

UNCLASSIFIED

|                                                                                                                     |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| AD NUMBER                                                                                                           |              |
| AD508664                                                                                                            |              |
| CLASSIFICATION CHANGES                                                                                              |              |
| TO:                                                                                                                 | UNCLASSIFIED |
| FROM:                                                                                                               | CONFIDENTIAL |
| LIMITATION CHANGES                                                                                                  |              |
| TO:<br>Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.                                                      |              |
| FROM:<br>Controlling DoD Organization: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development (Army), Washington, DC 20310. |              |
| AUTHORITY                                                                                                           |              |
| AGO D/A ltr dtd 11 Jan 1980; AGO D/A ltr dtd 11 Jan 1980                                                            |              |

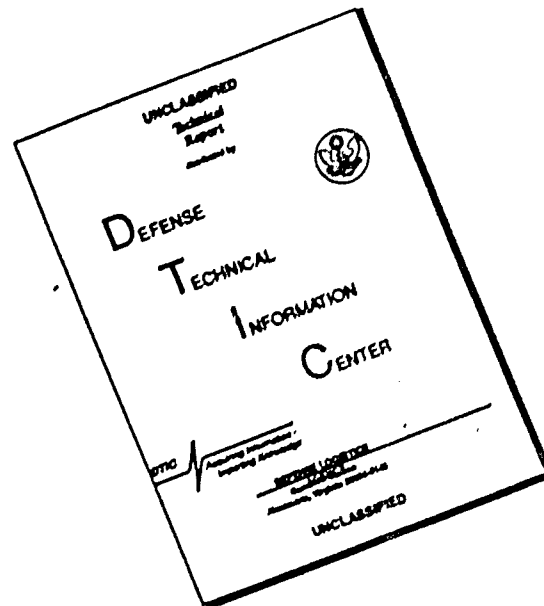
THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN DELIMITED  
AND CLEARED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE  
UNDER DOD DIRECTIVE 5200.20 AND  
NO RESTRICTIONS ARE IMPOSED UPON  
ITS USE AND DISCLOSURE.

**DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A**

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE;  
DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED.

# DISCLAIMER NOTICE



THIS DOCUMENT IS BEST QUALITY AVAILABLE. THE COPY FURNISHED TO DTIC CONTAINED A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PAGES WHICH DO NOT REPRODUCE LEGIBLY.

# **SECURITY**

---

# **MARKING**

**The classified or limited status of this report applies to each page, unless otherwise marked.**

**Separate page printouts MUST be marked accordingly.**

---

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE LAWS, TITLE 18, U.S.C., SECTIONS 793 AND 794. THE TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.

NOTICE: When government or other drawings, specifications or other data are used for any purpose other than in connection with a definitely related government procurement operation, the U.S. Government thereby incurs no responsibility, nor any obligation whatsoever; and the fact that the Government may have formulated, furnished, or in any way supplied the said drawings, specifications, or other data is not to be regarded by implication or otherwise as in any manner licensing the holder or any other person or corporation, or conveying any rights or permission to manufacture, use or sell any patented invention that may in any way be related thereto.

CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

18 OACSFOR

19

OT-UT-70BQ10

22 April 1970

AGDA (M) (16 Apr 70)

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG Charles A. Corcoran, Operations, J3 MACV; MACV; I Field Force Vietnam, Period 23 May 1968 to 23 February 1970 (U)

\*This document is the property of the National Defense

SEE DISTRIBUTION

Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

1. Reference: AR 1-26, subject, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U) dated 4 November 1966.
2. Transmitted herewith is the report of LTG Charles A. Corcoran subject as above.
3. This report is provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized from the experiences of the author. The report should be reviewed in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 1-26; however, it should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
4. Information of actions initiated under provisions of AR 1-26, as a result of subject report, should be provided OACSFOR OT UT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

MAY 1 1970

1 Incl  
as

DISTRIBUTION:

Commanding Generals

- US Continental Army Command
- US Army Combat Developments Command
- US Army Materiel Command

Commandants

- US Army War College
- US Army Command and General Staff College

Regraded unclassified when separated from classified inclosure.

CONFIDENTIAL

003 650



AD508664

FILE COPY

MASTER SERVICE AVAILABILITY  
DIST. 1 APR 68

9

**Copies furnished:**

### Deputy Chiefs of Staff

**Chief of Research and Development**

### Assistant Chiefs of Staff

**Chief of Engineers**

**The Surgeon General**

**Chief of Military History**

**The Provost Marshal General**

OSD(SA) Assistant for Southeast Asia Forces

**Director, Defense Research & Engineering**

Office, Joint Chiefs of Staff

## Commanders In Chief

**Pacific**

US Army, Pacific

US Strike Command

### Commanding Generals

Military District of Washington

US Army STRATCOM

III Corps, ATTN: Project MASSTER

Chief of Staff, USAF

**Deputy Chief of Staff, Air Force, Plans & Operations**

Chief of Naval Operations

Commandant of the Marine Corps

### Commandants

**Armed Forces Staff College**

Defense Intelligence School

**Industrial College of the Armed Forces**

**The National War College**

Senior Army Representative, Marine Corps Development & Education Command

USAF Air Ground Operations School

The Air University Library

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**DISTRIBUTION (Cont'd)**

**Defense Documentation Center**

**USAF Project RAND**

**Commanding Officers**

**US Army Limited War Laboratory**

**US Army Logistics, Doctrine Systems & Readiness Agency**

**US Army Mobility Equipment Research & Development Center**

**CONFIDENTIAL**



**CONFIDENTIAL**

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96375

04 APR 1970

AVHGC-DST

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report  
LTG Charles A. Corcoran

Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development  
Department of the Army  
Washington, D. C. 21310

1. Attached are three copies of the Senior Officer Debriefing Report prepared by LTG Charles A. Corcoran. The report covers the period 23 May 1968 to 23 February 1970, during which time LTG Corcoran served consecutively as Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations, J3 MACV, Chief of Staff, MACV, and Commanding General, I Field Force Vietnam.
2. LTG Corcoran is recommended as a candidate guest speaker at appropriate service schools and joint colleges.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl  
as (trip)  
2 cy wd HQ, DA

  
L. D. MURRAY  
CPT, AGC  
Assistant Adjutant General

Regraded unclassified when separated  
from classified inclosure.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS I FIELD FORCE VIETNAM  
APO San Francisco 96350

AVFA-CG

23 February 1970

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report (RCS-CSFOR-74)

Commanding General  
US Army Vietnam  
ATTN: AVHOC-DST  
APO San Francisco 96375

1. Reference: USARV Reg 1-3.
2. Forwarded in accordance with reference are five copies of the debrief report.

3 Incl  
1. Debrief Report, 5 cy  
~~2. USARV Reg 1-3~~  
~~3. AR 1-26~~  
2 cy Incl 1 and Incls 2 and 3 wd, HQ, USARV

*Charles A. Concoran*  
CHARLES A. CONCORAN  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

Regraded unclassified when separated  
from classified inclosure.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

## CONFIDENTIAL

Country: Republic of Vietnam

Debrief Report By: Charles A. Corcoran, Lieutenant General, USA

Duty Assignments: a. Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations, J3 MACV

b. Chief of Staff, MACV

c. Commanding General, I Field Force Vietnam

Inclusive Dates: a. 23 May 68 to 24 July 68

b. 25 July 68 to 14 March 69

c. 15 March 69 to 23 February 70

Date of Report: 23 February 1970

1. (C) COMMAND. The position of IFFORCEV/SA, II CTZ/Area Coordinator was designed to be a tactical command but with the passage of time has taken on many of the characteristics of an area command. This was necessary in order to coordinate activities of USARV and MACV through one commander without organizing the administrative staff necessary to exercise full command responsibility. The result is a coordinating headquarters which depends more upon cooperation in its daily business than command. Such a command relationship accommodates a wide variety of coordinating problems including relationships with the Koreans, Vietnamese Army, the US Special Forces, provincial officials and Territorial Forces. Although there are many disadvantages to such a loose organizational structure for fighting a war, it has proven to be a flexible relationship for readjusting to peace. The price of maintaining the integrity of Korean and Vietnamese forces and institutions is paying its reward in Vietnamization. The rapid transfer of responsibility for security operations to the Vietnamese has been aided as a result of building a complete SVN military and national organizational structure without permanent US crutches.

