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NEWSLETTER #5

VC POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGIC RESEARCH & ANALYSIS BRANCH

COMBINED INTELLIGENCE CENTER, VIETNAM

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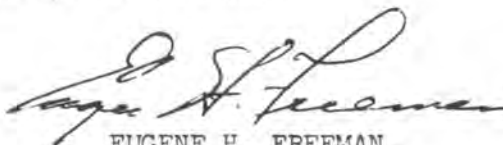
27 July 1968

SUBJECT: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastructure

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1. Forwarded for your information is the fifth newsletter of the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam, concerning VC political infrastructure.
2. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide the intelligence community with the latest trends, capabilities, and vulnerabilities of the VC political infrastructure. The ultimate goal is more effective and timely identification and neutralization of the enemy's infrastructure.
3. This issue contains two articles. The first article discusses the evolution and reorganization of Military Region 2 and the second deals with the VC's recent efforts to form popular alliances and liberation committees.
4. Subsequent newsletters will be published periodically as new information, trends, and developments warrant. Comments and additional information pertaining to the newsletters should be submitted to HQ MACV J2, ATTN: MACJ285.

FOR THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, INTELLIGENCE:



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1-H519

1-J520

1-K040

1-K110

1-K601

1-K655

1-N005

1-N100

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. DISCUSSION	1
A. Evolution of Military Region 2	1
B. Liberation Committees and the Third Front	2
ANNEX A: Vietnamese Inter-regions Created by the Viet Minh	
ANNEX B: VC Military Regions 2 and 3, Prior to October 1967	
ANNEX C: GVN Provinces of Military Region 2	
ANNEX D: VC Subregions Surrounding Saigon	

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VC POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

I. (C) INTRODUCTION.

A. This newsletter is the fifth in a series concerning VC Political Infrastructure. The purpose of these periodic newsletters is to provide various elements, particularly at the sector and subsector levels, with intelligence on the trends, strengths, organization, and vulnerabilities of the VC political apparatus.

B. This issue contains two articles. The first discusses the evolution and reorganization of Military Region (MR) 2, and the second deals with recent VC efforts to form popular alliances and liberation committees.

II. (C) DISCUSSION.

A. Evolution of Military Region 2.

1. History.

a. Vietnam has historically been divided into three areas: North Vietnam (Bac Bo), Central Vietnam (Trung Bo), and South Vietnam (Nam Bo). In March 1948 the Viet Minh, the predecessors of the Viet Cong (VC), subdivided Vietnam into six inter-regions: I, II, and III in Bac Bo; IV and V in Trung Bo; and VI in Nam Bo. A map showing these inter-regions is located at Annex A. The inter-regions were later reorganized into regions and numbered 1 through 9. Region 8 was the forerunner of the current MR 2.

b. From 1948 to 1963 Region 8 consisted of four provinces: Go Cong; My Tho, including parts of present Kien Tuong and Kien Phong Provinces; Long Xuyen, including parts of present Kien Phong Province; and Tan An, including part of present Kien Tuong Province.

c. In May 1963 Region 8 was redesignated MR 2. As of October 1967, the VC provinces comprising MR 2 were Long An, My Tho, Ben Tre, Kien Tuong, Kien Phong, and An Giang. A map showing the VC provinces of MR 2 is located at Annex B. The GVN provinces entirely or partially within MR 2 were: Go Cong, Hau Nghia, Dinh Tuong, Kien Hoa, Kien Tuong, Kien Phong, An Giang, Chau Doc, and Kien Giang. A map showing the GVN provinces of MR 2 is located at Annex C.

2. Reorganization subsequent to October 1967.

a. To facilitate their attacks on Saigon, the VC reorganized the political subdivisions surrounding the capital, including those of MR 2, into subregions under the direct control of COSVN. Each subregion formed a tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) as well as a political subdivision.

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A map showing these subregions is located at Annex D. As a result, the following important organizational changes were concurrently made in MR 2:

(1) VC Long An Province was divided into two subregions. The southern portion became Subregion 3, connecting Saigon with the Delta. Northern Long An became Subregion 2, connecting Saigon with the VC supply base in the Cambodian border area. Thus, the division of VC Long An Province gave the VC two access corridors to Saigon: one from Cambodia and the other from the Delta.

