The Learning Curve: MACV's Grasp of Intelligence, PSYOP, and Their Coordination, 1965-1971

By

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DEDICATION

Servant of God, Father Vincent R. Capodanno, the "Grunt Padre," was killed in action in Vietnam on 4 September 1967 while attempting to protect the life of a Navy Corpsman.[1] "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."[2] His example, inspiration, and intercession have seen me through this dissertation; and it is to him that this work is dedicated.

His Medal of Honor citation reads:

> For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Chaplain of the 3d Battalion, in connection with operations against enemy forces. In response to reports that the 2d Platoon of M Company was in danger of being overrun by a massed enemy assaulting force, Lt. Capodanno left the relative safety of the company command post and ran through an open area raked with fire, directly to the beleaguered platoon. Disregarding the intense enemy small-arms, automatic-weapons, and mortar fire, he moved about the battlefield administering last rites to the dying and giving medical aid to the wounded. When an exploding mortar round inflicted painful multiple wounds to his arms and legs, and severed a portion of his right hand, he steadfastly refused all medical aid. Instead, he directed the corpsmen to help their wounded comrades and, with calm vigor, continued to move about the battlefield as he provided encouragement by voice and example to the valiant marines. Upon encountering a wounded corpsman in the direct line of fire of an enemy machine gunner positioned approximately 15 yards away, Lt. Capodanno rushed a daring attempt to aid and assist the mortally wounded corpsman. At that instant, only inches from his goal, he was struck down by a burst of machine gun fire. By his heroic conduct on the battlefield, and his inspiring example, Lt. Capodanno upheld the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the cause of freedom.[3]

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[1] Daniel L. Mode, *The Grunt Padre: Father Vincent Robert Capodanno, Vietnam, 1966-1967*. (Oak Lawn, Ill: CMJ Marian Publishers, 2000).
[2] John 15:13.
[3] http://www.history.army.mil/moh/vietnam-a-l.html#CAPODANNO, accessed 17 April 2015.

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My beautiful wife and children who have been so patient and supportive.

My God, from whom all blessings flow.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines military intelligence, psychological operations (PSYOP), and the coordination between the two at Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) from 1965 to 1971 in order to determine the extent to which MACV demonstrated the attributes of a learning organization. The analysis is divided into three phases. The first, from 1965-1967, covers the buildup of US forces in Vietnam. The second examines the years 1968-1969, which include the Tet Offensive and the peak of US military involvement in Vietnam. The third encompasses the years 1970-1971, the period of Vietnamization and the point at which the last US PSYOP forces departed Vietnam. The study analyzes MACV's implementation of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination and identifies both successes and failures in MACV's approach to the war in Vietnam. This analysis utilizes primary-source material from holdings of MACV's records at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and the Army Heritage Education Center (AHEC). Secondary sources include the myriad scholarly works on the Vietnam War. This material was analyzed using criteria developed by Dr. David Garvin of the Harvard Business School to test whether an organization exhibited learning characteristics. This study refined his questions, added a scale, and assessed the evidence to determine the extent to which MACV was a learning organization in each period. The dissertation finds that despite losing the war in Vietnam, the US Army, and MACV headquarters in particular, varied in their effectiveness in meeting Garvin's standards. In Phase I, "MACV's Halcyon Days, 1965-1967," the command earned a score of eleven of fifteen for a rating of "Somewhat Effective." In Phase II, "Tet Changes Everything, 1968-1969," MACV earned a score of eight for a rating of "Marginally Effective." In Phase III, "Vietnamization, 1969-1971," MACV earned a score of twelve and one-half for a rating of "Somewhat Effective." The findings suggest that the US Army in Vietnam was able to learn about intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination, but was hindered in doing so by focusing too heavily on technical solutions; by believing too fervently that US military force could accomplish political, informational, and economic goals; and by reducing assessments of progress to quantitative, rather than qualitative, criteria.

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Introduction

The keystone of our contribution toward peace is total competence in waging war. That expertise can only come from an ardent study of tactics and strategy.

