



Gia Dinh

EMBASSY
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

See the Infrastructure

Saigon, Vietnam

OFFICE OF CIVIL OPERATIONS

WORKING PAPERS

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May 24, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Ambassador Komer

SUBJECT : Binh Chanh

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On May 18, you charged us with producing a comprehensive study of Binh Chanh District, Gia Dinh, with specific attention to the effort against the VC infrastructure.

Our report on Binh Chanh is attached. It does not make pretty reading, for the situation there is unusually bad, and the VC, despite the improvement in security that has accompanied Operation Fairfax, have not been badly hurt. Moreover, the recommended solutions outlined in Part IV of the report will have limited impact as long as Captain Nguyen Nghiem Ton, who is unanimously regarded as inadequate, remains District Chief. Yet because he is General Loan's man, he may prove impossible to dislodge until after the presidential elections.

The most obvious actions that would improve the situation are on the American side, and can be taken immediately, particularly in light of the reorganization of the U.S. Mission.

Individually, the American advisors and commanders with whom we talked were cooperative, candid, usually intelligent, and anxious to help. But the systems under which they are now forced to function seem to work against the kind of teamwork required. It must be overhauled before we can start to tell the Vietnamese how to run and win their own war.

Our particular thanks goes to Brigadier General John Freund, CG of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade; Richard Kaegi, OCO Representative, Gia Dinh; Major George Kantor and Captain Joe Jones, Sub-Sector Advisory Team, Binh Chanh; Michael Cook, OCO/Binh Chanh; Lt. Colonel Ross and Major Richard Garner, CO and EXEC, respectively, of the 3/7 199th; Captain Willis, CO, Alpha Company, 3/7; Jerry Averill, OCO/Cadre, Gia Dinh; Ed Boelte, OSA/Gia Dinh; Richard Wall, OCO/RDW, Region III; John Vann, Director, Region III; several members of the advisory group at CT-IV; and Nelson Brickham, OCO/RDW.

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Ambassador Komer

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Our special thanks to Frank Scotton, who made some independent field trips to Binh Chanh, along with the OCO survey cadre, to give us a different insight on the area.

While onward distribution of this report is entirely up to you, we believe that Part I and Part III can receive maximum distribution to all people involved in Binh Chanh, and that Part II and Part IV (Infrastructure and Recommendations) can receive a fairly wide distribution, including Mr. Hart, General McChristian, General Freund, Mr. Lathram, Lew Lapham, Nelson Brickham, and Arch Calhoun. You may wish to send a copy to Ambassador Bunker and General Westmoreland; we certainly hope this is possible. Beyond that, Holbrooke will take a copy back to Washington to add to his files.

Burnham remains the reigning expert on the horrors of Binh Chanh. His knowledge should be used to get something better going in that critical district.

Attachment



Richard Burnham



Richard Holbrooke

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PART I - BINH CHANH, Gia Dinh

When the Americans began their first "top priority" effort in the area surrounding Saigon in the late summer of 1964, a high-ranking member of the U.S. Mission visited us at the Hop Tac headquarters, from which the effort was to be directed, and, pointing to Binh Chanh District just south of Saigon, he said, "This is where we start. If we can't win here, we can't win."

What none of us appreciated then -- and what the Vietnamese, who knew better than we did, never bothered to tell us -- was that Binh Chanh was an unusually tough area, a historic Viet Minh base which had resisted the French, received an award from Ho Chi Minh in 1954 for its efforts, and an area in which, as a senior Vietnamese intelligence officer put it, "the people are intoxicated with communism." Not knowing the problem very well, we embarked on the Hop Tac campaign, receiving very little support from the GVN as we did so.

Each initiative in the area was painful and unproductive. It took one full year for the American advisors to force the ARVN to go into the pineapple groves for the first time -- although intelligence proved that the large pineapple area on the Gia Dinh-Long An-Hau Nghia border was a permanent VC base, the nearest one to Saigon. Even when the operation was finally mounted, it was a half-hearted affair, with higher headquarters reluctantly lending their battalions to a short operation which was compromised long in advance and had small results.