(2) VC Chau Thanh District was transferred to VC My Tho Province. Because of the increased tactical demands of the offensive against Saigon, Subregion 3 could not provide adequate support for VC activities in Chau Thanh District, which included Tan An City, the capital of GVN Long An Province. Therefore, the VC My Tho Province Committee absorbed this responsibility.

(3) VC Go Cong Province was created from the eastern part of VC My Tho Province. This reorganization was an attempt to relieve VC My Tho Province of the burden of administering three large cities -- My Tho, Tan An, and Go Cong. Generally, the boundaries of VC Go Cong Province appear to coincide with those of GVN Go Cong Province. (See Annex B.)

b. Two other territorial changes, which are apparently unrelated to the attacks on Saigon, have taken place within MR 2:

(1) VC Ha Tien District, formerly located in VC An Giang Province in western MR 2, was annexed by Rach Gia Province of MR 3 (see Annex B). This annexation gave MR 3 complete control of the VC supply routes which cross Ha Tien and pass through the Tram Forest to MR 3 supply areas in central and southern VC Ca Mau Province.

(2) VC Hong Ngu District, the northernmost district of VC Kien Phong Province, was reportedly divided into two smaller districts. The reason for this division and the names of the new districts are not yet known (see Annex B).

3. Conclusion. The evolution of MR 2 is illustrative of the extreme flexibility of the VC infrastructure. The VC are able to tailor the boundaries of their political subdivisions to meet tactical and organizational requirements. The dissolution of a province-level organization in MR 2 and the establishment of Subregions 2 and 3 are examples of this flexibility.

B. Liberation Committees and the Third Front.

1. General. In his unrelenting attempts to dominate and win the crucial political struggle for South Vietnam, the enemy is constantly

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modifying and refining his basic strategy. Recently, he has been attempting to evolve a dual political apparatus at the local and national levels. This evolution involves the creation of Liberation Committees at the local levels and, simultaneously, the creation of central coalitions at the top. The central coalitions are broadly termed alliances. The Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces is the most important. These alliances are intended to give the impression that a legitimate revolutionary uprising against the GVN is underway. They are designed to provide a new and ostensibly non-Communist rallying point for political support, the ultimate objective being to establish an organization with which the GVN could negotiate, and which would be prepared to participate in a coalition government.

2. Enemy Emphasis on Liberation Committees.

a. Recent enemy emphasis on liberation committees and elections at the village and hamlet levels is not a political innovation. Rather, it is reminiscent of the days when the Viet Minh were confronted with the Japanese and French. The Viet Minh, sensing the general unrest of the majority of the population under both the French and Japanese occupations, began a national salvation movement by instituting Revolutionary People's Committees, Revolutionary Workers Committees, Local Liberation Committees, and Viet Nam Liberation Committees. These transitory political organizations mobilized the masses and provided a pseudo-governmental means by which the people could participate in the revolutionary struggle. The use of these committees as springboards for transition from Japanese and French control to the democratic republic regime in the North was an extremely interesting characteristic of the Communist tactics during the Viet Minh insurrection.

b. Similar VC tactics and committees began to appear in South Vietnam in 1964 and 1965. The committees were established under a variety of names: however, the best known was the Autonomous Administrative Committee. The creation of Autonomous Administrative Committees was often accompanied by elections held to sanction appointments made by the Communists, thus providing legitimacy to the filling of key positions with members of the People's Revolutionary Party (PPP). Liberation Committees were established. The creation of these committees was accompanied by the election of an even larger legislative Liberation Council. With the election of these Liberation Councils, the enemy established the nucleus of a political organization in the South which essentially paralleled the existing administration of the government of North Vietnam. By 1966, however, this program began to lose impetus because of increased Allied support of the GVN and increased militarization of the insurgency. The enemy was forced to concentrate on the military portion of his three-pronged attack (military, political, and proselyting).