Edward C. Meyer

In the early morning hours of 30 April 1975, the streets of Saigon were eerily silent. The normal hustle and bustle of a Wednesday was replaced by a surreal calm that permeated a city already anxious with anticipation. In some ways, it was analogous to an audience that waits in hushed silence, watching as the tension builds between the main characters in a play moving toward the catharsis of the final dramatic scene. As the city held its breath and anticipated the approaching finale, sporadic gunfire could be heard to the east. The few remaining Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN) units spent their last full measure of devotion by offering heroic resistance on the altar of a failed endeavor. In another part of the city, the other actor in this drama was staging its performance on the grounds of the American embassy. Those grounds had been engulfed in chaos for the last several days, crushed with the presence of thousands of South Vietnamese civilians attempting to flee the steady progress of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA).[1]

[1] The North Vietnamese forces were called the Peoples' Army of Vietnam (PAVN), but Communist troops from the north were often referred to as the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). The South Vietnamese army was called the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). Those designations, NVA and ARVN, will be used for the duration of this study.

By 3 a.m., only eleven Marines remained in the embassy compound, locking the doors on each floor below them as they slowly ascended toward the roof.[2] According to Kristen Scharnberg, a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* who interviewed Marines who were awaiting rescue, "Four hours later, many of the men assumed they would either be killed by the communist troops or by the frenzied crowds that by then had broken through the embassy's gates and were breaking their way through each locked door between the floor and the roof."[3] As the men steeled themselves to face their fate, they spotted a lone approaching helicopter.

The last American helicopter lifted off from the rooftop of the US Embassy in Saigon at approximately 8:00, a.m., carrying those eleven Marines. As it left the city and flew toward the coast to a waiting US Navy ship, so went any remaining hope of an eleventh-hour American intervention.[4] The last vestige of the formerly ubiquitous American presence in the South Vietnamese capital departed unceremoniously. About four-hundred Vietnamese were in the Embassy courtyard watching that helicopter depart, and with it their last chance for rescue. The evacuation was so chaotic and sudden that at least a million South Vietnamese soldiers and government civilians who had worked with the Americans were left behind. In the frantic effort to make space and to

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[2] Graham Anderson Martin, who in 1973 succeeded Ellsworth Bunker as United States Ambassador to South Vietnam, barely made it out on one of the last helicopters – and this after a daring mission in the waning hours involving a secret passage, the French embassy, and the destruction of confidential papers at the ambassador's residence.

[3] Kirsten Scharnberg, "The Last Ones to Leave", *Chicago Tribune*, 30 Apr 2005, http://www.chicagotribune.com/classified/jobs/chi-0504300158apr30,0,5790009.story?page=2, accessed 16 Apr 2014

[4] Arts and Entertainment Network, and History Channel (Television network). *Vietnam in HD.* (New York, N.Y.: A&E Television Networks, 2011).

accommodate the thousands of evacuees, sailors dumped millions of dollars worth of military equipment from the decks of US Navy vessels into the South China Sea. Helicopters, planes, and other cargo were pushed overboard to create deck-space to accommodate the incredible volume of evacuees. As the remnants of the American mission were being evacuated, the last organized resistance by the ARVN collapsed. As the South Vietnamese government readied for its inevitable capitulation, the tension in the air was palpable.

By 12:15, p.m., Saigon time, barely four hours after the last American embassy personnel had departed, the North Vietnamese flag was hoisted atop the presidential palace.[5] The façade of an independent South Vietnamese government had collapsed – its defeat came not at the insurgent hands of the Viet Cong, but from a conventional attack by the NVA. Denied American air support, which had played such a crucial role in blunting the 1972 Easter offensive, and crippled by egregious strategic errors, the armed forces of South Vietnam had been routed merely fifty-five days after the start of the North Vietnamese offensive, coincidentally the same number of days the Viet Minh took to defeat the French at *Dien Bien Phu*.[6] The Ne*w York Time*s headline that day read "*Minh Surrenders, Vietcong In Saigon*" and showed the now-iconic image of the helicopter perched on the rooftop of the apartment building at 22 Gia Long Street, while desperate civilians attempted to climb to the roof to get

[5] Associated Press, "Minh Surrenders, Vietcong In Saigon", *New York Times*, 30 Apr 1975, http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/specials/saigon/fallfront.html, accessed 14 Feb 2014.
[6] By comparison the 1972 Easter Offensive lasted 207 days: 30 March to 22 October 1972.

on board.[7] As NVA trucks, tanks, and motorized personnel carriers secured the streets, a few people spilled back out onto Saigon's streets waving North Vietnamese flags, tentatively displaying support to the NVA who were being greeted as liberators.[8] The state of South Vietnam had simply ceased to exist.