Even more frustrating, but revealing of one of the major problems in the Gia Dinh area, was the first operation of Hop Tac, which began on

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September 12, 1964, and ended quite unexpectedly when the main elements of the ARVN force suddenly turned away from their operations area and drove into the heart of Saigon to participate in an abortive coup d'etat against the government of Nguyen Khanh. While this never quite happened again, it is clear that in the Saigon area more than any other area in Vietnam, troop commanders and chains of command are a function of the balance of political power within the RVNAF. Recently, some observers have said that they feel that this is an outdated fact, and that with the growing stability of the government the political factor in Gia Dinh commands has been reduced, if not eliminated. This is unfortunately premature and wishful thinking, as an examination of the commands and commanders in the area will show (see below).

As American efforts went on in the Hop Tac area, the general security situation was believed at first to be improving. Indeed, it was said in 1965 that Hop Tac had averted a siege of Saigon. This may have been true, but by late 1965 and early 1966 the Viet Cong, under increasing pressure throughout those areas of Vietnam where American troops were chasing them, made a decision to build up their forces in the area surrounding Saigon. The obvious starting point for such efforts was Binh Chanh, and all through 1966 the already poor security of Binh Chanh deteriorated as the VC moved through the area with increasing impunity. By the fall of 1966 the district was demoralized, virtually VC-controlled, and the approaches to the western and southwestern side of Saigon were open. The VC over-ran a police station on the edge of Saigon. The largest number of anti-election incidents in the whole country took place in Binh Chanh on September 11, 1966. The Vietnamese forces were dropping in strength, with RF companies at about 65 men each, the PF running about 21 men per platoon, and the cadre in total

disarray. The VC over-ran and destroyed bridges and outposts in the southern part of Binh Chanh, cutting roads to Long An.

To meet the growing threat, MACV and the JGS began Operation Fairfax/Rang Dong in December 1966, a combined US and Vietnamese operation in the entire Gia Dinh area. Three US battalions were committed to Fairfax -- one in Thu Duc, one in Nha Be, and one in Binh Chanh, and three ARVN battalions. Fairfax was originally scheduled to last two months.

Security in Gia Dinh improved rapidly, particularly at first. Roads were reopened, bridges rebuilt, outposts re-established. The VC were caught off balance and when they fought they got hurt. After they realized this, they pulled back out of the area, and for the first time in over a year, the GVN and the people could feel that there was a future for the area -- if the troops stayed.

In Binh Chanh the improvement was dramatic. With the commitment of one US battalion (first the 4/9 of the 25th Division, now the 3/7 of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade) and a Ranger Battalion, the area around Binh Chanh district town, which was being mortared regularly, became more secure. Route 4, which had never been closed, was now almost free of incidents. A small road linking Route 4 and Route 5A was opened. The road to Rach Kien in Long An was opened. The general level of violence in Binh Chanh was reduced. Viet Cong were killed in operations ranging from brigade-sized sweeps in the pineapples (at last!) to three-man ambushes set throughout the area.

But when it came time to remove the battalions of Fairfax and move on, leaving the remaining task to the GVN, MACV correctly decided that it could not do so without once again inviting a VC resurgence. Nothing permanent had been built in the area, RF companies still were at about 65 men each,

the VC infrastructure had not been damaged. If the Americans left, said the Vietnamese officer in charge of intelligence for CT-IV, "the VC will attack Saigon within a week."

The Americans stayed, and twice the conclusion date for Fairfax has been postponed. It will now continue until at least after the GVN elections scheduled for this fall. Moreover, no one -- neither American nor Vietnamese -- working in the area, believes that the US troops will leave even then. The people working in Binh Chanh have already come to depend on the US troops, so that life without them seems inconceivable, and of course, highly dangerous. Indeed, many Vietnamese-Americans think that the area needs more US troops, and by now the 199th Light Infantry Brigade has reduced the TAOR of the 3/7 and enlarged the TAOR of the 2/3 to include not only Nha B_e, but also the eastern part of Binh Chanh.

The commitment in Binh Chanh (and as a matter of fact in all of Gia Dinh) may thus turn out to be far greater and longer than anyone originally intended. But as long as the VC infrastructure remains virtually intact (see below) the US troops will have to stay, not as pacifiers, not as genuine search-and-destroy troops (a few forays into the pineapples notwithstanding) but primarily as defensive troops guarding the GVN strongpoints in the district. The defensive nature of their mission may be obscured by the impressive aggressiveness with which they approach their task -- laying, for example, dozens of ambushes each night -- but the US troops are basically deployed against an enemy which is rarely there, except with mines and booby traps and secret agents. As long as US troops remain, the VC will probably have to stay submerged, waiting for the day when we leave. And unless something is done now against those submerged VC, they will be ready to move against the GVN the first chance they get. Meanwhile they continue to collect taxes,

recruit, observe the US troops, and inflict a shockingly high casualty rate on the Americans with mines and booby traps. The answer to the VC in Binh Chanh is not more US troops, regardless of the wishes of those on the ground; it is an intensive campaign against the shadow VC government (infrastructure) that is still in Binh Chanh.