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c. The 1968 Winter-Spring Campaign, however, generated renewed enemy emphasis on liberation committees and elections at lower echelons. This is probably the result of the enemy's belief that his military effort is failing, and that the political struggle is the only way to victory. He has intensified his efforts to topple the "puppet regime" and to create a political vacuum to be filled by the ostensibly non-aligned committees and alliances. The following are examples of the enemy's tactics and progress made in achieving his objectives:

(1) Prior to Phase One of the General Offensive:

(a) A district level PRP cadre member captured in Long An Province in November 1967 stated that village liberation committees were to be established before the end of January 1968. These committees were to be elected by the people in all villages where the VC control two-thirds of the people or the area. In contested areas, or areas under Government of Vietnam control, VC cadre who had a good relationship with the people were to be appointed to establish village liberation committees at all levels (the district and provincial committees to be established during the second phase of the Winter-Spring Campaign) and to form a VC governmental structure which administratively paralleled the governmental structure of the GVN. These liberation committees would act as the governing body at all levels in the event that a coalition government were formed. If a coalition government were not forthcoming, the liberation committees would strive to incite the people to join in a general uprising against the GVN.

(b) Numerous reports received before Phase One of the General Offensive also focused attention on the formation of revolutionary committees. One directive designated "Flash/Top Secret" stated that preparations must be made for village elections to be held throughout liberated areas. These large-scale political campaigns are designed to bolster the revolutionary cause and promote enthusiasm.

(2) After Phase One of the General Offensive:

(a) A highly significant COSVN directive dated 5 March 1968 discussed the immediate build-up and development of village liberation committees. The COSVN Current Affairs Committee ordered that the directive be sent to the village level for careful study. The directive precisely explained the purposes, organization, duty assignments, tasks, and work regulations of the liberation committees at village and hamlet levels. It emphasized that the apparatus COSVN was attempting to institute would be a "fighting" machine as well as an administrative machine. The liberation committees were requested to initiate a program of ideological and political indoctrination which would strengthen the VC cause in rural areas. The committees were to encourage guerrilla warfare in an attempt to defeat the enemy, to enlarge and protect the liberated areas, and to control the rural areas. The committees were also encouraged to improve the health and educational standards of the people.

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(b) The COSVN directive also called for election of Village People's Liberation Councils. In areas where the people could not be organized for such elections, a council would be instituted. The councils were to consist of representatives from the various people's groups and from guerrilla and militia organizations and were to establish Permanent Council Sections which would supervise the execution of the council's decisions. Further, the councils were to elect Village People's Liberation Committees from among the members of the councils. These committees were to be the action agencies that executed the orders of the council sections and reported achievements in the villages and hamlets. The committees were also required to select people from the membership of hamlet committees to serve on Hamlet Liberation Sections. The task of these sections was the regular reporting of hamlet activities to the Village Liberation Committee.

(c) Additional insight into the enemy's tactics can be gained by considering enemy propaganda after Phase One of the General Offensive. It included numerous references to various organizations reportedly created as rallying points for those dissatisfied with the GVN. The main propaganda themes of the organizations were that they did in fact exist, and that they were exercising administrative control over large areas of South Vietnam. These revolutionary administrations, the enemy said, would soon merge into a single organization to administer South Vietnam and to eventually negotiate with the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN). On 9 April 1968 Liberation Radio announced that the administrations had been greatly extended since the beginning of the general uprising. The commentary stated that in 45 days, 1.6 million people and 600 villages had been liberated, and numerous administrations had been established. For the most part, however, these organizations were "shadow" entities which did not actually exist.

(d) As opposed to "shadow" entities, some Village Liberation Committees began to appear late in April and in early May 1968, when the enemy began to implement the COSVN directive that such committees be established. The timing and intensity of the effort suggests association with the anticipated peace talks between the US and North Vietnam. The enemy's political strategists were striving to establish organizations which could play a role in any local negotiations in lieu of the NFLSVN, which many leading GVN political figures had vowed not to recognize. The following are a few reported examples, by corps areas, of the efforts and successes the enemy has made in establishing the committees throughout South Vietnam:

1 I CTZ. A directive dated 6 February, captured in Quang Nam Province, urged the development of Party organizations and the activation of people's administrations in such villages as Dien Minh and Chau Lap. A captured notebook also contained comments indicating that the Quang Ngai organization should conduct elections of "People's Autonomous Committees." Autonomous administrative committees have been formed in 60% of the VC-controlled hamlets and villages in Quang Ngai. Despite these

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reports, captured documents from I CTZ indicate the VC have apparently been more intent on establishing high-level organizations referred to as the Front of National, Democratic, and Peace Alliance and the Thua - Thien - Hue People's Revolutionary Committee.