A View to a War

Images from the front lines of combat have had an effect on the American public since Alexander Gardner's photographs from the battle of Antietam were first displayed during the American Civil War. But in Vietnam, the nearly instantaneous reporting from the front due to technological improvements in satellite television feeds, coupled with uncensored reporting, enabled reporters to tell stories in a much more visceral way than they had a century earlier. General William Westmoreland was later to lament the lack of censorship when he stated, "Vietnam was the first war ever fought without any censorship. Without censorship, things can get terribly confused in the public mind."[9]

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[7] Many Americans mistakenly believed the photo showed a helicopter perched on the rooftop of the US Embassy in Saigon. James H. Willbanks, "The Fall of South Vietnam", (Kansas City Public Library, April 21, 2010, at the Central Library, 14 W. 10th St., Kansas City, MO), https://archive.org/details/Dr.JamesH.WillbanksTheFallOfSouthVietnam, accessed 07 January 2015.
In another instance of misinterpretation, the *NYT* headline fundamentally misinterprets the cause of the defeat. It was a NVA regiment that captured the presidential palace and forced Minh to capitulate – not a Viet Cong unit. This misconception of the nature of the war bedeviled the American government, the military, and the public for the duration of the war. Associated Press, "Minh Surrenders, Vietcong In Saigon", *New York Times*, 30 Apr 1975, http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/specials/saigon/fallfront.html, (accessed 14 Feb 2014)

[8] Richard Ellison, Judith Vecchione, and Will Lyman. *Vietnam a television history.* (Boston, Mass.: WGBH Boston Video), 1996.

[9] Eugene Secunda and Terence P. Moran, *Selling War to America: From the Spanish American War to the Global War on Terror,* (Westport, Conn: Praeger Security International, 2007), 102

The Vietnam War continues to evoke a panoply of images and ideas within the American people's collective consciousness. From the Eddie Adams' photo of General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, Chief of the South Vietnamese National Police, impassively shooting Vietcong suspect Nguyen Van Lem in the head; to Nick Ut's photo of the young, naked girl, Kim Phuc from the village of Trang Bang, running away from a VNAF napalm strike; to the chaotic evacuation of the American embassy in 1975 – the images of the war were both raw and seemingly devoid of a positive moral meaning.[10] In World War II, the photograph of the Marines raising the flag on Mt. Suribachi came to embody the spirit of American determination. In Vietnam, the photograph of the rooftop evacuation displayed on the front page of "The Grey Lady" came to embody the futility of the American effort.

In the aftermath of this stunning defeat, America's search for an answer to the failures in Vietnam was not constrained to partisan politics. America had never lost a war, and the stain of defeat blemished the armed forces in a way unlike any previous event in American history. Victory may very well have many fathers, but failure requires a scapegoat.[11] Events such as the Tet Offensive and the My Lai massacre were reinforced with images that cemented the concept that America had lost its way in Vietnam and that its warriors had lost their status as national heroes. Popular culture reinforced this stereotype of failure. Only one movie produced during the war was "hailed by supporters

[10] Eddie Adams photo was taken on 1 Feb 1968, Nick Ut's was taken on 8 June 1972 – both won the Pulitzer Prize for their respective photographs.
[11] David Dawson, *Flesh Becomes Word: A Lexicography of the Scapegoat or, the History of an Idea.* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press), 2013.

of U.S. military involvement in Vietnam."[12] It was the 1968 Hollywood action film *The Green Berets*, starring John Wayne. Many other movies, produced after the war had ended, such as *The Deer Hunter*, *Apocalypse Now, Full Metal Jacket*, and *Born on the Fourth of July* painted the entire enterprise as a waste of blood, effort, and treasure. Vietnam was depicted as a mismanaged war, fought for the wrong reasons, with devastating consequences in lives, resources, and national confidence.