Command of US forces is not so easily rationalized. The separation of US command between MACV and USARV, and the creation of multiple headquarters at USARV level contributed to many command problems which may be further aggravated as combat forces are redeployed. In every area of troop concentration, elements of these commands operate semiautonomously and under conditions in which command supervision has been diluted. Zone and subzone coordinators are commanders whose primary responsibility is in some other activity and whose staff are not organized to adequately supervise the other activities in their areas. In the future in many areas the senior US officer will be an advisor who has even less staff capability to supervise coordination of US units on an area basis. It appears that an area command system for support of all US forces may be more appropriate to our future

FOR OT UT  
70B010  
Inclosure

1

CONFIDENTIAL

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.  
DOD DIR 5200.10

## CONFIDENTIAL

circumstances in Vietnam than the area coordinator system under which we currently operate.

The command problem is rooted in an organizational structure which provides separate TDs for USARV and MACV. The command arrangement which separates territorial advisors, ARVN advisors and US combat forces is a basic cause of many personnel problems, logistics problems, and problems of integration and coordination of plans. The most highly motivated and best intentioned people are presented with many obstacles which at times prevent them from working smoothly.

2. (C) INTELLIGENCE. The enemy divides the II Corps area into three parts: the Highlands (B-3 Front), the coastal (MR-5) and the Southern area (MR-6). There is a military logic which dictates his operations in these three areas. In the Highlands the enemy utilizes sanctuary out of country in Cambodia and Laos and depends largely upon his LOC for support. Few of his units are continuously sustained from bases in country. His freedom of movement along the border offers an option of attack at any point from northern Kontum to Quang Duc without risk of interdiction of his LOC. He is able to stock pile and mass for attack and to strike swiftly at shallow targets, requiring extensive relocation of allied forces to counter him. He depends upon a favorable, set battle and a quick withdrawal. Sustained battles to either hold an area or to destroy a major force are beyond his capability. The problem of the Cambodian option is solved primarily by US intelligence means which permit adequate time to posture forces so as to deny him surprise or a favorable battlefield. In recent months this threat has been reduced by the heavy casualties the enemy suffered at Ben Het - Dak To and Bu Prang - Duc Lap but could be reactivated by reinforcement from other Corps areas or North Vietnam. As long as the Cambodian sanctuary exists, the threat to the Highlands cannot be completely neutralized.

Enemy forces in the Highlands perform another function which is equally important to that of the Cambodian option. They provide security to the LOCs that support the coastal areas. In the coastal provinces the enemy established sanctuaries in mountainous jungle areas up to 30 kilometers from the coast. Such areas provide access to the sparsely inhabited interior and yet are sufficiently remote from the populated coastal strip to make attack difficult. These areas function as sanctuaries not only for regular forces but more recently for guerrillas and provincial headquarters. They serve not only as a logistics and training base but as a forward base of operations for main force units. The interplay between these base areas and the enemy functionaries among the people is highly complex, but the critical military consideration is that the entire system is within reach and therefore vulnerable to neutralization. His offensive capability in the coastal areas has resulted more from his dispersed posture than his ability to mass. He has avoided major attacks or battles and has been content with initiating numerous minor actions of short duration. In 1969

## CONFIDENTIAL

we have reached a sufficient posture with Territorial forces to permit protection of the population while simultaneously massing large enough force for sustained operations in the enemy base areas. We have largely overcome the enemy's advantage of area posture and still retain the capability for maneuver.

The Southern area has traditionally been primarily a VC war. Main force units were commanded by indigenous personnel and their support was provided by the population. However, in the past year it has become increasingly dependent on North Vietnam fillers and the Cambodian pipeline. The enemy has sustained his efforts by guerrilla tactics since the TET of 1968. His dispersed operations seldom offer an opportunity for a major engagement. However, his base has been proven to be highly vulnerable to harassment by Ranger operations and his overall effectiveness greatly reduced by the increasing denial operations effected by Territorial Forces with regular force screens.

Of the three enemy tactical areas in II Corps, the coastal area is most vulnerable to neutralization by continuous allied offensive effort. Enemy forces in the Highlands will seldom present an opportunity for annihilation, while in the Southern area the enemy has chosen to so disperse his forces that the most effective friendly tactic has been one of denial operations directed at enemy replacements and rice.

Throughout the Corps area, several trends in enemy activity have become apparent over the past year. Most of the day-to-day incidents occurring appear to have been the result of local force actions, with the NVA and Main Force units seldom being identified in contact. Most actions have been by squads or platoon-size elements, with only rare reports of company-size or larger attacks being received. Small-scale ground attacks, increased use of sappers and snipers, limited attacks by fire, and more emphasis on LOC interdictions through ambushes and minings became the enemy's primary offensive weapons.

In conjunction with the trend toward increased emphasis on low level activity, the fragmenting of Main Force and Local Force units to support the guerrilla units has been noted on several occasions. This has been particularly evident in Binh Dinh and Phu Yen Province. Further reinforcement of the low level effort has come through the subordination of NVA units to provincial control. Again, this has been most evident in Binh Dinh and Phu Yen Provinces.

The moves to rebuild local forces and counter pacification gains can be seen in other enemy trends. Primary targets during the period have become the pacification forces and organizations providing security to the populated areas--RF/PF, PSDF, RD, and GVN officials. Ground attacks against these elements have become increasingly more common as the

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

pacification program continues to make progress into former VC-controlled areas, removes the population base from VC influence, and neutralizes the local power structure and its security elements. US forces and installations have also been frequent targets for enemy attacks by fire in his attempts to cause maximum US casualties.

Changes in the enemy's tactics and organizations over the past year have resulted in new and modified programs being applied to existing combat intelligence techniques. As the enemy increased his emphasis on the district-level war, it became necessary to expand intelligence production activities to include not only the major enemy forces, but also the forces involved in the district war as well. Identifying the low level enemy, pinpointing his operational areas, and determining his capabilities and objectives were major problems. A vehicle utilized very successfully in determining the extent of the local threat was a series of studies on each of the districts in the Corps area. These district studies drew material from all available sources to focus attention on the particular nature of the local war in each of the areas. Kept current, these studies were, and are, a valuable tool in establishing the enemy status in each district.

Coupled with reporting problems in the past has been the lack of thorough exploitation of all sources of intelligence, particularly human and documents. Although the exploitation of PW, Hoi Chanh, and other knowledgeable human sources has gained impetus through increased emphasis, progress has been uneven. Responses at the lower echelons to intelligence derived from human sources, particularly those knowledgeable in some aspect of the district war, still lack urgency. The dissemination of raw information from ralliers and captives to district officials has shown considerable improvement over the past year.