2 II CTZ. As of late May there were few indications from II CTZ of successful enemy attempts to create liberation committees. In early June, however, unproven sources reported the successful establishment of committees in Binh Thuan and Binh Dinh Provinces. According to these reports, the VC have been completely effective in creating the committees in VC Hong Phong District and have established committees in a total of eight villages in VC Thuan Phou and VC Nam Thuan Districts.

3 III CTZ. The enemy's political campaign has had only limited success in III CTZ. There have been only two reported VC attempts to organize liberation committees in Hau Nghia Province - one in Duc Hue District and another in Cu Chi District. Reports of actual elections of members to liberation committees have come from Gia Dinh and Long An Provinces. In Tay Ninh and Binh Duong the enemy has reportedly established People's Revolutionary Committees at the district and province levels.

4 IV CTZ. Enemy activity in establishing liberation committees is greatest in IV CTZ. Although most reports discuss VC plans for setting up committees, several elections have been held. The VC have been particularly active in An Xuyen Province, where elections for People's Liberation Councils were held in Tan Hung and Phong Lac Village on or about 20 May. The election in Tan Hung Village, however, did not go well. Although they were closely watched by hamlet VC security cadre members, about 40 people in the village protested the election by casting blank ballots. The election of a six-member People's Council in Tan Loc Village on 28 April was also reported. Elections have also been held in Phong Dinh, Bac Lieu, and Kien Hoa Provinces, and plans for elections of liberation committees have been reported for Go Cong, Kien Phong, Sa Dec, Ba Xuyen, and Chau Doc Provinces. Kien Giang Province, supposedly the VC testing area for the committees, has not reported any significant activity.

(3) In summary, the VC have generally met with only limited success in establishing liberation committees. The enemy has been confronted with public apathy and disinterest. His attempts have shown little unity of purpose, little evidence of tight control, and in some cases have even caused confusion among the cadre. It should be noted, however, that the enemy's organizational capability could be more successful under a different set of circumstances, such as a cease-fire. The absence of any meaningful successes will not inhibit the enemy's falsely propagandizing great gains to the world.

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3. The New Front -- Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces.

a. The new alliances which appeared in enemy propaganda at the time of Phase One of the General Offensive are an integral part of the Communist strategy to create a "neutralist coalition" government to facilitate the takeover of South Vietnam. The strategy was apparently designed to muster increased support by emphasizing the themes of peace, war weariness, anti-Americanism, opposition to the GVN, and neutrality, all in the name of the new non-Communist organizations ostensibly untainted by links with the Liberation Front.

b. Of the alliances formed to date, the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces has generated the most interest.

(1) The birth of this alliance was described by Liberation Radio in an April communique which stated that aspirations for independence and peace had become increasingly pressing. The struggle movement of city people's strata had mounted higher and higher harmony with the repeated victories of rural compatriots. Intellectuals, students, writers, journalists, teachers, civil servants, private enterprise employees, businessmen, and others of various political parties and tendencies, and increasingly large numbers of political and cultural organizations had joined the anti-American movement and those movements struggling for peace, independence, sovereignty, and democracy. From these struggle movements had gradually emerged a political front called the Vietnam Alliance of Nationalist, Democratic, and Peace Forces.

(2) The alliance's action program, as outlined in the Liberation Radio communique, was to put an end to the war, restore peace, achieve national independence and sovereignty, build South Vietnam into an independent, free, peaceful, neutral, and prosperous nation, and advance toward unifying the country peacefully on the basis of equal discussions between North and South.

