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group of 80 to 100 VC attacked the Kien An District Office, Kien Giang Province, killing the district chief, a policeman, six CG members and four civilians. Seven civilians were wounded and the VC after releasing about 70 prisoners from the local prison compound carried away 23 weapons and other equipment plus the district payroll, which was apparently the target of the raid. Exact VC casualties are not known, but were estimated to be considerable.

According to a senior GVN intelligence officer whose comments were reported by CAS in December, the VC in An Xuyen, Ba Xuyen, Kien Giang, Phong Dinh, An Giang, Kien Phong, Kien Tuong, and Long An Province numbered 2900 about twice the September 1959 figure, divided into groups of 40 to 50 men. This officer expressed the opinion that VC attacks in November on isolated Civil Guard posts and ARVN patrol units in Kien Phong Province present an important change in VC strategy in the southwest and that the VC plan to become increasingly active in early 1960 in an effort to prove to the people that the GVN is unable to cope with the internal security situation. An example of this type of activity is the November 14 VC storming of Phong My Market in Kien Phong Province during which they reportedly set fire to a defense militia post, the information hall, three bridges and a motor-boat of the Kien Phong Security Service. Minister of Information THANH told British Ambassador PARKES on February 22 that the VC's are burning a large number of information halls, and he is very worried by the lack of protection and retaliation.

By November and December it had become apparent that the VC were operating in larger groups than those used earlier in the year and that their attacks were well planned and vigorously executed. It seems apparent, moreover, from such large scale operations as took place in late January in the provinces of Kien Hoa, Tay Ninh and Phuoc Long (Dong Xoai incident) that the VC have further increased their activities.* Serious incidents are continuing: ARVN intelligence reports indicate that approximately twenty VC attacked a boat in Kien Giang Province on February 2 killing 12 Civil Guard and 13 civilians and wounding 11 Civil Guard, 2 other security personnel and 5 civilians and that as of February 7 VC terrorism was continuing in Kien Hoa Province.

* See Embassy telegrams 2288 (February 1) 2301 (February 2); FVS 4221, 4222, 4229 and 4227; ARMA CX-9.

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