Locating the enemy, either the major units or the small local units, has presented numerous problems over the last year. Some long range reconnaissance means underwent modification or proved ineffective while other new means were developed to meet the environment. The mountainous terrain and heavy jungle in II Corps Tactical Zone severely limited the effectiveness of the Side Looking Airborne Radar (SLAR). Although isolated movers were detected, no pattern of movement was determined which could be used for intelligence or targeting purposes. Some value was gained from SLAR by observing the out-of-country vehicular traffic. Supplementing SLAR as a valuable targeting tool was the Airborne Personnel Detector (APD). By the coordination of APD and gunships, targets were located and attacked. The APD was valuable in defining areas of enemy activity for targeting.

The use of unattended sensors throughout the Corps Zone expanded during the past year. The US commanders found many uses for the devices and

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

the Vietnamese were also trained in their employment. Particular success was achieved in reducing mining of roads by emplanting unattended sensors along the road. Security of bridges was improved by employing acoustic sensors to detect tampering with the bridge. Sensors were also used in the Plei Trap Valley - Tri Border area to detect enemy infiltration. These sensors were monitored by the Deployable Automatic Relay Terminal (DART II), the ground station of which is located in Pleiku. Experience to date indicates that more study in technique and analytical methods is required in order to obtain more precise information in regard to enemy foot movement. In general, these sensors have been used primarily in a target acquisition role with artillery being employed on significant activations. Combat assaults in response to sensor activations or bomb damage assessment missions were limited because of the scarcity of troops and the inaccessibility of the terrain where the sensors were located. The mission of DART II is significant in that it can describe the extent of enemy buildup in the Kontum-Pleiku area. However, ARVN has not yet developed combat power to sustain an operation in the Plei Trap to exploit the intelligence of enemy base development. Our best prospect for the sensors in the future may be in the coastal base areas. Permanent monitoring of each of these base areas should contribute considerably to ARVN and ROK planning.

The mission of the Corps Ranger Company in II Corps has also been modified. Rather than gathering intelligence by passive means, the Corps Ranger Company was employed in attacking small groups of enemy and in gaining intelligence by capturing personnel and documents. During the past calendar year, the Ranger Company achieved a 48:1 kill ratio, better than any of the other units in II Corps. Additionally the intelligence gained from personnel and captured documents was of particular significance. The employment of Rangers offers one of the best means of providing intelligence and target information to ARVN units as a basis for their offensive operations. ARVN units normally respond well to good targeting which in remote areas can only be provided through Ranger-type operations.

Because II Corps is large and our resources were limited, a special method of planning reconnaissance was developed. Instead of making a standard reconnaissance plan whereby the entire Corps area would be covered equally, reconnaissance resources were concentrated in specific areas where the enemy was suspected of operating. Each week, the areas were reviewed and modified as necessary to keep up with enemy activity. In this way, the intensified reconnaissance plan made best use of available assets.

US success in operations has resulted primarily from good intelligence. It starts with the employment of various area systems which provide information on the most probable areas of enemy activity. These areas are then refined by commitment of our limited resources, such as Rangers. Without area definition, we can expend our reconnaissance resources in fruitless searches. However, the means by which we define area targets

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

(APD, Observation Aircraft, etc) are normally distributed on the basis of the density of US troops. Within II Corps we have also attempted to support the ROK and ARVN by redistribution of these resources. Coverage of the II Corps area has never been adequate and will be less so with redeployment of US combat units. For that reason authorization of these assets must be made for support of ROK and Vietnamese units. Special consideration should be given to such units as the 23d ARVN Division which has an AO larger than all of III Corps.

3. (C) VIETNAMIZATION. One of the major objectives of Vietnamization is to give ARVN greater responsibility in direction and conduct of the war in the II Corps Tactical Zone. This objective has been translated into plans to turn over full control of the Highlands to ARVN. The fundamental elements of the plan require full territorial responsibility by the ARVN commands with stipulated US support and reinforcement commitments. However, it is not the objective so much as the process that is significant. Each phase of the process can be described as a brigade increment, in that the territory turned over to the ARVN is normally secured by a brigade-size force. When ARVN had adequate time to operate in the new area and they gained confidence in their ability to secure it, another brigade-size area was transferred from US to ARVN and the process repeated. This has allowed more time for redistribution of US forces and for relocation or transfer of facilities. Of all the advantages, the most important is that of building the confidence of both ARVN and the civilian population.

The two most significant battles fought in South Vietnam in 1969 were fought in II Corps as a test of Vietnamization in the Highlands. The battle of Ben Het convinced II Corps that they could do the job. The battle of Bu Prang and Duc Lap convinced Saigon. The final test will be the conviction of the people. With ARVN assumption of responsibility of Pleiku Province, our capability to make it work will be determined by the intensity of our efforts in intelligence and the increased priority that we give to ARVN operations by employment of US supporting forces. The magic in the process is to give the ARVN commander full responsibility and to support him as we would a US commander.

We must eventually reduce our advisory commitment, if we are to assure that the Vietnamese forces can defend their own country. We should be decisive in judging the requirement for continued advice. Most senior ARVN commanders have had 20 to 30 US advisors during the past 10 years. Our relationship should eventually be similar to that we currently have with the Korean forces, a relationship based on liaison as opposed to advice. We should develop a standard of performance as an objective of the advisory effort. When we reach this objective, we should terminate the advisory effort and treat this termination as an achievement.

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

In the US reporting system on RVNAP performance there is a requirement for a huge amount of information to be provided by advisors in each area of evaluation for development of comparative data. Such a reporting system is only valuable if it provides usable data for determining priorities of effort. We may have now reached a point that data collection is becoming an end in itself. Most of the activations have been completed. Most of the equipment under the modernization program has been distributed. Most of the performance data which would be required for continued evaluation of units is now employed in an ARVN reporting process and does not require duplication in the advisory system. We should, therefore, be prepared to Vietnamize reports in general and isolate those few remaining subjects which pertain to US assistance.

Another criterion for evaluation of advisory requirements is that of the enemy threshold of activity. So long as the enemy threat requires a commitment of a division-size force in coordinated operations, we should retain a strong division advisory team, regardless of the capability of the division commander and staff. The interplay between the division staff and supporting arms requires a full advisory team backed up by a coordinating US headquarters. Retention of battalion and regimental teams should be judged largely by the performance of the units they advise.

Within the CORDS advisory system, the same general problems exist with respect to separate TDs and the requirement for reporting, but it also has some distinct characteristics which should modify the general approach to Vietnamization. US assistance programs must continue to be supervised by US personnel and some technical assistance, for example, Public Health, may be continued for some time. All of the activities in CORDS can be associated with a specific program which in itself has objectives. We must continue to be highly critical of those objectives in judging termination of programs and personnel associated with them. The CORDS organization can be continuously evaluated by function as well as by echelon of advisory teams. The Refugee Program is an example. It is virtually completed. During 1969, the refugee population has been reduced from 430,000 to 43,000. The GVN has proven the ability to take care of its refugees. It has a body of regulations which are adequate for completion of the program. There is little advice we can give to assist them in the last 10 percent of their effort. By way of contrast, the Phoenix Program is not yet on its way. Additional effort is required to make it an effective program, for its objectives are still critical in the reduction of the insurgency. They will become increasingly important during the guerrilla phase which is developing and the more important political phase, which will intensify as the country approaches eventual elections.