(3) A later broadcast reported that a conference had been held on the 20th and 21st of April near Saigon - Cholon at which the alliance elected a central committee (whose members are overtly non-Communist) and adopted an official flag and anthem. A formal organizational shell was thereby created with the hope that it would eventually become operational. A national salvation appeal, which was passed by the conference, outlined a political program designed to have the broadest possible attractions. Significantly, the program paralleled much of the one adopted by the NFLSVN last August.

c. It is obvious that the newly formed alliance is a transparent creation of NFLSVN, or as some have called it, a disguise of NFLSVN. The alliance can properly be compared to a branch element of NFLSVN established to attract those people who are more moderate than NFLSVN members,

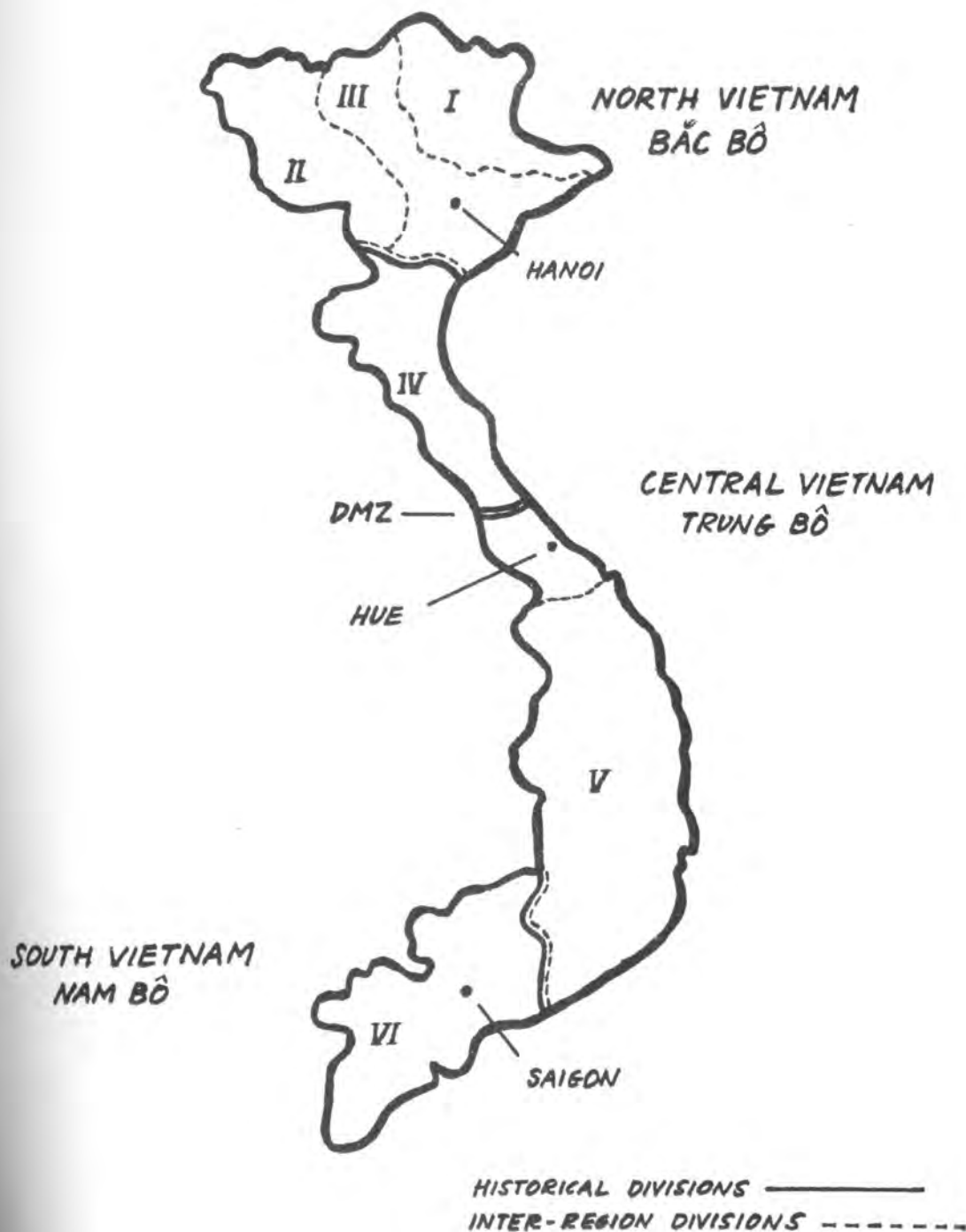
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but who are anti-Thieu, anti-American, and pro-peace. Consequently, the alliance's stated goal of establishing a "revolutionary government" must be viewed in its long-term context.

