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UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
APO San Francisco 96243

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MACJ233

SUBJECT: Orientation Material

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Attached for information are copies of MACV Staff papers which have been of value in the orientation of newly assigned personnel.

a. Inclosure one, Viet Cong Tactical Doctrine, is a general summary of Viet Cong tactics and methods of operation in the RVN.

b. Inclosure two is a pamphlet dealing with Viet Cong Infrastructure, while inclosure three is a prepared briefing on this subject. Charts reflecting type Viet Cong political - military organization at each echelon, COSVN through village/hamlet level, are included.

2. Addressees are encouraged to forward to this headquarters copies of any locally-prepared material which would be of value for similar purposes.

3 Incl
as

for C. A. YOUNGDALE
Brigadier General, U. S. Marine Corps
ACofS, J2

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[VIET CONG TACTICAL DOCTRINE]

VIET CONG FORCES

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

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VIET CONG TACTICAL DOCTRINE

1. General.

Viet Cong (VC) tactical doctrine emphasizes offensive action and follows in general the Communist doctrine for guerrilla warfare as developed by the Viet Minh during the French-Viet Minh War. Therefore this study deals primarily with Viet Cong offensive tactics.

2. Principles of Viet Cong Tactics

The War in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) is by no means a conflict of the "conventional type". However, the Viet Cong have generally followed the same principles of war contained in United States tactical doctrine. In the same sense that the United States has studied the impact of nuclear war on these principles, the Viet Cong have evaluated them in light of guerrilla warfare. The principles of Mass, Surprise, Simplicity and Offensive were considered adaptable to their operations without further clarification or modification. To the remaining five: Mobility (Maneuver), Economy of force, Unity of Command, Objective, and Security, the VC have added special delineating factors which they consider essential to the success of their military operations. No matter what size action is contemplated, Viet Cong doctrine requires consideration of these principles. Viet Cong terminology is sometimes vague and seemingly misleading, but related actions and repetitious references show that the above principles are the basic foundation of their doctrine. They continually emphasize that, when these principles are properly considered and efficiently applied successful accomplishment of the mission will result.

3. General Characteristics of Viet Cong Attacks

a. The Viet Cong attack is meticulously planned, rehearsed in detail if possible, and is characterized by surprise, speed, seizure of the initiative, movement, maneuver, and mobility (foot). They attack only when success appears certain and execute a short, ruthless action followed by a well-planned and rapid withdrawal. The Viet Cong continually seek to achieve local superiority at a critical time and place and at the same time adhere to the principle of mass by concentrating and committing firepower and maneuver forces on a highly selective basis. Subscribing to the axiom "not to battle on anyone's terms but their own", they adhere to the philosophy of Mao Tse Tung: "When the enemy advances - withdraw; when he defends - harass; when he is tired - attack; and when he withdraws - pursue".

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b. In general, any Viet Cong attack features heavy firepower delivered from advantageous terrain to provide supporting fire for assault elements. Doctrine, however, calls for planning to consider the assault phase without supporting firepower. Troops are prepared to engage in hand-to-hand combat and, while fire and assault elements perform their missions, other forces prevent enemy breakout or withdrawal. Should such occur, doctrine calls for immediate pursuit and notification of adjacent Viet Cong units.

c. The Viet Cong stress unity of command and effort, from initial planning stages through completion of the attack. The procedural steps and specific characteristics of each are particularly significant to a study of past Viet Cong tactics and a projection of those tactics to be anticipated in the future.

4. Planning

a. Minute and careful compilation of information on the enemy, terrain, and status of the local populace is the most prominent characteristic of Viet Cong planning. The meticulous and thorough manner in which intelligence is sought underscores the high premium that VC leaders assign to this facet of their preparation.

b. Close, undetected observation of the enemy and the objective is accomplished over a period of days or weeks by special reconnaissance units, or personnel specially selected for the task. Thorough briefings are delivered after which the unit moves to vantage points around the objective area. A detailed sketch of the area is prepared with particular attention to the size, location and nature of natural or man-made obstacles. When obstacles appear to present a significant difficulty, infiltration of intelligence collectors is conducted during darkness to get as close as possible (if necessary into the obstacle itself) to feel out, measure, sketch and record. Routes of guard posts, sentry schedules, and the weapons on the post are noted. Detailed data is developed on movement; into and out of the area to determine the interval between movements, the weapons available and their firepower. Intelligence personnel are particularly alert for special strengths or weaknesses indicated by the normal activities within the area of interest. Through such surveillance they compile data on strength, composition, morale, attachment, combat capability, disposition, command posts, liaison and communication. Efforts are made to gather all possible biographical data on enemy commanders, in order to analyze their weak or strong points; and predict the commander's probable reaction once the attack is launched. Of particular significance to the Viet Cong is the route, or routes, over which the enemy might withdraw to alternate positions, or over which reinforcements might be sent. Toward this end

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they determine the locations of enemy forces that could provide reinforcement and estimate strength, ETDs, travel time and ETAs. Analysis of routes is conducted to select the best site for obstacles or ambushes.

c. The Viet Cong exist in considerable measure off the countryside and are well able to exploit terrain, but this does not diminish the attitude with which they conduct terrain analysis. The limited scope of their present operations facilitates their performing this function in painstaking detail. In studying terrain, the Viet Cong seek to capitalize on advantages offered and to use it in such a manner that it becomes a disadvantage to the enemy. They gather data on roads, villages, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and canals. Dimensions and locations of bridges, bushes, walls and fences are recorded and sketched if there is even a slight possibility of their affecting the operation. Particular attention is given to likely enemy defensive positions and observation posts; their locations are noted on sketches so that planning procedures take them into consideration. If none are apparent, reference is made to terrain which the enemy could possibly use for such purpose.

d. Standard Viet Cong procedure calls for developing information about the civilian population contiguous to the planned operation area. Depending on the situation they are apt to enforce temporary evacuation of the area or somehow include the population, passively or actively, in the scope of operations. They look for sympathetic civilians and/or organizations and assess sentiment toward the GVN as compared to that towards themselves. Where Viet Cong agents have infiltrated and are operative in the area, as is the case in many areas of the RVN, gaining intelligence of this type is no major problem to the Viet Cong.

e. When information on the enemy, terrain or population appears to be insufficient, extreme measures are taken to obtain the necessary data and final decisions are delayed pending its receipt, providing that time permits. In many cases, the capabilities of separate specially-trained units or personnel are coordinated closely with the organic intelligence capability of the unit. Viet Cong leadership techniques call for the commander to be well forward and in a position from which he can lend guidance and supervision to the intelligence effort. Additionally, the commander is required to personally reconnoiter the area immediately prior to commencing the operation.

f. The intelligence produced from the above process is the basis for the development of advantages and disadvantages for varying courses of action. It permits the VC to conduct a remarkably thorough analysis of the enemy and to realistically evaluate their strengths

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against those of the enemy, before arriving at a final concept for the operation. From this stage, plans are formulated containing all fundamental requirements in final reconnaissance; preparation of the battlefield, men and equipment; movement to the line of departure or ambush site; formulation of assault and fire support plans; clearing the battle area; and disengagement and withdrawal if such becomes necessary. Separate plans and procedures are carefully prepared for both the withdrawal and disengagement.

g. The following excerpt from a captured document emphasizes Viet Cong philosophy regarding planning and preparing for battle:

"Attack preparation must be scrupulous in all phases in order to prepare completely, and all commanders must have a good understanding of the situation. If preparation requires too much time, there is increased danger that our plans might be disclosed to the enemy; he may change plans and positions, or increase his strength or move away. Under such circumstances our preparation must be prompt, and at the same time we must maintain surveillance so that any change which presents outstanding advantage to us may be attacked immediately. In doing this, however, do not take unnecessary risks. This is another reason why our troops must always be ready to attack. In cases of attacks on a transient enemy or enemy recruits, preparations do not require the same care as that of attacking bases. We should be ready to attack such targets".

5. Preparation of the Battlefield

Preparation of the battlefield is an integral and important phase of Viet Cong operational planning and involves both tactical and logistical considerations. This philosophy of creating the proper atmosphere for offensive action is practiced at all levels of command in manners peculiar to their own situation and missions. The level, objective and scope of operation, troop movement, time available, and subsequent plans are factors which affect the complexity of battlefield preparation; particularly at the lower levels. This preparation is considered by the VC to be a primary function for a local unit. It will involve the gathering of pre-attack intelligence, a survey of established Viet Cong communications and facilities in the battle area, and coordination with guerrilla forces in the area. Provisions are also made for billeting, food supplies, re-supply of ammunition, and handling of wounded. VC doctrine requires that such functions must be performed for the main forces by local elements.