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

Another limitation on the effectiveness of the advisory system will be the elections. The effectiveness of a military advisor to an elected official will be greatly reduced. Even more important, the job image of an elected official advised by a US military man will hardly stand scrutiny.

The anticipated continued progress in pacification, including the growth of security within the district and the political strengthening of the district and province officials through elections, foretells the form and pattern for the Vietnamization of CORDS. The district will be the working level at which programs are executed and evaluated, and it will continue to be the tactical control level for security, or the operations center. It is critical that we reinforce efforts to assure that the district is strong in the short range. When our evaluation concludes that a district is viable, the advisory effort should be withdrawn completely. The province is the most significant planning level requiring both leadership and staff talent. As the province officials strengthen their controls, the advisory effort can be phased down, and, after elections, purged of military advisors. The region is largely an administrative headquarters having some tactical resources for support of the provinces and having a major staff responsibility for coordination of plans. The region will steadily decline in its influence as political strength of the province grows. This decline is in progress now, since the corps commander was largely eliminated from the process of civilian planning. The influence of the region will be virtually eliminated upon election of province officials. We should look upon the region as an administrative headquarters which remains necessary to coordinate the various government agencies concerned with rural development. These functions will continue to decline as programs are completed or terminated.

Therefore, the Vietnamization of CORDS must proceed with the termination of US programs and as GVN assumes effective control.

4. (C) DISPOSITION OF US FORCES. Disposition of US forces is the primary means of influencing ARVN assumption of area responsibility. In the agreement which I signed with CG, II Corps, Northern Kontum was transferred to full ARVN responsibility. This first transfer became a test of the concept, the process and the determination of ARVN. In the Battle of Ben Het - Dak To of May and June 1969, II Corps proved its capability and determination to fight as well as its ability to direct and support large combat operations. During this battle we confirmed the concept of US support which was equally important to that of ARVN determination to employ its ground forces. The battle confirmed a continuing requirement for US intelligence, aviation, artillery, tactical air and strategic air. It confirmed the need for a senior US command headquarters capable of coordinating US support activities without diversion of advisory effort. Northern Kontum represented a brigade package in that ARVN control

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

released a US brigade for employment elsewhere. This brigade contributed to the battle by assuming ARVN missions elsewhere in the Corps area in order to release ARVN battalions to fight at Ben Het. The need for this reserve brigade will continue to permit ARVN the flexibility of reinforcement without uncovering the population.

In the second phase this same process was repeated with ARVN assumption of the Southern part of Kontum Province releasing another 4th Division brigade for redeployment to Binh Dinh as the swing brigade. This phase was uneventful except that it prompted the JGS to hold further expansion of ARVN responsibility temporarily. It was the Battle of Bu Prang - Duc Lap that convinced the GVN that II Corps could assume control of the Highlands, permitting the 4th Division to consolidate its forces in Binh Dinh and inactivate a brigade. The same essential ingredients, US combat support and a reserve brigade, have been maintained throughout the process. No relaxation of this minimum requirement should be made so long as the enemy has the Cambodian option of reinforcement and attack in force at any point on the border. II Corps flexibility for the redeployment of its forces to meet such a threat depends on this minimum US reserve capability.

In April of 1969 I committed the 173d Airborne Brigade to pacification in the four northern districts of Binh Dinh. This was not an experiment but an affirmation of the pacification process which begins with security. For the GVN pacification program to work, it is essential that sufficient armed men from the population be organized to defend the hamlets in order that the governmental process can begin to work. It was apparent that Northern Binh Dinh could not provide an armed force from its own population without assistance. The 173d was committed to temporarily fill the void of local security forces until recruitment would permit its displacement. Hoi Nhon District was the first in which the full process was achieved and US combat forces withdrawn. The process is coming to fruition in Tam Quan which started with only nine percent of the population under GVN control when the 173d arrived. The success of this operation has been attested to by the enemy in committing a division in an attempt to reverse it and by the people of Northern Binh Dinh who have shown visible evidence of their acceptance of GVN authority. Some of the most effective RF/PF units in II Corps are now operating in Northern Binh Dinh. The most effective ARVN pacification program in II Corps is being conducted by the 22d Division as a coordinated effort with the 173d Airborne Brigade. Above these specific accomplishments in pacification, this operation has confirmed the pacification process as a viable system for mobilization and control of the population. Employment of combat forces in the role of Territorial Forces is not a normal mission but must be recognized as a suitable mission when the conditions do not permit the pacification process to take root without added security.

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

5. (C) ARVN OPERATIONS. Shortly after the 24th BTZ assumed responsibility for Northern Kontum Province, ARVN capability to conduct a major battle was tested. From 6 May to 30 June, two enemy maneuver regiments and supporting troops tried repeatedly to score a major victory at Ben Het and Dak To. The ARVN fought and won the ground battle, with their maneuver units, supported by US tactical air, aviation, and artillery. I will not dwell on the lessons learned at Ben Het regarding ARVN inexperience at planning large-scale sustained operations and coordinating major support forces with the maneuver plan, since they are amply covered elsewhere. However, the psychological impact of an ARVN victory over trained NVA regiments was a solid boost to II Corps' confidence in their ability to defend the Highlands. The US support provided was what I expect US units to have in similar conditions. The stage was set for future success and growing self-confidence within the Corps.

There was ample opportunity to prepare for the next big test of ARVN forces. Throughout the summer intelligence indicated the major threat was developing in the Bu Prang - Duc Lap area, and we prepared a US support concept in which we incorporated our experience from Ben Het. The support concept clearly delineated progress in Vietnamization. ARVN was to fight the ground maneuver battle, support with available ARVN artillery and logistical resources; US forces would provide tactical air, artillery, aviation, Air Cav and limited combat service support, such as additional medical and transportation services. US infantry elements were to be employed only as required to relieve, on a mission basis, ARVN infantry units employed on territorial security missions outside the battle area, so that the ARVN units could join the battle. The scheme of maneuver and other significant tactical decisions were to remain ARVN responsibilities.

In execution ARVN improved vastly over its performance at Ben Het. Planning, coordination, and response were far better. The support concept was effectuated as planned. The 1st Brigade of the 4th Division assumed territorial responsibilities near Ban Me Thuot to release ARVN battalions for the battle, and several US artillery units also replaced ARVN units who then deployed to the battle area. The 23d Division commander established a light command post at Gia Nghia to control a part of the battle, and he directed a portion of the combat from established facilities in Ban Me Thuot. The commander and his staff implemented the division plans and organized quickly as the campaign opened. Throughout the battle from the 26th of October to the 26th of December, the commander exhibited great flexibility in reinforcing, relieving and reorganizing his forces. The battle of Bu Prang - Duc Lap was a major victory for the ARVN forces, as well as a tribute to the outstanding support provided by both ARVN and US support elements. However, ARVN operations still tended to be defensive in character during this battle.

## CONFIDENTIAL

The commander relied heavily on supporting fires when aggressive maneuver would have pushed enemy's mortars beyond effective range. The battle raised the stature of ARVN forces in II Corps and proved for the second time that the II Corps forces can sustain combat and defeat well trained regular enemy regiments.