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PART II - THAT INFRASTRUCTURE: The Failure to Destroy

If it is fair to say that American troops have brought temporary security to Binh Chanh and offered the GVN an opportunity to destroy to VC infrastructure and build a strong village/hamlet government (see following section) in its place, it is equally clear that the GVN has not made any significant effort to capitalize on the opportunity. It is this -- the lack of a serious GVN effort against the underground government of Binh Chanh -- that struck us as the first failure of the effort in Binh Chanh. Moreover, confusion and lack of cooperation among the Americans working in the area has compounded the confusion and reduced the chances for corrective action by the GVN.

"The VC have effectively controlled the village and hamlet administration within Binh Chanh for over a year," wrote John Paul Vann and his excellent staff officer on May 22. "The series of small canals and waterways which exist enable the VC to move freely between Binh Chanh and Nha Be, and thus escape forces deployed against them. VC can always slip south into Long An at any time they are threatened by enemy forces, and can return at will, once those forces have been withdrawn.

"GVN forces within Binh Chanh are for the most part made up of RF and PF, and are located in static posts which the VC have pinpointed, and against which the VC throw just enough military effort to keep the GVN forces safely inside the posts, allowing the VC to move freely, even during daylight hours.

"In the Da Phuoc area, a large village composed of many hamlets, there is no stable GVN structure. The people have been exposed to the VC victory over the RDC Group at An Phu, the withdrawal of the RD Cadre by the Province

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Chief, the eventual return of a thoroughly dispirited and frightened Group. The Group has done nothing to help the people in over a month. Da Phuoc is typical of most of the villages in southern Binh Chanh District.

"The VC infrastructure in Binh Chanh has been in position long enough, and is well organized enough to withstand any number of military sweeps throughout the area. The favorite tactic displayed so far by the VC, is to remain just outside any village or hamlet held by GVN or US forces, and when these units are withdrawn, to move back into the hamlets the very day of the movement."

While everyone agrees that the infrastructure is the problem now in Binh Chanh, no one seems to do anything systematic and thorough about it. There is no force in the area except a poor and ineffective 21-man PRU which is targetted full time against the VC infrastructure. The PRU's do not have much to show for their efforts, however. Moreover, in a classic case of poor coordination within the US Mission, the case officer in Gia Dinh has not bothered to tell the sub-sector advisor, the OCO district representative, or the 3/7 commander exactly who those "black-pyjamas with weapons wandering around about 4,000 meters from here" are. The case officer says that Captain Nguyen Nghiem Ton, the district chief, knows where the PRU's are, and even controls them, but there is nothing to prevent the US troops from calling down air or artillery on the PRU's at any time. (As a matter of fact, this possibility was raised by members of the 3/7 staff, and they are absolutely right.) Even the danger of ground contact between US troops and the PRU cannot be ruled out, although so far the only fire fight the PRU's have engaged in has been with the RD Cadre.

Beyond the PRU's, whom the case officer candidly admits have not accomplished much exploitation of anti-infrastructure intelligence is a somewhat haphazard thing. The US unit is quite happy to go after a VC guerrilla or political cadre if they get information about him, but this is a role generally ill-suited to American troops, as the Cordon and Search operations described below show. (Despite this difficulty, a platoon leader in Alpha Company tells of surprising two VC tax collectors last week, and killing one. This small achievement was not based, however, on intelligence, but came during a routine small unit patrol within sight of the company CP.)

The other forces in the area, all under different chains of command, also fail to concentrate on the VC political structure. RF and PF are guarding fixed points. Police are not up to the job. One-third of the Police Field Force, in a major misdeployment, are guarding the Mobile Interrogation Center at district headquarters. Some of the others operate regularly with combined US/Vietnamese companies deployed in Binh Chanh. The 703d PFF Company does not, however, participate in major Cordon and Search operations designed to eliminate VC elements. For these operations, which are organized by the 199th Brigade Headquarters, units of General Loan's Order Control Police are detached directly from Saigon for each individual mission. These operations have not generally been successful. The blacklists produced by CHV have proven inadequate, both being outdated, and unable to bridge the gap between name or alias, and physical identification. The few identification successes have occurred when a prisoner of

war or Hoi Chanh (returnee) has directly fingered an individual as Viet Cong. The MSS Chief, Captain Tam, suggests that if operations were derived directly from the intelligence he provides, they would be more successful than the 199th's Cordon and Search operations.

