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Page 1 of 18 pages  
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Special Report On Internal Security Situation In Viet-Nam

The Viet Cong attack on the Vietnamese Army installation near Tay Ninh on January 26 is a dramatic illustration of the increasingly aggressive tactics of the Viet Cong and of the difficulty the GVN is having in controlling the internal security situation. The audacity of the Viet Cong in conducting the attack, the likelihood of VC infiltration into ARVN, the indications of secret support of the VC by some of the local populace, the successful planning and coordination in carrying out the attack as opposed to apparent failure of ARVN which had been told there might be an attack to be sufficiently alert for such an attack and effectively counter once the attack had been launched, are indications of many of the problems faced by the GVN and discussed in this report.

Recent Viet Cong Activity

A. General Situation

The increase in Viet Cong activity in recent months can be traced back as far as the middle of September when the assassination and kidnapping rate began to rise. It will be recalled that the Government of Viet-Nam intensified its anti-VC measures during the spring of 1959 when it increased its forces engaged in internal security operations. These operations appear to have forced the VC to curtail their activities for a period of several months, regroup, strengthen and reorganize their cadres and establish new bases. The added precautions taken by the GVN during the period prior to and immediately following the August 30 National Assembly elections further suppressed VC activity. The two important exceptions to this relatively static period of VC operations are the acts of sabotage of farm machinery in May and June (which backfired because of peasant resentment) and the July attack on U.S. Army personnel at the MAAG detachment in Bien Hoa.

By September 1959 the VC position was somewhat as follows: The VC had failed to carry out their plans to disrupt the National Assembly elections. This failure placed the VC in a position of reasserting themselves in the countryside or facing a gradual decrease of their influence as the GVN improved security and pushed forward its social and economic reforms.

Reports reaching CAS indicated that the VC by September had become quite concerned over the possible effects of various GVN programs which were getting underway at that time. The GVN program for regrouping isolated peasants into communities was just beginning, the various youth organizations were becoming active in the villages and the new identity card program promised to create difficulties for many VC cadres who had been provided with false identity papers. The VC propaganda offensive against these programs, which was already underway during August, was intensified in September and VC harassment and violence

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