There appears to be no major obstacle to the success of ARVN forces in the future. Within the Corps their personnel strength is about 43,000 of the authorized 45,463. During the latter part of the year, ARVN leadership has improved noticeably, largely as the result of command emphasis at all levels and through training at the division and national centers. The regular ARVN forces have received 100 percent of their authorized M16 rifles, and M16s are being issued as they become available to support elements. Modernization of radios is progressing satisfactorily, with about half of the programmed AN/PRC-25 radios issued. The units have also received 85 percent of the M60 machineguns authorized. All together, the modernization program is progressing well, and I foresee increased effectiveness throughout the Corps as the units continue to train, equip and gain experience in combat.

ARVN has an opportunity over the next year to establish effective control over the Highlands, although it may lack full realization of all pacification objectives. It has the additional opportunity of neutralizing long established base areas in coastal and Southern areas which have declined in strength over the last year. Frequent penetrations by long range patrols and sustained operations of at least a month's duration are required. Units operating on the border have proven their ability to do this with some rotation of battalions within the battle area. The same determination is required to be effective in base area operations. Enemy bases are particularly vulnerable to LRRP operations. ARVN needs this capability for both intelligence and confidence in their operational planning. If ARVN is to control the vast areas of II Corps, it must devote its primary effort to offensive operations and less to reaction planning. It no longer needs to conduct only raids of short duration but should sustain its ground operations to neutralize the enemy's support system.

6. (C) FORWARD MOBILE STAFF. The acceleration of the Vietnamizing process in II Corps Tactical Zone paradoxically made it necessary to extend the I FFORCEV staff beyond its normal method of operating in order to assist ARVN divisions in their major unilateral operations. The requirement was vividly illustrated during the Ben Het - Dak To battle in the Spring of 1969. Although the 24th Special Tactical Zone provided all the maneuver elements directly engaged in the battle, US forces furnished considerable combat and combat service support. With artillery, aviation, tactical air, engineer, and support command logistics funneled into a relatively tight terrain compartment, there was urgent need to coordinate

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

the many activities associated with this support. This is a US function requiring a US commander. The sources of support came from US vertical organizations and were without coordinated direction in the battle area. It was this requirement to have somebody in charge that led to the development of the Forward Mobile Staff, an extension into the battle area of representatives of the I FFORCEV general and special staff divisions.

From the lessons learned at Ben Het, the forward staff organization was developed and first implemented at the Battle of Bu Prang - Duc Lap. The Forward Mobile Staff had the mission of coordinating US support of ARVN operations, insuring adequate plans for the security of US forces, forecasting requirements for US commitments, preparing operational plans and orders for US forces, providing support to the advisory team as needed, assuring the coordination of military and civilian effort, and informing and providing intelligence to Headquarters, I FFORCEV, in a timely manner. The staff operated in the forward area exactly as their counterparts at the headquarters in Nha Trang. Although they were located near and in continual conversation with the advisory group to the 23d Division, the staff did not interpose between the advisor and the commander nor did it interfere with the responsibilities for functions of the ARVN division staff. The forward staff operated for two months in the command post of the 23d ARVN Division and successfully linked my headquarters with the events of the battle. During the operation I found that the forward staff could react to my requirements and hasten responses when I needed to influence the battle by reallocation of support. In the forward area I had the flexibility of being able to direct the staff to prepare plans and orders and to execute when needed. The 23d Division and the advisory element profited from ready access to information and assistance while I FFORCEV gained rapidity of response to support requirements. Headquarters, I FFORCEV received timely reports, accurate descriptions of the plans and orders of the 23d Division and timely assessments of the situation. Altogether the forward staff was a single point of contact and coordination for US support forces in the area. The experience of the Forward Mobile Staff in Quang Duc indicates that there will be a need for such an element as long as division-size ARVN forces require large US combat and combat service support.

7. (C) ARTILLERY. I FFORCEV Artillery's mission dictates numerous tasks. In order of priority these are: support of maneuver force; protection of population centers and logistical complexes; road security; artillery assistance to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), and to Regional and Popular Forces (RF/PF) as well as to the Special Forces Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Camps. The mission usually assigned subordinate units is that of General Support or General Support Reinforcing, although some I FFORCEV artillery units have had the Direct Support Mission.

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

To accomplish these varied missions artillery employment is tailored to the particular situation faced. Limited resources result in split battery configurations being the norm rather than the exception. While efforts are made to maintain unit integrity, demands have at times required a 105mm battery to be split four ways. While Vietnam has long been accepted as a battery commander's war, all too often we find the brunt of conducting operations resting on the shoulders of the junior officers of the batteries. Battalion commanders have had elements scattered over 300 miles; battery commanders, limited in travel by the scarcity of helicopters, often visit platoon elements only weekly or bi-weekly. This results in autonomy of operations at the lowest level, demanding self-reliance and a careful allocation of assets--both personnel and equipment--to offset the increased difficulties encountered with maintenance, security and maintaining high standards of technical proficiency.

Since the ARVN currently has no heavy artillery, US artillery is normally employed to reinforce ARVN artillery during Vietnamese operations. This is accomplished most often through the General Support Reinforcing mission.

The evolution of platoon employment has resulted in strange bed fellows in the area of technical gunnery. Metro flown in one area are adjusted by local readings and utilized over wide areas. FADAC has come into its own as the backbone of fire direction. Often one battery FDC will control the fires of light, medium and heavy artillery located in five or six firebases within communication range. During the Ben Het - Dak To battle of mid-1969, one battalion headquarters controlled the fires of three 175mm guns, two 8" howitzers, 14 - 155mm howitzers, and six 105mm howitzers. In addition, the battalion headquarters acted as the Fire Support Advisor for the local ARVN commander, who had six medium and six light howitzers assigned. Fire direction personnel must be capable of solving the 81mm and, at times, the 4.2mm mortar gunnery problem. Successful operations under these conditions require constant emphasis on basic gunnery techniques - good registrations, VEs, metros, accurate application of corrections, wind card data, and GFT settings. Safety is of paramount importance with firing charts depicting no fire zones, free fire areas, friendly locations, roads, bridges and hamlets. Difficulties with clearances of fires, both military and political, is a source of considerable frustration and is the impetus in a continuing search for quicker, more responsive techniques. When instituted, combined fire support coordination centers, with ROK, ARVN and US elements co-located with those capable of granting clearances, have reduced reaction time considerably.

Although the heavy artillery with II Corps generally is in fixed locations unless a specific major operation is planned, temporary

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

movement from the home firebase is not unusual. This maneuver is referred to as an artillery raid. Once the maneuver unit being supported develops sufficient target intelligence, heavy artillery support in a certain area is requested. Since some of the maneuver forces in II CTZ do not have their own organic heavy artillery, I FFORCEV Artillery units are called upon to perform this task. Fulfilling the request means a move of heavy artillery. Previously occupied or prepared sites are usually employed with the heavy guns. If range capability permits, the accuracy and lethality of the 8" howitzer are preferred. For maximum surprise, the fires of the raiding artillery may be integrated closely with those from naval gunfire, tactical air, gunships, and organic weapons of the maneuver forces. These raids normally last one day to three days. Factors upon which the duration depends include: initial intelligence, necessary road clearance for movement, weather, development of new targets, target area sweeps by maneuver forces, and availability of security forces. In 1969 I FFORCEV Artillery units conducted 28 heavy raids.