Thus, no one is fighting the VC where they are strongest in Binh Chanh. But it must also be pointed out that almost no information of exploitable value is yet being collected there. Here again, distrust between intelligence units and a corresponding lack of coordination the US side combine to make the outlook bleak.

There are at least five intelligence nets in Binh Chanh. On the Vietnamese side, they are jealously guarded by each operating agency, which is a traditional Vietnamese approach to intelligence. Less excusable is the fact that on the American side, compartmentalization is also preventing the most effective collation and exploitation of intelligence. In theory, this problem, long recognized by the American intelligence community, was to be overcome by the combined US-GVN CT-IV, a collation center for entire Viet Cong Military Region IV, with Major Nguyen van Mau, General Loan's personal

agent, in charge for the GVN, assisted by a joint MACV/OSA advisory effort. Unfortunately, CT-IV is cut off from the levels at which intelligence could be effectively exploited. Its advisors are not at all sure they receive all the information produced by the various intelligence agencies in the area, and CT-IV has so far proved to be too remote from the chain of command to be useful. Moreover, the American advisors are cut off from the normal MACV and OSA chains of command and often find it difficult to establish continuing institutionalized contact. This is unfortunate, for the Americans at CT-IV are a talented group, ready to assist the advisors in the chain of command. At this time, however, they do not work closely enough with the Special Branch advisors or the MACV advisory teams.

The agent nets in Binh Chanh, according to Major Mau, are "worthless." "Our agents in Binh Chanh are dishonest," Mau says. "The people are VC because of their mind, not because of the strength of VC weapons, and our intelligence is poor." In contrast, Major Mau says that Nha Be has a good intelligence net.

The nets, with a short comment:

1. Police Special Branch net -- the OSA Provincial Special Branch Police Advisor said there were only six PSB officers in Binh Chanh, a ratio of less than one/10,000 population. (Binh Chanh has close to 70,000 people.) The PSB runs a net consisting of five informants and 15 "sympathizers." The information they produce is not very useful.

2. District Chief net -- The S-2 of the district (sub-sector) runs a 12-man net. In this net he ^{is} assisted by the assistant sub-sector advisor,

a captain who is also responsible for RF/PF advice, and general support of his boss.* The value of this net is also considered low. The OSA case officer in Gia Dinh does not know about this net, he says.

3. Census-Grievance Cadre -- OSA case officer says that a 25-man net operates in Binh Chanh, reporting directly to province. When they have tactical information they give it to district. However, Lieutenant Linh, the S-2, says he never gets any intelligence from the CG cadre, that he sees them occasionally but does not know how many there are. Linh has never met, to his knowledge, the OSA cadre-PRU-GC officer.

4. PRU's -- OSA says that there are 21 men in the PRU and that while they are in Binh Chanh sub-sector (they move across district boundaries) they are under the district chief's control. However, Lieutenant Linh says that he knows of only seven members of the PRU, which sub-sector does control. He says they are worthless, and as of May 23 they were in jail, following their drunken attack on the RD Team. As previously mentioned, the PRU are a mystery to the Americans on the ground in Binh Chanh.

5. MSS -- MSS has a full-time representative in Binh Chanh, Captain Tam. He is not under the command of the district chief, although the district chief is also an MSS officer. He controls five MSS, plus 21 trainees from Special Police/Saigon who rotate every 15 days. He also

* A word about the sub-sector team: At the present time it is one of the stronger teams we have visited in Vietnam. Major George Kantor, the sub-sector advisor, and his assistant, Captain Jones, are both excellent, handle themselves well with the Vietnamese, and understand the nature of Binh Chanh's problems. They are supported by Michael Cook, one of the best young officers from OCO. All of them are overworked.

has some control over the 703d PFF Company, about 60 men, of whom 15 guard his installation, 15 were at the Police Station on May 24, and 20 were at the Ranger HQ. The MSS net consists of 29 agents. While everyone assumes that MSS does have a net, there is no detailed knowledge of the net in the sub-sector team, nor with the OSA officers at Gia Dinh.