6. Preparation of Troops and Equipment

a. Overall Communist political-military doctrine calls for political as well as military preparation of troops prior to committing

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them to combat. Political instruction will usually be conducted at the latest time possible prior to the attack. The instruction consists of political and ideological propaganda oriented toward the impending tactical requirement and aims to condition emotionally the individual soldier to pursue the objective without the slightest reservation. The objective is to instill in the soldier a particular, but perhaps superficial, brand of courage. All armies desire their troops to be emotionally conditioned to combat situations, but the Communist method of obtaining it is somewhat different from the practices of western armed forces. The Viet Cong somehow link every tactical action of the individual soldier to overall political goals. This preparation of the soldier is composed, timed and presented in such a manner that it usually achieves significant success.

b. Additionally, and when time and security precautions permit, the complete concept of the operation is disseminated to the troops; at a minimum, major points are always covered. Unit commanders and their subordinate commanders are always thoroughly briefed and in most cases will have studied the operation minutely, using sand tables, drawings and maps. The careful preparation for a sizeable operation may consume several weeks prior to the initiation.

c. Viet Cong doctrine, as does that of the west, calls for adaptation of equipment to fit the environment under which the action is to be fought. Although their present equipment resources limit the scope of such adaptation, the Viet Cong do make shifts of weapons in order to exploit the situation they will enter, or to conserve materiel. Those individuals whose task does not require initial use of a weapon, such as ladder bearers, probably will be unarmed.

7. Movement

a. The thoroughness which characterizes the reconnaissance previously mentioned carries over into Viet Cong movement. They practice rigid movement discipline plus sound tactical assembly and dispersion procedures. Their doctrine in this regard varies little, if any, from that of the United States or other western countries. What does differ, however, is the manner and discipline with which such doctrine is practiced. Viet Cong leaders have fought for years and have learned well the benefits to be gained from efficient and careful movement, assembly and dispersion. The individual Viet Cong soldier adheres to these same principles. Well-trained, combat-indoctrinated troops of any army tend to do likewise, but the Viet Cong are particularly skilled in these techniques.

b. For security reasons, movement warning orders are held to a minimum. Sometimes to the point of withholding notification for preparation of the next day's rations. This is generally the rule

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rather than the exception, unless the route to be travelled is without water and/or an accessible food supply. In the latter cases, word is passed to alert the troops to carry their own water and food supply. On extended marches the cooking of food is usually limited to once daily, normally in the early morning hours.

c. On an operational mission a Viet Cong battalion will move over trails, roads, canals or any terrain which will conceal their movement to battle positions. No set march formations are practiced although they do have a basic arrangement that generally applies. Terrain is the determining factor in march formations, but in any case leading elements are liaison agents or scouts who precede the main body by a considerable distance. They are followed by a reconnaissance intelligence unit which provides forward and flank security. A rifle company with at least one machinegun or automatic rifle is next followed by the available weapons or combat support unit. The battalion headquarters and a protective rifle company are the next elements while the third rifle company is the last march unit and provides the rear guard, usually a squad. Units smaller than battalions try to follow this same principle no matter how meager their force or limited their weapons. Such a formation provides for local security in all directions and places combat elements and supporting weapons well forward for immediate employment if necessary. The command element is then well positioned to coordinate and rapidly control any actions necessary; and it has a ready reserve immediately available. However, any formation is dependent on the terrain, and the Viet Cong are experts at blending movement with terrain whether during daylight or darkness.

d. River, canal and road crossings are conducted in a conventional manner. Initial security and scouting patrols are sent forward and laterally on the far side of the obstacle and laterally and to the rear on the near side. When the situation is developed and crossing is permissible, action is swift and conducted with dispersion. Security elements are recalled after the main body has control of the situation on the other side. When water crossings are hampered by lack of watercraft, field expedients are used, i.e., rafts for weapons and equipment are made from sheets of plastic that are a part of the individual equipment of each man.

e. When bivouacs are called for and the locale permits, they are established on the banks of streams, or in forests; in any case, maximum exploitation of terrain is sought. Sentries are usually posted in pairs at a radius of several hundred meters, but the distance is reduced during darkness. Other security measures used during movement, assembly and dispersion consist of miscellaneous and basic signal systems. During daylight the movement of branches, bushes, or tree limbs, is used

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for identification and signalling, i.e., a certain number of brush movements requires a set response of so many movements, by the unit. At night, devices such as animal sounds or clicking of sticks are used.

8. Disposition of Forces

a. In the simplest terms, the Viet Cong believe that sound troop dispositions and a mental conviction that the battle can and must be won will produce victory and destruction of the enemy. Considering their successes, this belief has some proven validity. More precisely, their successes have been due to judicious selections of objectives that are within Viet Cong capabilities. They are well aware of their material deficiencies, consequently, their disposition of forces constantly seeks to offset these limitations.

b. The Viet Cong base all troop dispositions on the results of careful analysis of the enemy, terrain and available forces. Practically all Viet Cong attacks feature assaults from encirclement or some variation of it. Doctrine almost flatly refuses to tolerate attacks using a purely frontal disposition, however, they may resort to this when natural or man-made obstacles on flanks or to the enemy's rear can be integrated into attack plans. Any disposition other than some degree of encirclement will not permit them to exploit their mobility and adaptability. They believe that encirclement facilitates attainment of the objective in that it permits severance of enemy withdrawal routes and establishment of ambushes or obstacles on routes over which the enemy might reinforce. Whether large or small forces are employed to provide the encirclement is dependent upon the coverage desired, size of the enemy force, whether infiltrators have penetrated the enemy ranks, and whether traitors are within GVN ranks. When the latter two cases exist, employment of smaller forces is given due consideration because of the increased possibility of greater enemy panic when attacked from within as well as without.

c. When the enemy establishes definite patterns of training, movement or tactics, the Viet Cong may use a light force for encirclement. In such cases, set patterns allow the Viet Cong to place a main attacking force to take advantage of the probable enemy reaction.

d. Doctrine calls for the observance of usual characteristics of good troop disposition, those of concealment and camouflage, observation, fields of fire and sufficient maneuver room. They seldom desire to take real estate as an objective - not at this stage of the conflict - rather they seek to close with and destroy the opposing force, provided

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that the circumstances overwhelmingly favor their success. Toward this end, they strive for disposition that limit the enemy's maneuver room and hinder his development of firepower. In many instances they alter enemy maneuver room by man-traps armed with sharpened, disease-infected bamboo sticks. Maximum use is made of terrain for concealment and camouflage. They realize that secrecy and surprise depend a great deal on how effectively they are concealed, not only from the opposing force, but also from stray peasants who are perhaps friendly to GVN. They seek positions for automatic weapons yielding fields of crossing and grazing fire which do not interfere with maneuver room.

e. Command and observation posts are established for surveillance and control, and they will usually establish no less than two. From one of these positions the commander will exercise close supervision of the impending action. It allows him to influence quickly the action if enemy reaction is unexpected, or to take his own counter-action to enemy reinforcement. It enables him to have an immediate grasp of the situation, which is vital to the proper disposition and exploitation of a mobile force as is the Viet Cong.

9. Attacks

a. In 1964, Viet Cong military tactics can be divided into three broad categories:

(1) Attacks against isolated GVN outposts and training centers, new life hamlets and sometimes the capitals of districts and provinces.

(2) Meeting engagements with GVN forces.

(3) Ambushes of any and every type of GVN force, including ARVN units.

b. Viet Cong attacks in all three categories continue to be executed in a short, ruthless and overwhelming manner. Maximum fire is usually delivered at the onset of the attack - neither too early nor too late, but at a predetermined time upon order of the commander. Viet Cong intelligence has ordinarily allowed the planning to pinpoint the enemy elements that are to be primary targets or objectives. Alternate methods of attack are provided for in case movement and/or appearance of the opposing force indicates they have knowledge of an impending attack. Secondary missions for selected groups facilitate rapid changes in attack plans if called for by such disclosure. Seldom do their attacks last more than several hours. After the attack has been completed, they immediately move from the area leaving only a small element to "clean" the battle area of weapons, ammunition, brass and other useful

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supplies, as well as to evacuate their dead and wounded. When they feel that time will not allow complete cleaning of the area, they hide what they can, planning to return subsequently and salvage what they leave. If no enemy reinforcements are anticipated, the VC are likely to remain in the area and engage in propaganda activities.

(1) All Viet Cong attacks endeavor to achieve surprise, and hit the enemy at a time, place and in a manner which is not anticipated. It is not necessarily dependent on misleading the enemy. The enemy may know from the attendant situation that he will be attacked, but, if the VC efforts are effective, he will not know how, when, where or in what strength.

(2) Hand-in-hand with secrecy and surprise is the element of speed, which is characteristic of all Viet Cong offensive action. They attack swiftly, withdraw quickly, disengage rapidly and counter-attack without hesitation.

(3) The Viet Cong on occasions will attempt to "condition" enemy installations into a state of susceptibility and vulnerability to attack. They try to generate conditions whereby the enemy underestimates Viet Cong potential. Ruses are created and false information is planted to create suspicion, doubt, hesitation and confusion in the mind of the enemy. To further psychologically condition opposing forces they sometimes have the local population evacuate the area, unexplainably to the GVN.

(4) The Viet Cong always provide for several methods of withdrawal subsequent to an operation, and for disengagements, if for some reason the attack does not immediately gain the desired results. In the case of the former, the main body's route of withdrawal is different from that of the covering force. Plans usually call for a sizeable covering force; however, the actual size is determined on-the-spot by the commander. In any event the dead, wounded and heavily armed elements are the first to be withdrawn. Efforts are made to conceal their movements by brushing trails, crossing water, etc.. When terrain does not lend itself to unobserved movement they will sometimes conceal themselves until darkness, and then withdraw.