I FFORCEV Artillery units provide artillery assistance to Vietnamese artillery through three programs. Increased emphasis is necessary in this field because of the lack of US artillery advisors below the ARVN division artillery level. The Associate Battery Program is designed to augment existing advisory programs, improve the effectiveness of ARVN artillery and develop channels for coordination of fire support and mutual understanding. US artillery units are assigned assistance responsibilities for specific ARVN units. The CIDG Assistance Program assigns US artillery responsibility to provide technical artillery advice at CIDG camps. The Territorial Forces Assistance Program (RF/PF, RD and PSDF) provides assistance to District Chiefs in formulating their District Fire Support Plans and instruction and evaluation to insure the presence of qualified observers and communications to enable the calling of artillery fire support as required. The three programs fulfill the US responsibilities for assistance. This letter was signed by the commanders of US, ROK and ARVN forces in II CTZ in June 1969. Monthly reports of progress are rendered to evaluate the progress of the Territorial Forces Assistance. These programs have achieved the overall objectives of increasing the effectiveness of ARVN artillery and a better integration of all allied fire support. They have contributed materially to the evolution of a self sufficient armed force for the Republic of Vietnam.

Due to the combined nature of many operations in II Corps, as well as the numerous allied fire support means available for employment, combined coordination centers are required. Such centers must be capable of two main functions: (1) Granting both political and military clearance for fires rapidly, and (2) quickly selecting the most effective fire support means available to perform the task at hand. Past

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

history has demonstrated both slow and inefficient use of combat fire support means when the required coordination agencies were not centralized. The Combined Fire Support Coordination Centers (CFSCCs), established in II Corps Tactical Zone have shown the value of centralizing required coordination operations. At the CFSCCs all necessary agencies are present in order to select the correct weapons systems and grant necessary clearances. The program of establishing new CFSCCs at critical locations was continued in 1969. Permanent CFSCCs were formed at Dak To to provide clearances in the sensitive area of upper Kontum Province and at Tuy Hoa to coordinate the fire support means of three nations in protecting the population centers in Phu Yen Province. Phu Yen is supported by Korean, Vietnamese, and US artillery units.

In addition, temporary CFSCCs were established during the NVA Winter-Spring offensive in Quang Duc and Darlac Provinces. The trend of establishing these fire support agencies should continue in future operations. Since the participation of both US and ARVN is involved, operation of CFSCCs provides an excellent vehicle for training the Vietnamese in fire support coordination and ultimately "Vietnamizing" the fire support effort.

8. (C) TERRITORIAL FORCES. The Territorial Forces will be critical to the sustained security and the permanence of pacification of the hamlets and villages. If the Area Security Concept of the Combined Campaign Plan for 1970 is implemented, the Regional Force companies and the Popular Force platoons will be left with the task of securing the population in the absence of regular forces, who will be disposed to engage the enemy in less secure areas or along the border and in the base areas, against major enemy forces. The degree to which the population has confidence in the government's ability to protect them and its intent to do so will devolve on the performance of these Territorial Forces. In terms of numbers there is no reason why the Territorial Forces cannot meet this challenge, for all together their 96,000 strength is double that of the ARVN units. All of the Regional Force companies are armed with the modern M16 rifle and they have 90 percent of the authorized AN/PRC-25 radios. Similarly, the Popular Force Platoons have 75 percent of their M16s and they will receive the modern radios in the near future. Their formalized training in schools sponsored by the 4th Division, the 173d Airborne Brigade, the 22d ARVN Division, Task Force South, and the ROK forces, as well as MACV and province training centers, has given them the basic required skills. Mobile Advisory Teams visit the units to continue and improve their skills and knowledge.

I have noticed indications of increased performance by some of the Regional Force and Popular Force units during the past quarter, although overall their performance is not consistent. My personal observations and those of General Russ, who concentrated upon the Territorial Forces, are that the primary difficulty is one of leadership. In those districts having

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

strong district chiefs and good force commanders, the units performed well. To illustrate, in a rather extensive study which we conducted to determine why some forces did better than others, a prime conclusion was that the units which trained at least six hours a week performed two to four times better than those that did not. This is not a remarkable conclusion since it follows that well trained units should do better. The paucity of leadership is illuminated by the fact that at the time of the study most of the Territorial Forces did not train six hours a week, even allowing critiques of operations, weapons maintenance, and improvement of positions to be considered as training. The obvious lack was the strong leader who would require training to improve his unit.

Although the role of Territorial Forces will continue to include population security as its primary function, its techniques must be continuously revised in accordance with the enemy situation. Recently, the enemy has shown little inclination for offensive action that seriously threatened the population. His current objective appears to be one of survival. This requires different techniques. The enemy will orient on population as a source of replacements, food supplies and money which dictates that our Territorial Forces will be primarily concerned with denial operations. Although such operations include the technique of ambush and early warning, they require a different posture and attitude from that of defensive positions. It requires an aggressiveness and flexibility that is too seldom seen in Territorial Force operations. It also militates against the use of Territorial Forces as simply another maneuver force.

One of the most difficult problems with the Territorial Forces is to keep them awake at night. Many circumstances contribute to the boredom of a PF outpost, part of which is lack of leadership, lack of enemy activity for long periods of time, the repetitive occupation of the same positions and the utilization of RF/PF during the day for other activities. However, it is the infrequent attack upon a sleeping outpost that gives the enemy his greatest gains in kill ratios and perpetuates his influence by terror. When the RF/PF are awake, they are seldom bettered and frequently achieve a significant if minor victory.

The confidence of the people in their security depends as much on combat support units as upon the Territorial Forces. There must be an operations center which has control of fires for each populated area that provides prompt and effective artillery fire, air support and aviation for reinforcement and medivac. Many of these operations centers have in the past been ad hoc by US forces, such as artillery battalions in general support of infantry battalions on pacification missions, but most continue to be operated by a district team. Relocation or reduction of forces or reduction of the advisory effort must always take into account the effect upon fire support for Territorial Forces.

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

9. (C) CIDG. The role of the border camps in screening the Cambodian and Laotian borders should continue so long as the enemy is allowed sanctuary in those countries and continues to use them for support of his forces in South Vietnam. In the II Corps area, this screen provides bases for reception and deployment of other forces which may be required in defense of the border or in defense of the population located near the border. It is therefore an integral part in the defense system of the Highlands provinces and must be directed by a military authority responsible for the area. The border camps differ from those of the interior in that they can not be converted to local defense missions without major impact on the security of the border area. They cannot logically be converted to RF/PF without denying their most significant function as an intelligence screen for movement of large enemy forces and a base for interdiction of infiltration. Such enemy operations traditionally avoid populated areas where RF/PF may be employed. The border camps must, however, be brought under effective control by ARVN and become exclusively an instrument of the GVN.

During the battles of Ben Het and Bu Prang, one of the major issues was the ARVN commitment to reinforce and defend the CIDG camps. Fundamentally, the issue was one of ARVN commitment to defend its national borders, thereby securing the scattered Montagnard population of the Highlands. So long as the CIDG was considered a US force, the Vietnamization process could have been impeded. Although the issue was squarely faced and GVN was committed to the defense of the border in each of the battles, the commitment cannot be firmly made until ARVN has some responsibility for CIDG forces and not merely operational control. The alternative strategy is to fall back on Highway 14; this would provide the enemy sanctuary in country and free access to the interior, and ultimately reduce security along Highway 14, the only north-south route to integrate the Highland provinces.