In addition, there is a good possibility that if the 3/7 remains long enough in Binh Chanh, they will develop a unilateral net. The 23rd Rangers also run a net, in the opinion of Captain Tam.

Coordination between these nets is effected primarily through a meeting that is supposed to be held daily, attended by the district S-2, the assistant sub-sector advisor, the MSS officer and his advisor (not part of the sub-sector team), a US Army MI officer who works at Mobile Interrogation Center, and the battalion intelligence officer. This meeting is clearly not enough; what is needed is a single American charged with responsibility for pulling the entire intelligence effort together. (See recommendations)

While we understand the political and historic reason for the split intelligence channels on the Vietnamese side, there seems to be no valid reason for the kind of split chains of command which exist in this field on the US side. Here is an area in which a tightly-organized US effort, with total lateral exchange of information and a unified chain of command, would go a long way towards reducing the damage done by the Vietnamese system. Instead, we have duplicated the Vietnamese system and sometimes gone further. For example, since the MSS chief in Binh Chanh is not under the district chief, the American advisor to the MSS chief is also independent of the sub-sector advisory team. He is a competent professional intelligence officer, who is under-employed at the MSS headquarters, and it would make

far more sense to assign him to the sub-sector advisory team as the full-time, across the board intelligence advisor.

It was impossible for us, in the short time available, to gain a full understanding of all the chains of command and flows of information in the intelligence field for Binh Chanh and Gia Dinh. But we gained the distinct impression that no one else knew either, at least not on the US side. We have attempted to put down the existing structure in a schematic diagram. It is immediately apparent that there is no one in charge, a statement made repeatedly to us by many people. CT-IV is too far away from everyone, and the proper headquarters of sector/province and sub-sector/district seem to be bypassed as often as possible.

In this regard the planned District Operations Intelligence Coordination Centers (DIOCC) are a vital step. The first one is planned for Thu Duc, and one is planned eventually for Binh Chanh. The organizations represented will include:

- District Chief S-2 staff
- Census Grievance (static) (CG)
- Police Special Branch (PSB)
- Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU)
- Police Field Force (PFF)
- Uniformed Police (NP)
- Regional Forces (RF)
- Popular Forces (PF)
- ARVN
- US combat troops or FWMAF