(5) Disengagement is called for when the VC are unable to control the situation, or it appears that the enemy may acquire the upper hand. Again, in this case, a strong covering force is used under the personal supervision and control of the commander. Their disengagements are executed with a rapidity and mobility which have made it extremely difficult for contact to be maintained, particularly if reaction is slow.

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c. Harassing tactics are continuously conducted by all types of Viet Cong forces. This action is sometimes coordinated with "conditioning" an area for susceptibility to attack. Most often, however, it is conducted to disrupt, annoy and confuse the enemy so that morale and combat readiness are lowered. The objective often appears to be one of irritation rather than destruction of the enemy or the capture of equipment; although it can be combined with these at any time.

10. Attacks on Fortified Positions

a. The difficulties posed to conventional forces by fortified installations are compounded and become more complex for the ordinary Viet Cong force. The only units having the inherent capabilities and resources sufficient to undertake such actions are main and local force units. Using such a force as a base element, a special task-force type unit is tailored to fit and meet the problems and complexities presented by a given fortified position. Since this is the case, common sense dictates that every precaution be taken by the Viet Cong in planning and organizing for such an attack, not only to insure success, but to prevent decimation of their elite and special-type units. Decisions to conduct such operations are based on the ultimate in intelligence gathering, as has been previously discussed.

b. Depending on enemy strength, firepower and magnitude of the fortification, attacks of this nature are made with reinforced companies or battalions. In either case, Viet Cong tactics are rather standard though terminology differs from that of western armies. Fire support is always mandatory in these actions. Four main elements are organized out of the overall attacking force:

- (1) A spearhead, or leading element.
- (2) A secondary force.
- (3) A second-wave or exploitation force (main attacking force).
- (4) A reserve element.

The leading element is assigned the mission of eliminating and clearing positions and obstacles to facilitate entry or passage of the exploitation force toward the final and primary objective. The secondary force is actually a secondary attack, since it is coordinated with the assault of the leading elements, but its objective is the breaching of a second passage to the main objective. Doctrine calls for the exploitation or main-attack elements to use the first gap effected, either that accomplished by the leading element or that acquired by the secondary force.

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If the former is delayed at the time the latter is successful, then the main attack is shifted. The reserve element provides security for the operation and, in effect, isolates the battleground from reinforcement by the enemy.

c. The leading and secondary forces are organized into special cells or teams in order to facilitate accomplishment of their assigned missions. Though deviations may be encountered, the general breakdown of these units is as given below:

- (1) One demolition team, 9 men.
- (2) One base of fire team, 3 automatic rifles.
- (3) One assault team, platoon or comparable size.
- (4) One second assault team, if needed.

The demolition cell advances under the cover of supporting fires and endeavors to clear a path as soon as possible. The size of the team will vary with the number of obstacles to be cleared. Personnel comprising this team are not random selections or volunteers from throughout the unit, but rather they are a group that has trained together as a unit.

(1) The base of fire team supports the demolition and assault teams by heavy concentrated fire of automatic weapons and mortars. A detailed fire plan is prepared and minutely reviewed by all command echelons involved.

(2) The assault team takes immediate advantage of obstacle clearances, and vigorously assaults to insure firm establishment and widening of the breach. It continues the assault to effect deep penetrations. If difficulties are encountered which tend to slow the momentum of the attack, the second assault team is committed. When the breach is completely effected the main exploitation force aggressively and violently continues to attack the main objective.

d. The importance attached by the Viet Cong to prior planning for operations of this nature is illustrated by the following excerpt from a document captured by GVN forces:

"Attacks on fortified positions are complicated affairs, and their plans must be carefully prepared because the enemy is in prepared positions and has contingency plans. A step-by-step and mission-by-mission plan must be prepared with definite assignment of missions and precise delineation of responsibilities. Cadres must be positive in their actions and be quick to take advantage of all opportunities. Reviewing, supervision, accuracy and careful planning will

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prevent careless execution and insure success". Toward this end, the Viet Cong operations order includes the enemy situation, mission, coordination and liaison, weapons, political actions and concept of operations.

11. The Meeting Engagement

a. "Judicious refusal to engage" has been presented as a principle of war to which the Viet Cong try to adhere. Though this is true, their forces are trained to cope with the situation when it arises. It is defined in Viet Cong doctrine as "an unexpected and sudden confrontation of two opposing forces neither of which is aware of the other's strength, weapons, composition, or mission". Neither force has an offensive plan for the particular situation, and the Viet Cong realize they will usually be at a disadvantage in such a predicament. Doctrine calls for avoiding this situation, however, being aware that there will be instances where this cannot be done, they have formulated three objectives to be accomplished when the meeting occurs:

- (1) "Be the first to deploy troops to critical terrain".
- (2) "Be the first to open fire".
- (3) "Be the first to assault".

They teach that the first unit to deploy to key terrain will gain important tactical advantages. By so doing, they aim to force the enemy into an unfavorable and perhaps untenable position. In seeking to be the first to fire, the Viet Cong hope to create sudden and extreme confusion in forcing the enemy to hastily deploy under fire. In theory the resultant atmosphere should immediately allow Viet Cong forces to assault and destroy the enemy.

b. Practical application of this theory calls for all troop movements to be preceded by "look-out teams" or scouts. Rear security is likewise provided as is flank security, and the distances involved are fully dependent on the terrain. When the enemy's presence is detected, rapid and silent notification is passed to the commander while the scouts immediately take positions which offer them observation and fields of fire. Concurrently, the commander performs a hasty estimate of the situation and deploys the main force. If these actions allow advantageous terrain to be occupied, fire is commenced as a prelude to the assault. When good terrain cannot be quickly occupied, the scouts open fire to deploy and pin the enemy. The commander, in the meantime, maneuvers his other troops to positions from which sufficient fire

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superiority can be developed to permit assault. When a favorable atmosphere cannot be obtained due to enemy strength and/or terrain, the commander is taught to continue the fire fight with a few elements and hastily disengage. Once the main body has broken contact, the forward elements perform a retrograde movement.

c. Captured documents sum up this theory with the following:

"Therefore, the side which adheres to the three principles, practices good scouting procedures, has well-trained personnel thoroughly acquainted with their jobs and cool-headed, active and determined leadership - this side will have the initiative and will occupy good terrain features first, open fire first, and assault first. This side will be the winner".

The Viet Cong excel in each of these areas, and though they prefer to fight at a time and place of their own choosing, they can, and will, fight meeting engagements.

12. The Ambush

a. "The ambush is a common form of combat employed by guerrillas. It is a well-planned disposition of troops in concealed positions either on one or both sides of a road, river or canal over which the enemy will pass. We wait until the enemy reaches a predetermined position in the ambush site at which time we destroy him by violent and sudden attack". This is a description of an ambush as contained in a Viet Cong document captured by ARVN forces.

b. The topographical characteristics of South Vietnam lend themselves well to guerrilla techniques, and in many areas they particularly favor the specific tactic of the ambush. A not-too-severe climate and adaptable terrain offer the basic requisites for establishment of ambushes. This allows occupation of positions for hours, or days in some instances, without imposing undue hardships on the ambushing forces. Terrain provides extremely good concealment of positions and routes thereto. The countryside and a restricted road net act as aids to the Viet Cong ambush by conditioning GVN physical susceptibility and limiting routes of transportation. The Viet Cong are much aware of these conditions and the result has been the conduct of numerous ambushes throughout Vietnam.

c. As in other Viet Cong combat actions, preparation and planning are in great detail, and intelligence remains the most fundamental requirement for the planning. Without it, the risks are too great and they do not comply with guerrilla doctrine which calls for

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"fighting only on their terms". The intelligence requirement remains three-pronged: to obtain all information on the enemy, terrain and civilian population. This paves the way for establishment of the appropriate-sized ambush party in the most advantageous terrain, at the proper time, with maximum security and secrecy. Preparation of the battlefield is laborious and minute; planning includes movement to and occupation of, the ambush site, conduct of the operation, possible unexpected reactions and withdrawal. Carefully delineated missions are assigned to individual soldiers and/or teams, and pre-arranged signals are devised. All these areas are checked and re-checked and, if possible, rehearsals are held. Last, but not least, comes the inevitable and omnipresent political indoctrination to "raise morale, preserve secrecy and arouse determination".

(1) Movement to the site is over covered routes avoiding villages and roads as much as possible. Training and pre-planning allows individuals to move directly to their positions upon entering the ambush site. On occasions when terrain does not offer the maximum in concealment, they will choose not to occupy positions until the last possible moment. In the interim, they remain close by with only scouts in position who, when the enemy is near, sound the alarm for rapid occupation of the site. Once in position, the ambush party imposes movement and noise discipline. Prior and subsequent to occupation, the Viet Cong have been known to prohibit the populace access to any part of the anticipated battleground.