The vitality of the border screen depends largely upon the intelligence it produces, and the sensitivity of the system in employing it. Considerable effort has been expended through US advisory systems to collect and disseminate this intelligence primarily for US reaction. Although the system exists for collection and dissemination of intelligence within ARVN, interest and motivation have been lacking. Again, the problem is one of ARVN accepting responsibility for the border camps. When border camps are under operational control of local ARVN commanders, such interest and motivation can be instilled. It can be further encouraged by preparation of specific battle plans which incorporate the direction of CIDG forces, as in the preparatory plans for both Ben Het and Bu Prang. In the long run, ARVN motivation to fully employ CIDG forces must be built on a force structure which makes them fully responsible for their mission and their performance.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

The position of border camps within II Corps has been effective with respect to main routes of enemy infiltration. There are, however, major gaps in the surveillance screen. Efforts should be made to re-establish the screen for surveillance of the route north of Dak Pek that supplies MR5, southern I Corps and Binh Dinh Province. The route through Bu Gia Map in Phouc Long Province not only impacts upon III Corps, but includes the LOC that eventually reaches MR6 and supports forces in Binh Thuan. Within II Corps, a camp may eventually be required in the Plei Trap Valley. ARVN is not sufficiently strong in the Highlands at this time, nor will it be in the next few months, to support operations in the Plei Trap Valley. However, the enemy's use of the valley for movement of supplies to the south and as a base for operations in Kontum and Pleiku Provinces must be stopped. Periodic raids on his bases, or even clearing operations, will not be adequate. A strong, permanent base similar to Ben Het will be required.

10. (C) ROK OPERATIONS. The two ROK divisions provide the primary military force in the coastal area. Historically, they have provided the most significant contribution to population security and they provide area security to the major US bases along the coast. Recently, however, their posture has been overtaken by the expansion of pacification in the foot hills and mountains in every province along the coast. In many areas the RF/PF are postured between the enemy and ROK defensive positions. The reorientation of the ROKs in both their permanent dispositions and their tactics must be made to accommodate to the enemy today.

Whereas the Koreans have maintained very high kill ratios, it is a product of professional ambush techniques by well trained and disciplined troops, whether it be done in the lowlands in the defensive screen, or as a part of massive squeeze tactics in base area operations. Their tactic of massive operations with multiple battalions requires considerable expenditure of support with declining returns. The enemy in his attempt to preserve his force seeks to avoid contact and to disperse his forces. The massive ROK operation which takes weeks to execute simply nets too little for its short duration to make it usable for the future. The requirement is for sustained operations within the base areas employing the ambush tactics that have made the ROKs so successful but from a dispersed posture.

To bring about such a change in thinking may take time, but it is possible. Initial steps have been made in relocation of ROK forces westward in Phu Yen Province, and there is general agreement for relocation of other forces. The ROKs have been independent but cooperative in planning their own operations and in responding to requests from I Field Force. They are particularly receptive to intelligence, and freely exchange it for combined planning. This provides the best foundation upon which to build a new tactic. Disposition of the enemy and his current methods of operation dictate such a change.

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

11. (C) LOGISTICS. There have been significant improvements in the US and RVNAF logistics system. Most of these improvements were the result of programs which have been underway for some time, but some particular areas are worthy of note. For instance there has been too much use of air. We must use the roads, not only because they are more efficient and cheaper but because they contribute to pacification. One of the primary reasons for requiring convoy resupply in Binh Dinh was to open the roads and to demonstrate to the population that they are secure. Freedom of movement does wonders for building confidence. This is equally true of rail movements. Although the rail lines are highly vulnerable to sabotage and have frequently been interdicted, we must continue to stress their use. In the last few months, considerable tonnage was moved by rail with very few acts of sabotage.

There has been little advantage gained by employment of pipelines for movement of bulk fuel. The pipeline is too easily interdicted and too vulnerable to pilferage. The enemy is in a natural position to capitalize upon our problem by simply siding with the people in their pilferage. The price of the pipeline is too high in security forces and in the strain it places upon the small police forces and the fragile village governments. The effort to keep the pipelines operational has probably cost us more in good will than anything we could have gained by them.

Considering RVNAF, I have noted definite progress in the development of a more responsive, flexible RVNAF logistics system. The ARVN logistics system functioned reasonably well in two major battles in 1969--the Dak To - Ben Het Campaign in May and June and the Duc Lap - Bu Prang Campaign in November and December 1969. Although continued improvement and command emphasis on logistic staff work and prior logistics planning is necessary, the RVNAF logistics elements in II CTZ have proven that they are capable of identifying logistic requirements and providing necessary support to the combat soldier. It is apparent, however, that reliance on US air assets for timely supply of units operating in remote areas will be necessary for some time to come.

Major emphasis has been placed on the turnover of excess facilities to RVNAF, consolidation of remaining installations, and termination of leases. Facilities were turned over to RVNAF as usable facilities and allowing a major reduction in GVN construction requirements for similar RVNAF facilities. Some examples include a battalion-sized area in Tuy Hoa/Phu Hiep turned over to the ARVN 201st Engineer Battalion, 117 buildings in Nha Trang released to expand the VNAF Air Training Center and turn over of the 283d Dustoff Compound in Pleiku to the ARVN 72d Medical Group. The lease termination program in Nha Trang was also effective in that it allowed better consolidation of personnel and activities, reduced costs and reduced inflationary effects on the Vietnamese

## CONFIDENTIAL

economy. Recent actions in Nha Trang have resulted in 67 leases cancelled with a net savings to the US Government of approximately \$700,000 per year.

The distribution of repair parts within II Corps has not been adequate to meet the requirements for US operational aircraft and other priority combat items. Army aircraft were being deadlined for parts for excessive periods of time when in fact the parts were available in country. The need for faster reaction time in obtaining EDP aircraft repair parts was recognized and a program for delivering repair parts to using units by dedicated C7A aircraft was initiated in August 1969. This program has successfully reduced the order-ship time for aircraft repair parts from 10-14 days to 5-6 days with a resultant higher availability rate. In January 1970 a similar program was established using an I FFORCEV "Otter" (U-1 aircraft) to transport critical ordnance, signal and engineer repair parts, retrograde items and requisitions for I FFORCEV units between Cam Ranh Bay Support Command and the Logistical Support Activities at Phan Thiet, Ban Me Thuot, Dalat and Bao Loc. This program has reduced the order-ship time from an average of 35 days to an average of 10 days again resulting in higher availability rates and increased combat efficiency.

Another program which has been successful is the repair and return program to upgrade the maintenance of self-propelled artillery. The concept was to perform a concentrated quarterly service in direct support shops. The crew accompanies the weapon and receives training from DSU personnel in all phases of the service. The program has significantly improved self-propelled artillery operational readiness.

As further reductions of US tactical units in RVN occur, it will become increasingly more important for RVNAF to provide security and logistic support to US combat support elements that are employed to provide combat support to RVNAF. A recently negotiated agreement whereby US units in the Ban Me Thuot area became ammunition customers of the ARVN ammunition supply point at Ban Me Thuot is a step in this direction and is directly related to Vietnamization of the logistics effort. Additional agreements of this nature are necessary to reduce US security requirements for the future.

12. (C) LINE OF COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTION. The results of Saigon's commitment of resources for economic development and the welfare of the people are not always seen in the countryside. The rural people do see Saigon's efforts to provide the routes of communication required to open up, protect, and develop their areas thus giving them access to major market and political centers. The people can see the results being obtained by ARVN and US military engineers and the Vietnamese, US and Third Country construction contractors working to develop a modern road network. The tremendous contribution of the LOC program is evident

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

in the 1800 kilometers of highways nearing completion in the II Corps Tactical Zone. The successful execution of pacification operations in areas formerly controlled by the enemy (particularly in Binh Dinh) and the ever-increasing civilian use of these roads are graphic manifestations of the success of this program. However, the impetus of this LOC effort has been permitted to remain dependent upon major US participation. Furthermore, there appears to be a complacent reliance upon continuing this major US participation to such a degree that it may become a major problem area within the foreseeable future.