d. Although the alliance has not yet made any significant impact on the political situation in South Vietnam, it is still too early to completely discount its importance. The Communists may be able, over a period of time, to provide the alliance with an aura of real political significance. They will certainly continue to attempt to build the alliance into an identifiable entity, independent of the NLFVN and with its own political base. In any event, the strategy of the alliance will be dictated primarily by Communist assessment of the military and political situations.

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ANNEX A: Vietnamese Inter-regions Created by the Viet Minh



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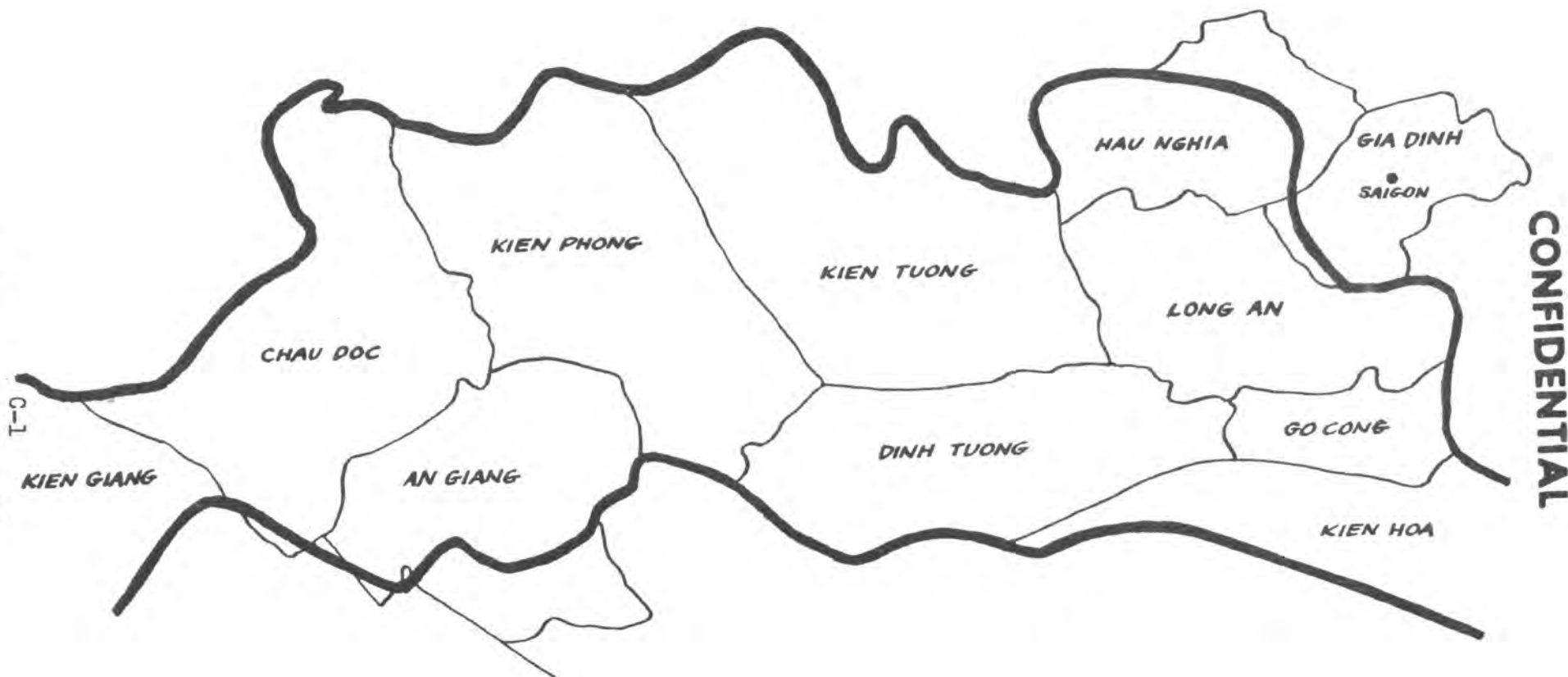
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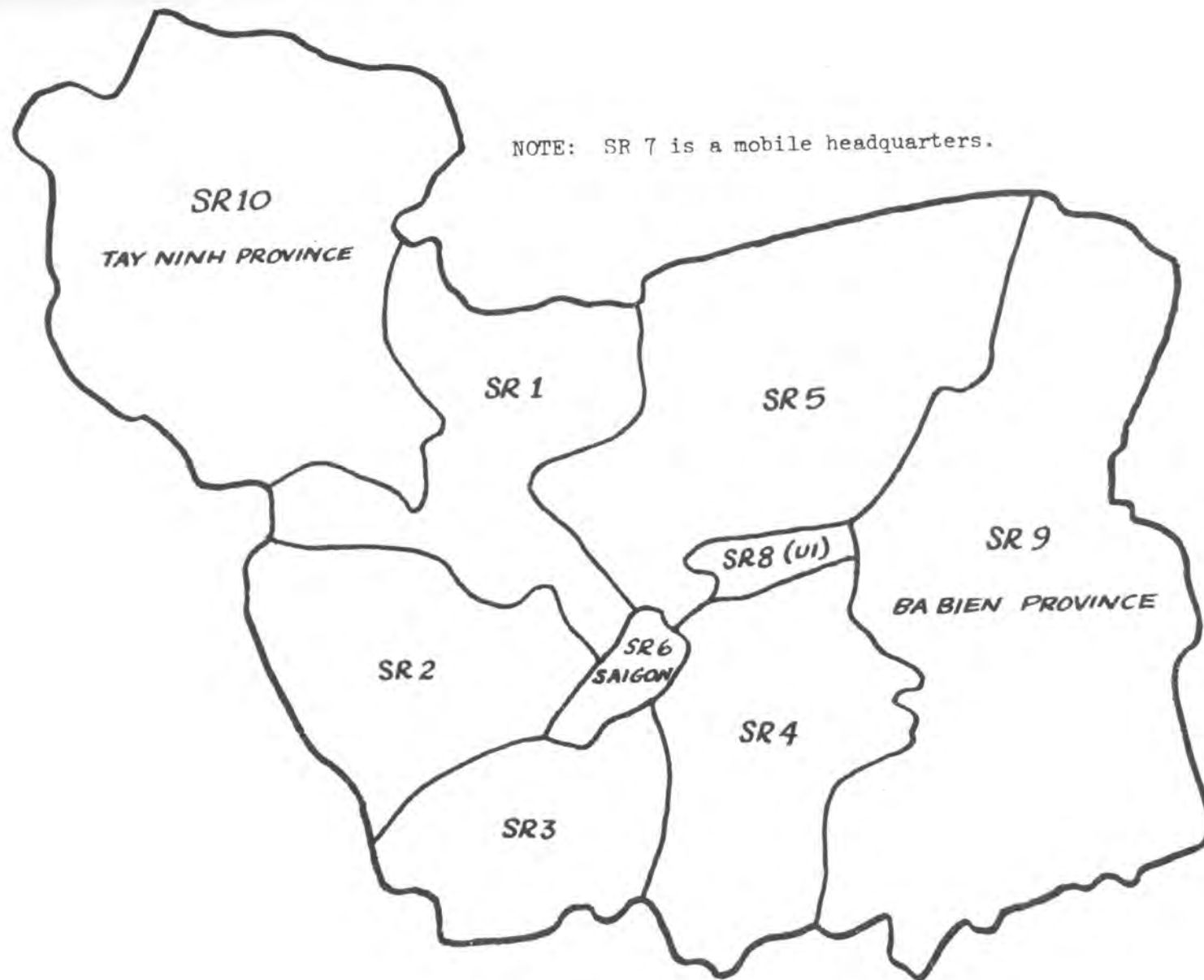
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