(2) Troop dispositions depend on Viet Cong strength, enemy strength and terrain. Regardless of disposition, the force is divided into sections, each being designated a portion of the enemy as a target. This does not mean to imply that the Viet Cong divide their forces equally and then position them. On the contrary, they first exploit favorable positions afforded by terrain, and then allot segments of the enemy as primary targets. A very broad guide will usually allocate two-thirds of the force to attack the enemy. Up to one-third of the force using mines, barricades or other obstacles is employed to prevent the enemy's forward and/or rearward movement. Any reserve is deployed to fill areas of potential weakness. On the flanks and to the rear they will usually place security teams. Their mission is to warn of, or ambush enemy reinforcements. The added ambush of reinforcements is a typical Viet Cong tactic, but when it is not planned, delay is sought in order to prevent the reinforcement and ambushed forces from being mutually supporting. Disengagement is called for when there is the slightest possibility of successful reinforcement.

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(1) During withdrawals or disengagements, the Viet Cong are likely to hastily organize ambushes of various sizes. They can range from several individual soldiers to a sizeable force, depending on the situation. In any case, it is designed to delay, disrupt and disorganize the pursuing enemy. No attempt is made to close with or destroy the opposing troops because the Viet Cong in this instance are usually at a disadvantage, and the mission then is only to enable major elements to break contact.

(3) Viet Cong ambushes have also been directed against rail and water traffic. Adroit use of mines and demolitions are coordinated into these ambushes, particularly the former type. This ambush of rail traffic has been significant in that it has established a Viet Cong capability to seriously disrupt, if not completely sever, all such traffic. Ambush of watercraft is almost wholly limited to the Delta area and is conducted in a manner similar to that which is exhibited in ambushing on land.

13. Sequence of Events

a. Concurrent with planning, troops are physically and mentally conditioned by conducting a rigorous training program in which considerable time is devoted to ideological indoctrination. The period of time involved usually is about one or two months.

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13. When plans are completed, rehearsals are conducted until commanders are satisfied that all personnel are completely familiar with the operation and the part that they will play. This usually covers a one or two week period. Along with this, conditioning is continued and troops are equipped for the action.

14. Viet Cong Tactics in the Rainy Season

a. The tactics applied by the Viet Cong during rainy or high water season follow the principles described above, but with particular emphasis on those tactical actions that will capitalize on expected vulnerabilities that the Viet Cong believe will result from decreased enemy mobility. Ambushes of vehicles and boats, and destruction of lines of communication between the larger base areas and principal enemy headquarters are considered by the Viet Cong to be the most lucrative operations. The attack of lines of communication in the Viet Cong view has the two fold benefit of delaying enemy resupply and movement while also causing the enemy to disperse forces for route protection and thereby limiting his capability to attack Viet Cong base areas.

b. In this application, as in all Viet Cong operations, country-wide, or even military region wide, shift in tactical emphasis does not occur uniformly throughout a sizeable geographic area with the onset of the rainy season. However, the wet season works to their advantage in their campaign against local objectives within the affected areas. The following actions are emphasized:

(1) Attacks against supply depots and training centers where rapid reinforcement will be impeded by high water.

(2) Harassment of secondary roads to draw enemy security forces away from the main or heavily defended routes.

(3) Destruction of bridges and storage depots that support resupply or reinforcement of isolated enemy installations.

(4) Making use of periods of poor visibility and high winds that conceal movement to take under attack those small posts that are difficult to approach during periods of clear visibility.

c. No advantage accrues to the Viet Cong as a direct result of the rainy season, but they are prepared to capitalize on any opportunities that are presented if the enemy permits the weather to restrict, diminish or channelize his operations in such a way as to render himself vulnerable.

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15. Summary

The Viet Cong military forces have applied and continue to apply with some amplification, the Viet Minh-proven, Communist guerilla tactical doctrine to achieve their military objectives. They have been encouraged by their successes in employing these tactics and, therefore, can be expected to continue to employ similar tactics in the future. Their tactics do not show a drastic departure from time honored principles that have resulted in success in any military conflict. VC success is due to the meticulous attention paid to execution of these principles.

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VC INFRASTRUCTURE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. PURPOSE: The purpose of this pamphlet is to describe in general terms the covert and clandestine military-political framework which the Communist Viet Cong have established throughout South Vietnam, and to suggest intelligence and operational methods which warrant emphasis, particularly at sector and lower levels, in order to develop detailed information on local VC structure as the basis for operations to neutralize or eliminate this structure.

2. CONTROL OF THE VC MOVEMENT: It should be noted at the outset that VC organization in any given area of SVN is not the result of spontaneous, uncontrolled or haphazard activation and growth such as has happened in some previous insurgent situations; nor do the various components of the VC structure operate independent of control and support from a higher authority. Instead, we are confronted by an organization the growth and activities of which have been subjected to careful planning and coordination at each level of command by means of a political-military control apparatus which extends from HANOI through Central Office South Vietnam (COSVN) and the regional, provincial, district, village, and hamlet echelons throughout the country. Portions of this apparatus have been in existence since before World War II.

3. A MONOLITHIC MOVEMENT: Some differences as to VC organization, rate of growth, and methods of operation exist throughout the various regions, primarily due to differences in the local environment to which the VC must adjust, but basically we are confronted with one highly coordinated and tightly disciplined revolutionary movement the branches of which are both inter and intrarelated and reach into every hamlet and village in RVN. Since every point of contact extending from this VC apparatus serves as a nerve end, sending impulses back to the nerve centers, exposure of these connecting links leads to exposure of other portions of the VC system. However, as is well known, elaborate security arrangements exist to protect the VC apparatus at each echelon. In their own areas the VC subject all suspect individuals, including their own cadre, to repeated surveillance and investigation. This same thorough investigation is typical of their intelligence oriented approach to potential targets for recruitment, proselyting, or the various forms of coercion and attack.

4. IDENTIFICATION AND DEFEAT OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE: Because the VC organization, regardless of its outward appearance, is held together by an internal framework, we refer to this hidden but most important nerve system, as the infrastructure, which must be exposed before the outward manifestations of the VC movement can be defeated. It could also be referred to as the substructure or understructure. Like an iceberg, the largest and most dangerous portion is hidden from view; like a foundation, it is the vital organization upon which VC growth and prosperity depend. Like the chain of command, it is an invisible network which, in a highly efficient and disciplined organization, may be temporarily severed but is quickly replaced. Two programs to be considered in this

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pamphlet are intelligence operations and population control operations, both of which are interrelated and vital to the overall program of identifying and removing the VC infrastructure.

II. GENERAL SITUATION, BY AREAS OF CONTROL

1. GENERAL: The impact of the VC movement varies from area to area according to the state of GVN control and the VC strategy and objectives for the area. The VC expend their effort and resources according to the urgency of the situation and the risks they consider to be warranted; otherwise, they strive to make whatever progress is possible in all areas. In describing the situation, it is useful to consider three types of areas:

- a. VC Controlled (VC call these "liberated" areas)
- b. Contested ("disputed")
- c. GVN controlled ("temporarily occupied by the enemy")

2. VC CONTROLLED: Many parts of the country have never known strong central government influence. Certain of these were considered secure areas by the Viet Minh, having been written off by the French, and have been further developed by the Viet Cong. In these areas the Viet Cong program, although on a smaller scale, most nearly resembles the type of consolidation program which large portions of China underwent prior to 1950 as the Chinese Communist Route Armies occupied areas beyond central government control, and at their leisure went about the reshaping of social and economic structures according to their own doctrine.

a. In the VC controlled areas of SVN, VC units remain generally dispersed and concealed because of allied (friendly) air capabilities, but the presence of these units for enforcement of VC programs is well known to all of the people. VC domination of the populace in these areas however, is not entirely dependent upon the use of force. The VC have exploited the traditional hostility of the people in many of these areas to central government control. They have also initiated VC-sponsored programs to improve social and economic conditions, bring about land reform, raise educational standards, and formed local defense programs to "protect" the people from GVN tax collectors, military conscription, corvee labor programs, absentee landlords, money lenders, and the like.

b. GVN elements can enter such areas in force; however VC preparations against such entry, such as the construction of "combat villages", generally make these expeditions unprofitable. VC hamlets, potential air landing areas, and routes of access often contain fortifications and extensive antipersonnel devices which permit the VC and/or the villagers to conduct either active or passive resistance to GVN entry. Due to the overall situation, GVN temporary forays into such areas have little permanent effect and it is believed that the effort may be better spent in other areas where more lasting progress against the VC may be possible.

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c. While the VC maintain many concealed bases throughout SVN, those within the VC controlled areas play an important part in their overall military program. Manufacture, storage and distribution of crude (but effective) weapons and other war materiel can be accomplished most readily in those areas where extensive and elaborate caches and workshops can be prepared for current or future use in and around any of the villages or in remote locations not likely to be reached by GVN forces. Almost total control of local manpower and agricultural assets deny these resources to the GVN and place them at the disposal of the VC. Also, the general lack of GVN surveillance or interference makes the VC areas good springboards for initiation of operations against province and district capitals or other remaining pockets of GVN control which can be maintained only at great cost within areas under VC control.

d. In VC controlled areas the infrastructure follows the same general pattern as throughout the country, though there is greater emphasis on administrative organization than on agitation and conspiratorial activities since the areas are already VC-dominated and undergoing consolidation. Recruitment by GVN of anti-VC agents in such areas is difficult due to the lack of any outward evidence of GVN support, the great risks involved, and the difficulty of making contact for communications and reporting. However, reliable agents once placed have relatively less difficulty than in other areas in determining VC structure and capabilities since there is less apparent need for concealment of VC strength in these areas. Detailed intelligence on VC areas continues to be required by GVN as the basis for air and surface operations against selected targets whose destruction will have impact upon overall VC capabilities, although significant lessening of VC control in the areas attacked may not be an immediate GVN objective or capability.

