons (DWT). Of these, 17 units of 1,000 GRT and above are capable of extended international voyages. The remaining smaller ships are well suited to the needs of trading in the Southeast Asia area, being adaptable to small ports and shallow waters. There are nine Vietnamese tankers totaling 48,000 DWT and a combined capacity of about 324,000 barrels (U.S.) of petroleum and related products. Vietnam also owns a passenger ship with a capacity for 577 passengers and 120 vehicles.

(C) With the exception of one 18-knot passenger ship, all other Vietnamese ships operate at speeds between 10 and 17 knots. Three cargo ships have lift capabilities of 40 tons, and six cargo ships have a large hatch of greater than 15 meters.

(C) Vietnam owns five cargo ships, totaling 62,000 DWT, which are registered under the Panamanian flag and which are operated worldwide by Hong Kong shipping companies. There are an additional 150 small cargo and fishing trawlers of 100 GRT and less which operate locally and could supplement naval vessels as inshore patrol craft.