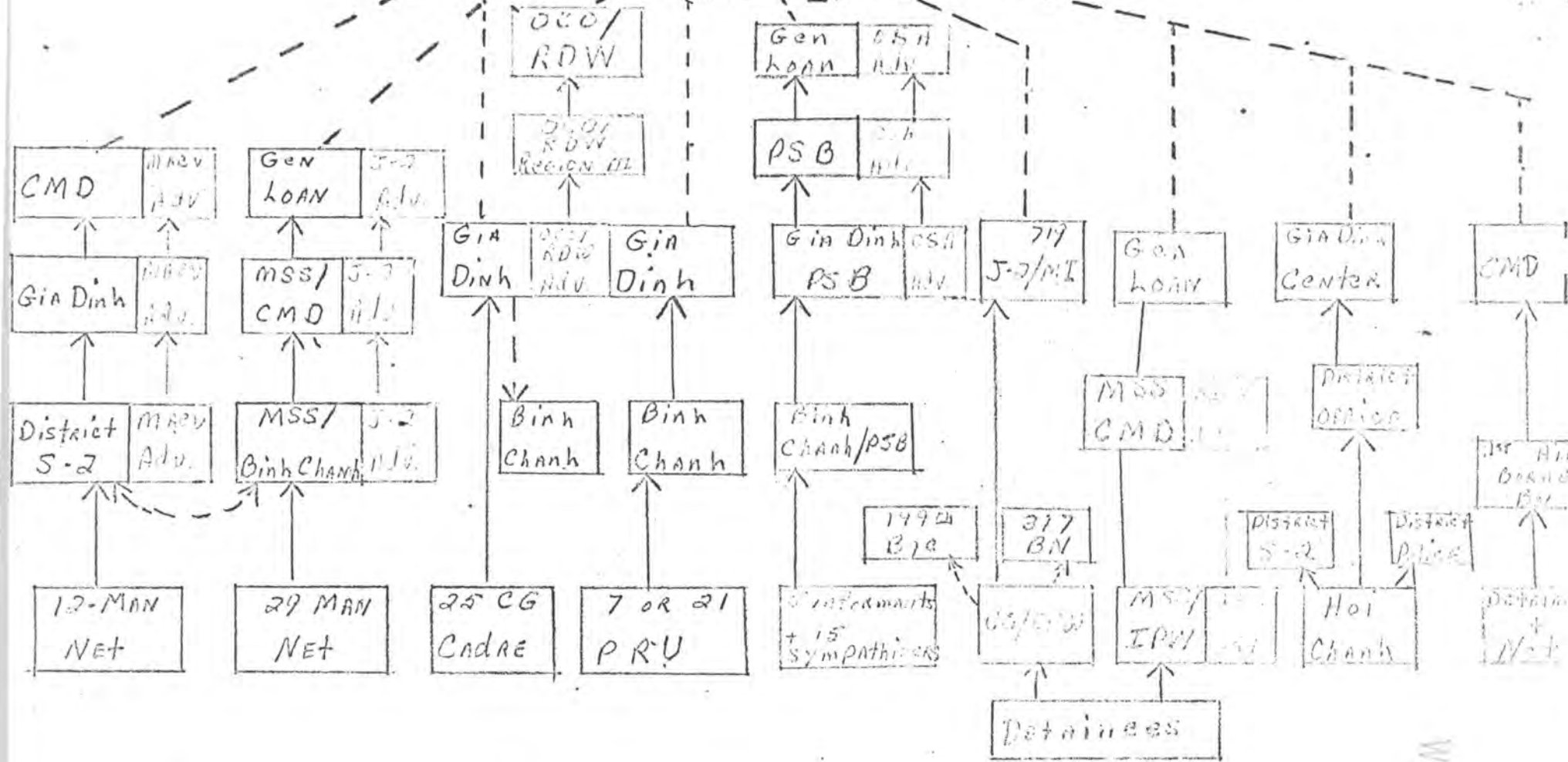
While we believe it likely that the Vietnamese will hang back and not cooperate fully in this program, especially at first (thus following the

pattern of all previous experiments along these lines), it is imperative that for the US Mission there be a single man in charge. His parent agency is not as important as the absolute necessity for having him be the actual boss of all American advisors and intelligence officers in the area. While this suggestion may violate the traditional need for compartmentalization of intelligence and might, if wrongly applied, even lead to a loss of certain programs, the potential return of such an integration of effort is great -- and we believe it outweighs the dangers.

In summary, "coordination" is not enough -- integration is needed, especially on the US side, where the political restraints that confuse the GVN do not exist. And US integration, if properly done, may eventually lead to a better structure on the GVN side.

ICT-IV

(in theory)



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PART III - The GVN: The Failure to Build

If the story of VC infrastructure is the story of failure to destroy the enemy, then the story of the GVN's administration in Binh Chanh is the story of failure to build.

In the six months since Fairfax began, there has been no significant effort to build a more responsible and responsive government--the prime positive ingredient of a pacification program.

This failure seems to extend through every aspect of the GVN's presence in Binh Chanh.

The five RF companies of Binh Chanh for example, remain at their pre-Fairfax strength of between 65-85 men each, and the GVN has made no systematic attempt to bring them up to strength. The same is true of the PF. The US troops have not carried out in a systematic way that portion of their assigned mission which involves the re-training and improvement of the Vietnamese soldiers with whom they fight. The only major move to improve these forces has been the Combined Company Teams (CCT) which 3/7 has instituted with the 33rd Ranger Battalion. In the CCT, US and Vietnamese soldiers patrol together and even man three-man foxholes together. The Americans feel that this has improved the performance of the Vietnamese, but as an American major put it, "the real test will come when the Vietnamese are operating on their own again," and this test is not yet in sight.

Hamlet and village elections in Binh Chanh were another great disappointment. While over 90% of the registered voters went to the poles, and this was hailed as another triumph for democracy, the fact

is that this 90% turnout took place in only two of Binh Chanh's 15 villages and seven of its 59 hamlets. No other statistic shows so clearly how the GVN really feels about the people of Binh Chanh than the fact that the government would not even risk an election for hamlet chief in two of its original three Ap Doi Moi's nor a village chief election in Phu Tho Hoa, which is partly in the suburbs of Cholon. "The people of Phu Tho Hoa are still not safe." Major Mau said.