3. CONTESTED AREAS: It is within a second category of areas that our knowledge of VC infrastructure is most urgently required. In this are the contested areas within which GVN is making maximum effort to hold and increase its influence over the population. The VC in these areas maintain a capability to strike cruel blows using combinations of local guerrillas and large mobile units attacking isolated outposts and vulnerable hamlets, interdicting lines of communication, disrupting economic patterns, levying and collecting taxes, subsistence, and material items from all elements of the population, as well as creating incidents which range in scope and intensity from propaganda to assassination. In this highly complex and fluid environment, GVN and VC political and military structure are in direct confrontation.

a. GVN authorities are at a disadvantage in that they must allocate much of their forces to the maintenance of such tenuous control as now exists, attempting gradually to expand their sphere of influence. Concurrently, operations must be conducted along and beyond the periphery of areas being pacified in order to seek out and destroy VC major units or, as a minimum, to keep these units off balance. Faulty intelligence and overextension of GVN forces can lead to premature withdrawal from "pacified" areas with the result that the VC infrastructure continues to be effective, reprisals are conducted against those who have cooperated with the GVN, and

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the local populace becomes even less responsive to future GVN efforts in their area.

b. VC forces have the advantage in that they can strike against fixed and vulnerable targets at the time and place of their choosing. However, to maintain their apparatus and obtain manpower, subsistence, materiel, shelter, medical care, intelligence, channels of communication and concealment for their forces in the face of the GVN presence, limited though it may be, requires the utmost in secrecy, devoting great attention to detail in planning, and obtaining both passive and active support from large segments of the local population. The ability to obtain this support from the people, whether voluntary or involuntary, is the VC's greatest asset.

4. GVN CONTROLLED: At the other end of the spectrum within the cities and surrounding areas now controlled by the GVN, VC apparatus and activity are almost entirely covert, but no less dangerous. Here, reliance is placed upon small, cellular units whose existence, capability, and ultimate missions are known only to a few key activists, such as is typical in any communist underground network. VC military capabilities within the large, densely-populated urban areas are largely untested and there may be a tendency for responsible GVN and US authorities to underestimate this potential threat. Terroristic activities are maintained at a low and selective level, sufficient to impress target elements with the risks attached to betrayal of VC interests and the futility of expecting governmental protection of individual life and property. Propaganda and recruitment activities are conducted discreetly, but effectively, as are fund raising and other support programs conducted amidst the population, whose resistance is generally passive at best. Making use of this apparatus, the VC gather intelligence for local and regional use and make detailed plans in anticipation of some local or external occurrence which could provide opportunities for full use of the capabilities so painstakingly developed.

5. POLITICAL MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS:

a. Certain functional organization appears common to VC structure at all echelons. A committee or commissariat exists at each level to oversee the translation of instructions, policy and guidance received from higher authority into specific campaigns, plans, and orders for execution at own and subordinate levels. While VC long range plans are tightly held and can only be speculated upon by the lesser cadres, a factor which merits consideration when evaluating apparent knowledgeability displayed by low level sources, short range VC plans are developed in great detail and generally well in advance by units concerned. For example, in anticipation of seasonal changes adjustment of activities is preplanned so as to compensate for changing operating conditions while maintaining a pre-determined overall level of operational intensity.

(1) Certain members of the commissariat also have functional responsibilities. Chief among these would be the chiefs of the political and

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military sections. The political department is normally a separate section, but political elements are found in the military staff section and also in all military units. The commander of the senior military unit may also be military representative on the commissariat, and possibly head of the military staff section.

(2) Counterintelligence is a function of the security element within the political section. The far-reaching responsibilities of the political and security elements give them authority to look into all activities within their geographical area. They deal continuously with their counterparts at other echelons.

(3) Military operations are planned by the military affairs committee, military section, or staff bureau which may be separate entities or one and the same. The combat intelligence function is frequently a part of the operational staff element.

(4) Recruiting (or proselyting) is a major activity which is undertaken in a thorough, persistent and imaginative manner, as results have indicated. Close liaison exists between this element and the security elements.

(5) Propaganda elements under the political sections are active at each level. Their programs are directed at both friend and foe, with continuous reindoctrination of the "liberated" population receiving high priority attention.

(6) Military training is a function of the military affairs elements; however such training probably devotes a disproportionate share of the program to political subjects.

(7) Other common sections include logistics, communications, and special elements to meet local financial, agricultural, and other requirements. Staff elements are also established to give publicity and deal with special interests or fronts, such as "War Victims", Farmers, Fishermen, etc., which the VC wish to play up or exploit.

b. Organization charts reflecting type political-military supervisory structures and troop objectives are included as inclosures to this pamphlet for background information only. It is known that GVN agencies at district and higher levels already possess considerable detailed knowledge as to the outline of VC infrastructure in their general areas of interest and responsibility.

6. URGENCY IN DEFEAT OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE: What is now required is systematic action, through local intelligence and population control programs, to expand present knowledge of the VC infrastructure, and to identify and apprehend those key VC who, regardless of their motivation, make the VC organization and methods effective in their struggle to gradually supplant and eventually overthrow the established government. While the VC may frequently give the appearance of being defeated locally, it must be recognized that the VC organization goes deep, that it is effective, and that it

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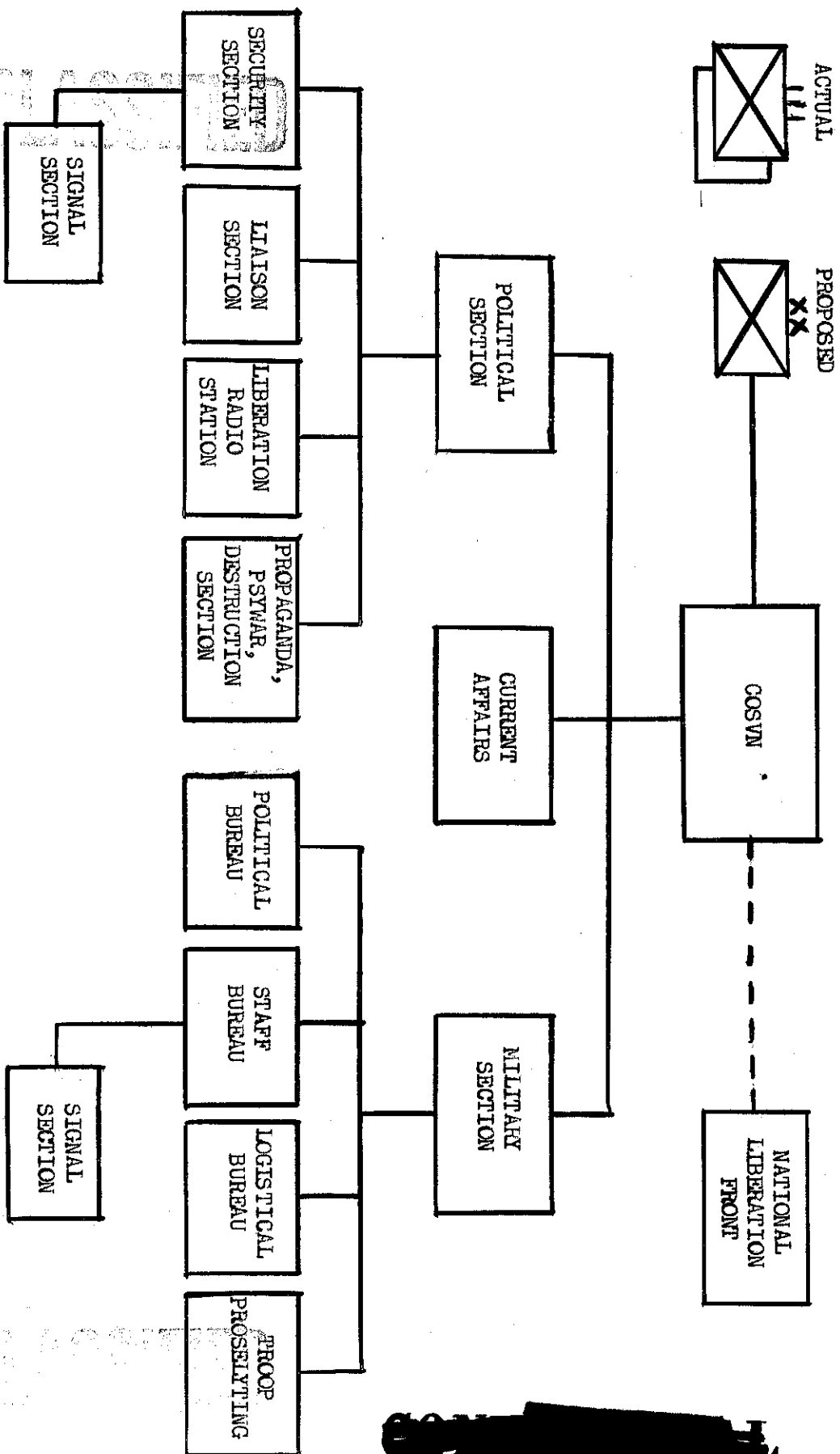
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is prepared to take advantage of any weakness or lack of GVN organization in any area of South Vietnam by implementing its own VC military, political, and economic programs to "meet the people's need". GVN vigilance, even in "pacified" areas, can not be relaxed.