The LOC Program, particularly in the II Corps Tactical Zone, consists of the upgrading/rebuilding of the 1800 kilometers of major routes originally constructed by the Vietnamese with significant reliance on French know-how and support. Prior to the initiation of the LOC Program, these 1800 kilometers of highway had deteriorated to such an extent that a major effort was required to restore them to their former trafficability and capacity. Although this deterioration was aggravated by enemy actions of destruction, it was due primarily to a lack of RVN maintenance/repair capability and a failure to properly utilize the limited capability which did exist. Since then, the RVN highway maintenance/repair capability has dwindled even further. At the same time, the LOC Program has been proceeding to restore the trafficability and increase both the quality and capacity of the major highway network so that it will meet not only the increased wartime requirements but even greater highway capacities required for post-war economic viability. When the currently approved MACV LOC Program is completed, the resultant major highway network will require a maintenance level of effort which will far exceed that which was required prior to the war in South Vietnam. However, the maintenance capability is less now than it was then, and there is no visible evidence that it is improving at a rate consistent with the foreseeable requirement. Thus, upon completion of the construction phase of the LOC Program (unless effective corrective action by the US is taken now or some Third Country assumes the burden), the US will be faced with extended participation into the maintenance phase following completion of the LOC Program.

One of the success stories has been the Rome Plow. It has become an indispensable means for securing the LOCs and large installations. The most extensive use that has been made of the Rome Plow in installation security was at Ben Het, in which the ground was stripped beyond 60mm mortar range and all likely positions from which sapper operations could be conducted were eliminated. Requirements for priority in military employment have permitted only limited use of the plows in pacification projects. Provincial requirements for land clearing have consistently exceeded our capabilities. The requirement for these plows should continue indefinitely in both their security and pacification roles.

## CONFIDENTIAL

13. (C) COMMUNICATIONS. Operations in the II CTZ place a great strain on communications because of the vastness of the area, the variety of the terrain, and the shifting conditions of the war in which major confrontations occur in the Highlands, along the populated coast, or in the mountains of the Southern provinces. However, I found communications to be flexible and responsive to sudden requirements. An example is the support of the 173d Airborne Brigade as it shifted from a maneuver role into a pacification assignment in upper Binh Dinh. As the 173d Brigade settled into a fairly static situation, the 54th Signal Battalion established extra VHF multi-channel radio links from An Khe to LZ English; and it also operated an area communications center facility in the LZ English area to provide rapid access to Headquarters, I FFORCEV and into the worldwide teletype system. As the pacification operation developed, the channels were extended to LZ English North and LZ Uplift. By July, a complete 12 channel system was installed from LZ English north to Tam Quan. These communications have provide continuous reliable support for the brigade and I FFORCEV throughout the pacification operations. Similarly, the 54th Signal Battalion designed a flexible system of single side band radio and radio teletype facilities in support of Task Force South after its move in July from Dalat to Phan Thiet. Additional VHF systems and communications centers were emplaced to tie Phan Thiet, Song Mao, and Thien Giau together. Province Senior Advisor at Dalat is also in communications via single side band facilities with Task Force South, as well as the district locations at Bao Loc and Phan Rang. The adaptability of our communications I think was epitomized by the support provided during operations at Bu Prang and Duc Lap in November and December. The great resourcefulness of communicators established a variety of systems--single side band, radio teletype, and telephone--to link the operations center of the 23d Division, the signal system of the Forward Mobile Staff, the 3/506th Airborne Infantry, a brigade of the 4th Division and other supporting elements. The result was that the Headquarters, I FFORCEV, remained in continuous communications with all of the essential elements in the forward area. The experience gained here and recorded will be invaluable for future operations in which ARVN will conduct extensive operations supported by US support elements.

One of the most significant developments was the installation of a special communications system known as "Quick Comm" to fill a void in communications between Headquarters, I FFORCEV, and the district advisors. Events occurring in the remote districts filtered very slowly to I FFORCEV through the established area communications and common user circuits, so that a vital item of intelligence might be stopped at any one of several links in the communications nets. This was unacceptable, considering that with the sophisticated means available to the Force headquarters, the district could be provided fire power or aviation or the precise intelligence needed at the lowest level. The Quick Comm system utilizes a dedicated circuit directly from the I FFORCEV Territorial

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

Intelligence Operations Center to each province headquarters where radio wire integration equipment provides an entry into the province-district FM radio net. Use of this system enables the district to call directly through the province to Headquarters, I FFORCEV, to provide a spot report as quickly as the district can inform the province; and conversely, the G2 can talk to district advisors throughout the Corps area. With the impending redeployments and possible future reconfiguration of the advisory structure, the Quick Comm concept and apparatus promises to provide an indispensable means of providing critical information of happenings in the districts and returning essential instructions.

14. (C) SUMMATION. Since early in 1968, US forces have been engaged in economy of force operations in II Corps. The ARVN have had full control of large areas of II Corps, and today one province, Phu Bon, is entirely secured by Territorial Forces. The ROKs control most of the coastal provinces with critical populated areas carved out for the ARVN. Therefore, our commanders have had considerable experience in supporting non-US operations. This experience has been brought to focus in the Vietnamization process by which we are turning over to the ARVN exclusive control of some critical areas which have been traditionally US areas of operation. We have learned that the crucial test is Vietnamese confidence in their own ability. This can be partially achieved by combined operations and advisory systems wherein there is still a requirement to teach. However, the true advance in Vietnamization is gained when they stand alone. Too often it is US commanders who are afraid of ARVN inability to do a job that perpetuates their dependence upon us. We must be hardheaded about the requirement for instruction or assistance by defining it in specific terms to know when we have accomplished it.

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification

## DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R &amp; D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

|                                                                    |  |                                                                             |                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author)                         |  | 2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION                                          |                 |
| HQ, OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310                            |  | CONFIDENTIAL                                                                |                 |
|                                                                    |  | 2b. GROUP                                                                   |                 |
|                                                                    |  | 4                                                                           |                 |
| 3. REPORT TITLE                                                    |  |                                                                             |                 |
| Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG Charles A. Corcoran          |  |                                                                             |                 |
| 4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)          |  |                                                                             |                 |
| Senior Officer Debriefing Report, 23 May 1968 to 23 February 1970. |  |                                                                             |                 |
| 5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)               |  |                                                                             |                 |
| LTG Charles A. Corcoran                                            |  |                                                                             |                 |
| 6. REPORT DATE                                                     |  | 7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES                                                      | 7b. NO. OF REFS |
| 23 February 1970                                                   |  | 29                                                                          |                 |
| 8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.                                          |  | 9a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)                                           |                 |
| b. PROJECT NO.                                                     |  | 70B010                                                                      |                 |
| N/A                                                                |  |                                                                             |                 |
| c.                                                                 |  | 9b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report) |                 |
| d.                                                                 |  |                                                                             |                 |
| 10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT                                         |  |                                                                             |                 |
|                                                                    |  |                                                                             |                 |
| 11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES                                            |  | 12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY                                            |                 |
| N/A                                                                |  | OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310                                         |                 |
| 13. ABSTRACT                                                       |  |                                                                             |                 |
|                                                                    |  |                                                                             |                 |