The chain of command in Binh Chanh for military operations presents another inexcusable picture of non-coordination and non-cooperation. The District Chief controls only a fraction of the military assets in the district and does not consider the other units part of his district forces. His command is essentially restricted to the five under-strength RF companies, less than 800 PF and 131 police (and the police are not completely under his control). Other forces in his district, over which he has partial control, include the PRU's and the three cadre teams. Forces not under his control at all include all US troops, the 55th Regional Force Battalion at Chau Hiep, the 33rd Ranger Battalion operating with 3/7 out of Binh Chanh and any other units which may feel like wandering through the area, such as the 1st Airborne Battalion which is on the road to Duc Hoa, and a Marine unit in the eastern part of Binh Chanh.

While it can be argued that the District Chief--an MSS Captain--should not control some of these forces, it is essential that he be more fully involved in their operations, and that the units be more

responsive to his requirements. For example, the 199th Light Infantry Brigade feels it necessary, for security reasons, not to discuss its operations in advance with the District Chief. The reason for the secretiveness of the 199th is, of course, the danger of compromising its operations. However, valid this reason may be, it should be recognized that in failing to work closely with the District Chief the 199th has caused some antagonism in the district, and perhaps has not always been as useful as it could be. By ignoring the district police and using Saigon order police loaned by General Loan for the Cordon and Search operations the 199th has further complicated the situation. The District Chief often does not even know where the C&S operations are being conducted. The RF battalion at Chau Hiep, under the direct command of CMD, serves, even in the opinion of its advisors, no useful purpose. (There is even evidence to suggest that the RF Battalion at Chau Hiep, the Catholic priest, who dominates the settlement there, and the VC, who surround the settlement, have all reached a very cozy modus vivendi.)

Unfortunately, there is no answer to the problem of coordination of military operations between the 199th and Capt. Nguyen Nghien Ton, the District Chief.

Ton, who has been the District Chief for seven months, is an MSS officer who is regarded by all the Americans who work with him as uncooperative, a poor leader, and an inferior District Chief. This assessment is shared by at least one Vietnamese in a position to know: Major Nguyen Van Mau, Chief of CT-IV. Mau considers Ton an "inactive"

chief and says he has recommended several times to General Loan that Ton be replaced. But Ton is obviously General Loan's man in Binh Chanh, and we assume that Loan will not agree to removing him until at least after the presidential elections scheduled for this fall.

Ton's inabilities present a major problem. If it is true that he can not be removed, and equally true that working with him is a frustrating and unproductive experience, it is difficult to see what can be accomplished on the positive side in Binh Chanh this year. The pacification program is virtually non-existent in Binh Chanh. One of the three cadre teams is virtually non-existent; the other two are not going to accomplish much. Nor is Ton going to make a serious effort to build up hamlet and village government. He turned down American suggestions to hold elections in more villages.

Captain Ton's main suggestion for the problems of Binh Chanh is to build a detention center for the families of known VC. He points out that well over 1,000 families are known to have members in the VC. Ton wants to put these people in large detention centers and keep them there, tightly guarded, until their VC relatives come back. The disturbing thing about his suggestion is that it may well turn out to be the only solution for Binh Chanh if a positive GVN program designed to gain the active support of the population is not started.

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PART IV = RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations vary from the broad and perhaps impossible to the very specific. We are convinced, however, that while the basic problems of Binh Chanh -- the fact that it has been VC by conviction for 30 years -- are extremely difficult to solve, rapid improvement in the situation would result from some of the easy and basically technical steps advocated below. This is of course truest of the steps which require nothing from the Vietnamese -- the US must get its house in order.

David Galula wrote in his excellent study, Counterinsurgency Warfare:

"Clearly, more than any other kind of warfare, counterinsurgency must respect the principle of a single direction. A single boss must direct the operations from the beginning to the end." -- pp 87.

With the reorganization of the U.S. Mission we have an opportunity, and we submit an obligation, to carry out this principle on the U.S. side. The following recommendations apply only to Binh Chanh, but they should be examined for possible applicability to other districts as well.

Recommendations

1. A single American must be in charge of the entire US advisory effort in the district. He must command all US advisory assets. While we believe that theoretically he should also command any US units stationed in the district, we recognize that this is probably impossible; therefore, the US unit commanders must be ordered to keep the senior US representative in district fully informed and fully involved in any planning, and the unit commander must be responsive to the representative's guidance.