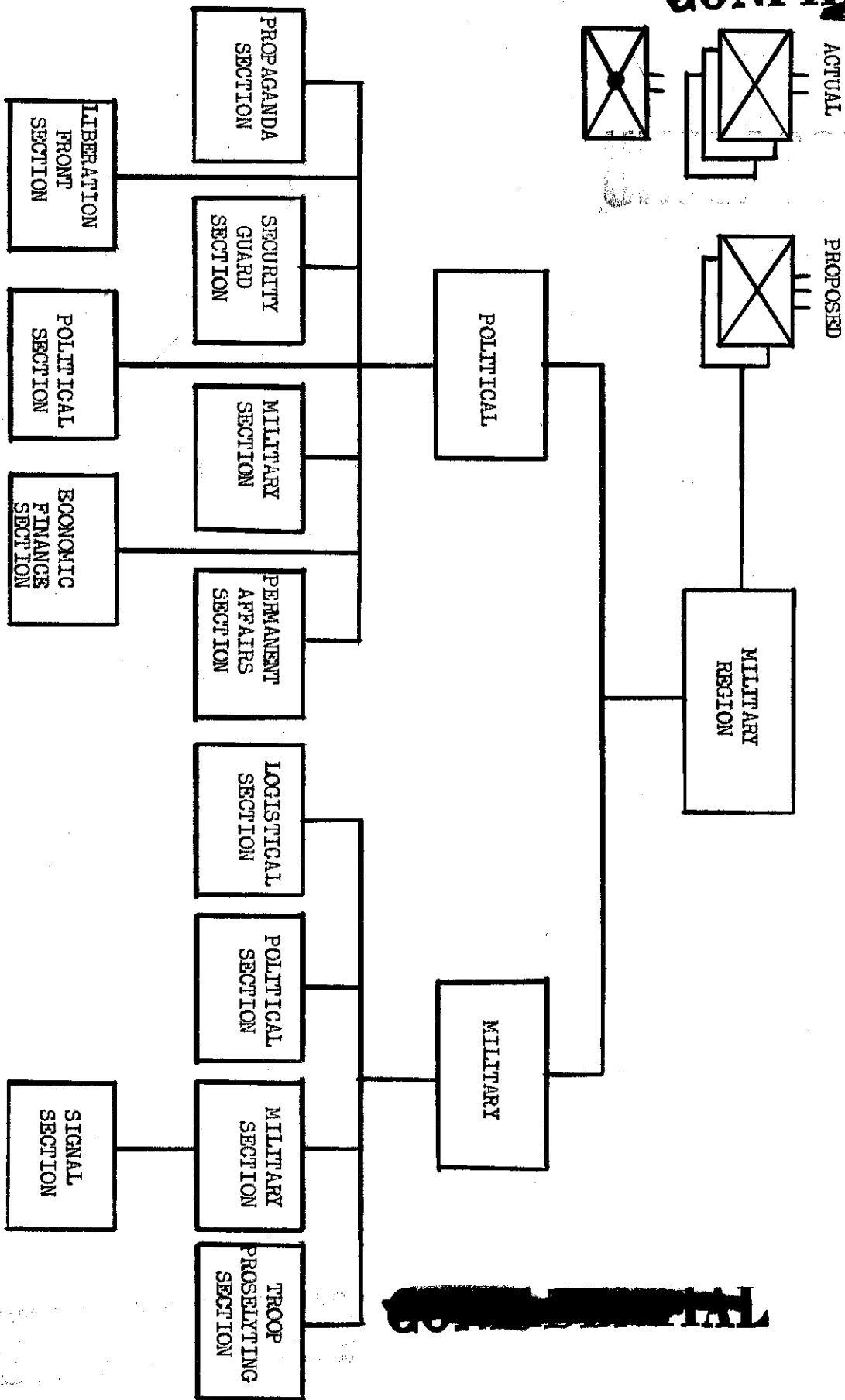
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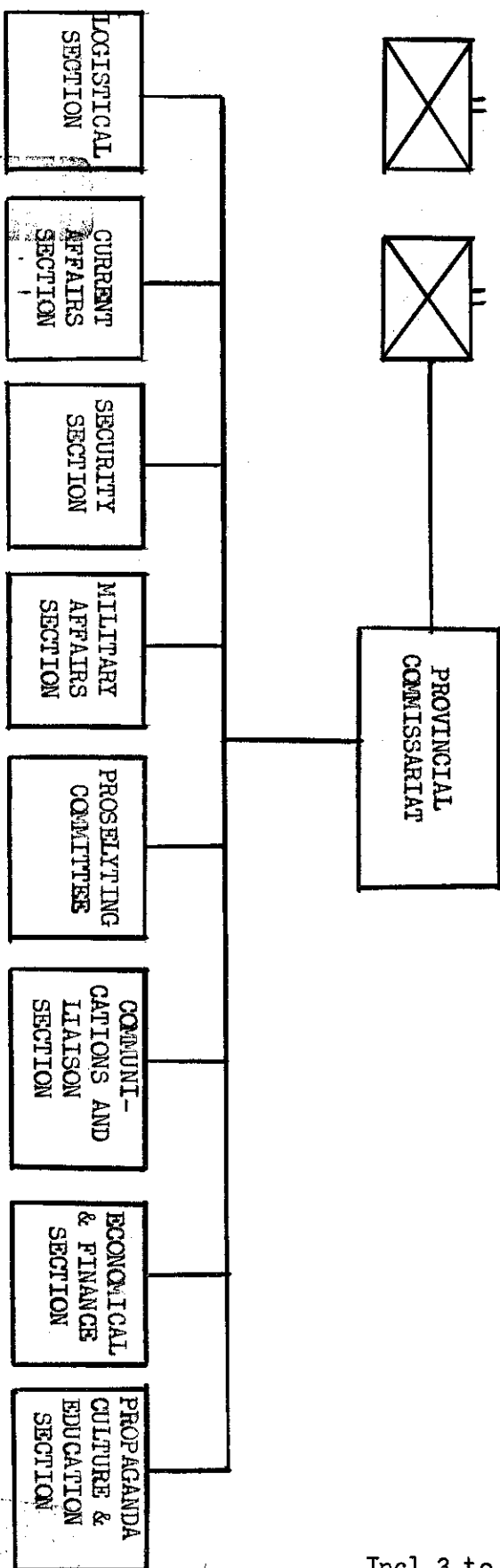
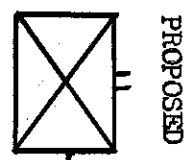
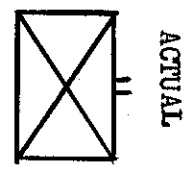
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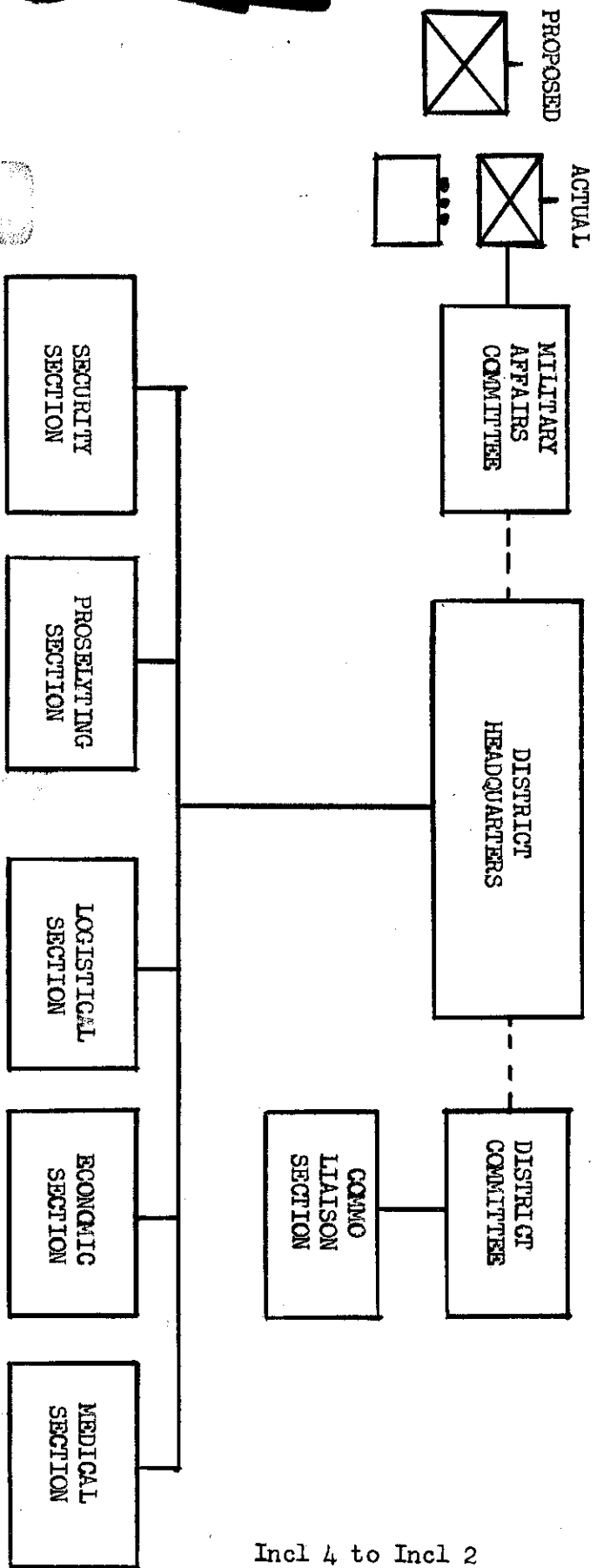
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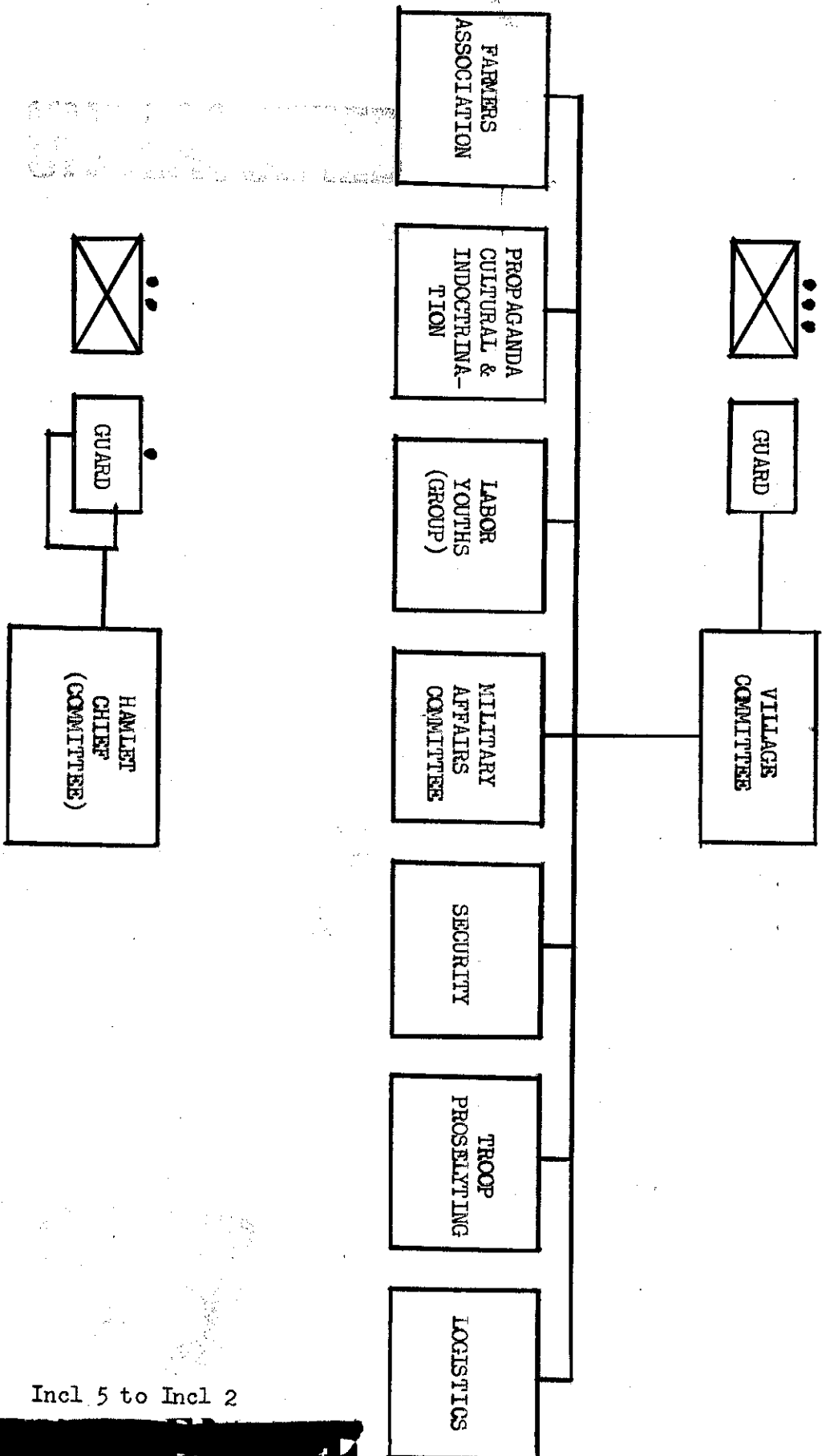
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VC INFRASTRUCTURE

(A prepared briefing)

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VC INFRASTRUCTURE

For the next 45 minutes I am going to talk to you about the VC infrastructure. The term infrastructure in this context is used to mean that portion of the VC organization which is hidden from view, which lies beneath the surface, which is not obvious, but which is the framework upon which depends all other VC or VC supported organizations and activities. In practical terms, the VC infrastructure is the VC political-administrative organization by which the VC control or seek to control the populace of SVN, the economic organization which supports both the administrative and military organization, and the organization for social domination.

To better understand this organization, let us take a brief look at the VC aims and objectives in SVN; just what are they trying to accomplish?

It presently appears that the VC strategy is:

1. To force a cease-fire and seize power thru political maneuver.
2. After that, to form a "neutral" coalition government and force the withdrawal of US forces.

3. This will be followed by negotiations with Hanoi to reunify the two Vietnams.

This path is viewed by the VC as more political than military.

The second item I would like to touch on briefly is the Communist, not just VC, doctrine of power. It is based on 6 major tenets:

1. One unified political/military strategy at all levels.
2. Detailed political/military tactical methods to carry out the strategy.
3. One unified political/military chain of command from the Central Committee to the hamlet committee.

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4. Elite cadre who thoroughly understand the strategy and are versed in intelligence/psychological/political/military affairs and can train others to carry out these methods.

5. Secrecy and surprise.

6. Emphasis on intelligence, particularly political intelligence.

In SVN in particular, the communists have the following specific objectives:

1. To establish base areas and ensure the security of their rear installations

2. To organize peasant masses in order to deprive the GVN of their support and provide manpower and supplies necessary to:

(1) Build and maintain a large cadre organization and armed forces.

(2) Isolate the central government and the Americans politically by obtaining the active or passive support of all segments of the population.

(3) Divide and subvert government leaders and the armed forces.

In the pursuit of their strategy and objectives, and by applying their organizational theories, the VC have developed a well-organized, extensive, covert and clandestine government in SVN under the command of the Lao Dong or Workers' Party, in Hanoi.

Most of its leaders are known by aliases and the structure of the government is largely hidden.

Secrecy is the cardinal principle. Organizational and physical compartmentation is extensive. Officials and officers are told only what they need to know. Bases are widely dispersed, hidden, and linked by radio or covert communications routes. The routes are divided into separate links;

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the liaison agents in each link know only their own link and not the whole chain.

The government attempts to make its rule popular, but uses an iron hand if necessary.

This government is supported at each echelon, from the Central Office in Tay Ninh Province, down through the regional, provincial, district, village and hamlet levels, by troops and militia, even in so-called GVN-controlled areas.

Taxes are collected to help finance VC governmental activities and economic/social development is implemented in VC controlled areas.

The entire apparatus in SVN is governed by a central committee called the Central Office South Vietnam (COSVN) located in the Duong Minh Chau War Zone (War Zone C) in Northern Tay Ninh Province next to the Cambodian border.

COSVN consists of over 1200 men and women laboring in myriad bureaus, sections, branches, sub-sections, etc. These staff elements are by no means concentrated in compounds or fortified areas, but are scattered in lonely thatched houses in the hamlets and jungle and in underground installations. COSVN comes under the direct control of Hanoi. Communications with Hanoi is by radio, by couriers using the many land trails leading to NVN, and probably by agents using the normal commercial air routes linking Phnom Penh and Vientiane with Hanoi.

COSVN's overall mission is to translate the policies of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party into concrete directives, regulations, and orders which will be implemented by lower echelons in the VC organization.

COSVN is organized into two major sections - a political section and a military section. This duality is carried out in all lower echelons down

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to the regional level. In the province and below, the smaller number of personnel in those headquarters normally causes the two functions to be meshed into one component.

The COSVN Political Section in turn has 4 sections which are responsible for the so-called "Liberation Radio" station, the security of the war zone, liaison with front organizations in SVN and the development of themes and directives for propaganda, psywar, entertainment, and political education which are directed outside the VC organization.

The COSVN Military Section is broken down into four major bureaus:

1. The Political Bureau, which is responsible for political training, special services, security training, press relations, enemy troop proselyting, and personnel assignments. This is a sort of G1 with major emphasis on political training and indoctrination.

2. The Staff Bureau, which is responsible for VC operations, military training doctrine and regulations, the organization of military intelligence units and the collection of intelligence on enemy units.

This is a combined G2 - G3.

3. The Logistical Bureau, which handles such affairs as medical care, finance, ordnance, economic policy, depots, factories, taxation, etc.