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2. Under the full command and control of the senior US representative in the district, there must be a full-time resident senior intelligence advisor, who is in command and control of all US intelligence operations and advice in the district. We believe that in Binh Chanh this man should probably be military, but regardless of parent agency, the American intelligence officer in charge must represent all US agencies.

3. The US should urge that the GVN duplicate both the above moves on its side. This will not be done rapidly, but if the US sets a good and consistent example, and keeps pushing, there is bound to be an improvement over time. Right now, the US can scarcely urge upon the GVN steps towards unity when their own efforts are in such evident disarray.

4. As a minimum, the GVN should set up a DIOCC in Binh Chanh immediately. This does not need to await the successful test planned for Thu Duc -- the idea is obviously conceptually sound, and testing it again sounds like an avoidance of actually doing it throughout the country on a priority basis.

5. As a general rule, advisory responsibility for all US supported or advised programs should be delegated to Americans -- either military or civilian -- who are resident in the district. Remote control from province is not necessary when there is an effective US presence already at district. Thus, the PRU's, RD Teams, CG, and Special Branch should all receive daily advice from a designated American on the ground. A possible breakout in Binh Chanh would be to assign the RD and the CG Teams to the OCO District Representative, and the PRU's and the Special Branch to a full-time intelligence officer.

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6. The sub-sector team should be beefed up -- thus recognizing that we do indeed regard Binh Chanh as a high priority area. (There is little evidence of this now in the numerical composition of the advisory team, which resembles those in many low priority areas.) This increase should include as a minimum:

- 1 Full-time Intelligence Advisor (who could easily be the MI officer advising the MSS at the Mobile Interrogation Center; he could move in under the sub-sector team's roof and take over all intelligence responsibilities. His present job is not a full-time one.)
- 1 Full-time RF/PF advisor. This seems like a bare minimum for such an important area.
- 1 Additional NCO to assist in the preparation of reports, general administration, and perhaps some RF/PF training.

7. The US Brigade should be responsive to intelligence from the DIOCC (once it is established). Their operations should be worked out with at least the US advisors, if it is felt that discussions with the Vietnamese are too risky.

8. Either the 703rd PFF Company should be used in all anti-VC infrastructure operations, including Cordon and Search, or it should be pulled out and replaced by one of General Loan's Order Police units now being used by the 199th. The advisor to this unit should be under control of the sub-sector advisor.

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9. We should make our dissatisfaction with Captain Ton known at every level, and seek his removal. Loan may refuse to dismiss him until after the elections -- in which case we can do little but continue to press -- but if the man is really bad (and everyone seems to agree on this) we should not appear to tolerate him. We should start assembling a strong documented case against Ton.

10. We should press for more village and hamlet elections -- a real test of the government's attitude towards the people.

11. Continuous military pressure must be maintained against the pineapple base area on the Long An/Hau Nghia border until the base area is destroyed. Until this is done, all other recommendations will have only limited value; once this famous VC retreat is destroyed, there should be a dramatic change in the atmosphere throughout a large area. (This is not an easy job, particularly since the area running to the west and southwest is even more difficult.)

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GVN AND US ARMED PERSONNEL IN BINH CHANH

<u>Units</u>	<u>Strength</u> <u>(Rough Estimate)</u>
<u>UNDER CONTROL OF DISTRICT CHIEF</u>	
5 Regional Force Companies	400
Popular Force Units	800
National Police	130
3 RD Teams	100
PRU	<u>20</u>
	1,450
<u>UNITS NOT UNDER CONTROL OF DISTRICT CHIEF</u>	
<u>UNDER CONTROL OF OR DIRECTLY COORDINATED WITH US 199 INFANTRY BRIGADE</u>	
3/7 US Battalion	800
2/3 US Battalion (roughly 50% in Binh Chanh)	400
33d Ranger Battalion	400
<u>PARTIALLY COORDINATED WITH US BRIGADE AND DISTRICT CHIEF</u>	
703d Police Field Force Company	70
Special Branch Trainees	20
<u>CONTROLLED DIRECTLY FROM SAIGON (CMD)</u>	
55th RF Battalion	350
1st Airborne Battalion (Outer Defense Saigon)	400
Marine Battalion (Eastern Binh Chanh)	<u>600</u>
Total Not Controlled by District Chief	<u>3,040</u>
Total Forces in Binh Chanh	4,490

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