4. The Troop Proselyting Bureau. The establishment of a separate bureau at the highest level for the purpose of supervising and directing troop proselyting points up the great importance the VC place on this type of action.

What do the VC mean by troop proselyting? It is the recruitment of members of the RVN armed forces over to the VC cause. The program has many advantages to the VC, many of which are obvious. They gain already trained

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and armed men; they obtain, in many cases, a fifth column ready to turn its weapons on unsuspecting friendly troops at the appropriate time; they gain invaluable intelligence; and eventually they gain in manpower.

As an adjunct to COSVN, we find at the national level the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. The Front was established in 1960 and is an important political action/propaganda arm of COSVN. The Front is supposedly made up of representatives of various ethnic and religious groups, socio-economic classes, and professional groups such as the People's Revolutionary Party, VC regional and provincial committees, the VC armed forces, youth, farmers and women's organizations, Montagnards and Cambodians, Buddhists and Catholics, Cao Daists and Hoa Haos, artists, writers, students, teachers, etc.

The NFLSVN is precisely what its name implies, a front organization for COSVN which the Communists use in an attempt to unify all religious and ethnic groups and all classes into one political movement under Communist control.

The Front, which is a rival to the GVN and which has proclaimed a policy of national independence, peace and neutrality, also is the vehicle the Communists would use to form a coalition government, should the opportunity arise.

The military force under the direct control of COSVN presently consist of 2 regiments of 3 rifle battalions each, and a guard or security battalion. There is a possibility that the regiments each have a heavy weapons support battalion or an artillery battalion. It is the objective of the Central Office eventually to form a division.

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The next rung down the ladder are the military regions of which there are five:

1. MR 5 which is responsible for the area from the DMZ in the North down to a line drawn along the southern boundaries of Khanh Hoa, Darlac and Quang Duc Provinces;
2. MR 7 which covers the area down to the southern boundaries of Tay Ninh, and Binh Duong and the western boundary of Bien Hoa;
3. The SCGD Special MR, which covers the Saigon metropolitan area and Gia Dinh Province;
4. MR 8 which covers the area down to the Mekong River and An Giang;
5. MR 9 which covers the lower Delta region.

Each MR command has a main base area developed during the IndoChina war and reactivated in 1958-1959. The VC generally remain in these base areas which are located in remote, inaccessible areas made up of closely integrated complexes of villages prepared for defense, a politically indoctrinated population in which even children have their specific intelligence tasks, and an administrative machine parallel to that of the legal authority to which may be added at will any military unit assigned to operate in that area.

As mentioned before, the duality of the political/military combination obtains at this level also. The MR is mainly a tactical headquarters, but has responsibility for applying the directives received from COSVN to the peculiarities of its particular area.

You will notice on this chart that the political headquarters has a military section and the military headquarters has a political section.

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In theory, the political and military headquarters are equal. In actuality, the political headquarters establishes the policy and the military headquarters carries it out. The military section found in the political headquarters is where this policy is established. The political section located in the military headquarters is a watch dog which sees to it that the policies are carried out faithfully and which also observes and reports to the political headquarters on the adherence of the individual members of the military headquarters to the party line.

Below the MR level we find a varying number of provinces. These are VC provinces and their boundaries do not necessarily coincide with those established by the GVN. The province is one of the main policy making and policy implementing echelons in the chain of command. The provincial central committee has 9 to 15 members. Its staff is made up of about 300 people. As are other headquarters, the provincial headquarters is usually located in a remote region, dispersed in several hamlets or in thatched huts hidden in the jungle, forest or swamp. The headquarters moves from time to time.

The province usually has radio and courier contact with the MR and courier nets to the district committees, which have similar nets to the village committees. The military affairs section of the provincial committee has radio and/or courier contact with the military force operating directly under its control.

The District Committee is probably the key level in the VC infrastructure. The District is responsible for the consolidation of VC gains and for enlarging VC control into virgin territories. It not only directs but participates directly in the village and hamlet organizational activities.

The district headquarters contains the same elements as those we have

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already discussed, but of course, on a smaller scale. The district organization, including the military forces under its direct control, numbers somewhere in the vicinity of 200 to 250 men.

In some districts, the district chief is also the head of the military affairs committee and commander of the district company or platoon.

The main contact between the district headquarters and the populace is through what the VC call "mission" or "activity" teams, or what most students of Communist revolutionary methods call agitprops from the Russian words for agitator and propagandist.

These teams are normally allocated on the basis of one per village area. They number anywhere from 3 to 25 men depending on the number of hamlets and inhabitants in their areas of responsibility. In VC controlled areas these teams make the rounds of the hamlets conducting meetings, explaining VC policies, advertising VC military victories, extolling VC economic and social developments in the area, collecting information and intelligence not only on RVN military units but on economic, social and political conditions. The information is then relayed by messengers to the district headquarters where it is evaluated and used as the basis for VC action.

The district establishes the program of economic and social development. Schools may be built, farming quotas established, seed furnished, entertainment teams sent out.

The district committee will arrest and judge recalcitrant persons, enemies of the people, criminals, gamblers, and the like.

The district committee will install village and hamlet leaders and supervise the proper organization of the populace into VC front and

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supported organizations. These organizations usually are four in number:

1. Farmers' Organization
2. Women's Organization
3. Youth Organization
4. Self-Defense Corps

The district units are responsible for the training of the VC SDC, for supervising the establishment of proper defense plans in the hamlets, for supervising the establishment of proper camouflage, evacuation and intelligence reporting procedures on the part of the populace, and for establishing quotas for military service, based on the needs of the hamlet, villages, the district units, and higher headquarters.

At the village level we find the same organization as in higher echelons, with the added sections that are responsible for the so-called mass organizations. These have been mentioned before: The Farmers', Women's, Youth and SDC. The VC attempt to get all of the people into one or more of these organizations, in order to get them committed to the VC, to obtain their support in one form or another, unwitting though it may be.

At the lowest organized level we find the hamlet. It usually is run by a VC-appointed official for the first few months after its organization by the VC. Eventually, when the inhabitants are judged by the VC to be sufficiently indoctrinated and complaisant, they will be allowed to select their own chief, subject to VC approval.

The hamlet chief is responsible for the recruiting of men into the VC self-defense force to guard the hamlet against government incursions, and to establish a local perimeter defense and warning system. The populace of the hamlet is formed into the 4 VC sponsored organizations; classes are conducted in the avowed aims and objectives of the VC. In the sphere of economic

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development, the VC exact rice seedlings from the richer farmers and distribute them to the poorer ones. Land owned by absentee landlords is confiscated and redistributed to the landless or the poor farmers. A collective is established to render financial support to destitute farmers. Agricultural experts advise the farmers in the improvement of their crops. Local force military units are called upon to help build dikes, to repair houses, to replace houses damaged by military action of either side. Classes in reading and writing are established. In return, the people are expected to pay taxes to the VC to support the military forces and to help in the social and economic development of the hamlet and surrounding areas.

So far, I've been talking about organization for control of the people. The system becomes even more complex when I bring in the subject of the Communist Party.

The cadre, particularly the leaders or the elite who make up the chain of command that I have just described, are usually members of the Communist Party. Thus they wear two hats, since they are engaged in purely party activities as well as normal political, military, economic and social activities. It is the duty of all party members and their responsibility to conduct or supervise party activity, party training, and to establish and translate military/political/economic/and social programs that are in keeping with party desires and theories.

The party apparatus forms a separate and parallel chain of command from top to bottom. The leaders of the party normally are in positions of responsibility in the political/administrative organization. They thus form what is called an interlocking directorate which assures that the

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desires of the party per se are translated into political and military actions which, in turn, are meshed, since members of the political committees are, in many cases, the military leaders also.

In addition to and in conjunction with his other duties, each party member has five basic responsibilities:

1. Intelligence
2. Propaganda
3. Struggle (that is, political persuasion or military action)
4. Training
5. Organization of other people.

Well-versed through training and experience in political, psychological and military affairs, these cadre drive and guide the Communist operation.

So we finally get down to the man. What kind of animal is this Communist? Jean Larteguy, a French writer with many years of journalistic and military experience in Indochina and North Africa, describes the character and lives of the Communist cadre in his novel The Centurions:

"The Party and the Army, that's their whole life. Outside them they have no existence.

"Many of the officers and other ranks have been waging clandestine war for years. They've lived in bands quartered in out-of-the-way little villages, in the mountains, in this militarily intransigent, rigorist and highly organized community."

"Even the Voice (a VC cadre), who's a graduate of Hanoi University and quite brilliant has ceased to have an original thought or to struggle against his surroundings. All those chaps, just in order to survive, need all the strength they have. They must endure night marches, battles to death, insufficient food. In their leisure hours they are transformed into propaganda machines. They are compelled to reiterate again and again the same slogans that have to be hammered into the thick skulls of the nha-ques (VN peasants). They organize all sorts of associations to embrace the civilian population and see to it that these associations do not come adrift immediately. They have to instruct recruits, conscript coolies, collect money. These men don't have a minute to themselves; their life isn't their

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own. Thus they prefer to accept this Communist system wholesale rather than ponder over it and discuss it."

"And after a few years of communal life the result is a man without a soul who is totally inhuman and at the same time ambitious and incredibly naive."