The Historiography of the Vietnam War

Numerous academic works have examined the Vietnam War and the failures thereof. These works fall into three major categories of whom to blame: national-level leaders, the American media, and the armed forces.

The first objects of culpability are national-level leaders. Works in this camp typically blame one of four sub-groups or some combination of them. The first to receive blame is President Lyndon B. Johnson, who is seen as being indecisive, unnecessarily meddlesome in military matters (particularly targeting), and unable to entertain divergent thoughts.[13] In the masterful biography by Doris Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, Johnson is pictured as being psychologically wounded by dissenting opinions, which he perceived as personal attacks. In *The Limits of Airpower*, Mark Clodfelter argues that Johnson believed the war in Vietnam had the potential, if not meticulously managed, to give his critics ammunition with which to sabotage his dearly held

[12] Eugene Secunda and Terence P. Moran. *Selling War to America: From the Spanish American War to the Global War on Terror.* (Westport, Conn: Praeger Security International, 2007),105.
[13] Phillip B. Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War.* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1990), 160.

domestic agenda of creating the "Great Society."[14] This belief led him to control carefully the selection of tactical targets for the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign.[15] According to this line of argument, Johnson's character flaws, coupled with what Jeffrey Record identifies as Johnson's "southern populist's innate distrust of military men" had a debilitating effect on the prosecution of the war.[16] By this reasoning, Johnson almost single-handedly prevented the American armed forces from defeating the North Vietnamese.

The second group to receive blame at the national level is Department of Defense leadership, both civilian and military. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, who according to Neil Sheehan "personified the hubris of the senior civilian leadership with his cocksureness and naïve acceptance of his generals at face value," is a particularly inviting target.[17] He has been portrayed as driving the military toward "body count" metrics and vilified for having personal doubts about the war, but resigning in silence rather than honestly testifying before Congress or otherwise publicly voicing a dissenting opinion.[18] Conversely, he was also accused of too closely controlling the war by not allowing his generals the latitude required to achieve a decisive military

[14] Clodfelter cites this as background on operation "Rolling Thunder", although it is not the main argument of his book. Mark Clodfelter, *The Limits of Air Power: The American Bombing of North Vietnam*. (New York: Free Press, 1989), 43-44. See also Phillip B. Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War*. (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1990), 161.
[15] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War*, 84.
[16] Jeffrey Record, *The Wrong War: Why We Lost in Vietnam*. (Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 1998),144.
[17] Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 289.
[18] Record, *The Wrong War*, 4.

victory.[19] This line of argument holds that he tragically misapplied business management and modeling techniques to the conduct of war.[20] Ironically, his autobiography *In Retrospect* supports much of this criticism, despite its attempt to explore honestly why things did not go well in Vietnam.

Next on the docket are the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), who in H.R. McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty* are faulted for prosecuting the war with a strategy they knew would not work. Inter-service rivalry, bureaucratic battles, and cumbersome administrative processes prevented the JCS from functioning properly.[21] The "Five Silent Men" of the JCS were complicit in President Johnson's misrepresentations to Congress and the American people and exacerbated this problem.[22]

The second major groups blamed are the American media, which are pictured as undermining the American public's will to support the war effort. Following this line of thought, the "grunts" fought their battles with honor and dignity and did not lose a single tactical engagement.[23] But a hostile press

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[19] Robert S. McNamara and Brian VanDeMark. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam.* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 290.

[20] McNamara, however, was a product of his environment. He credits Charles B. "Tex" Thornton, the head of Air Corps statistical control program during WWII, with developing a rudimentary control system. "He thought that the system and the data, if used intelligently, could help win the war." McNamara's experiences in the Pacific theater during WWII (working for GEN LeMay), coupled with his meteoric rise at Ford Motor Company, led him to believe that systems could be measured and managed. He brought this mental paradigm with him to the pentagon and set about seeking to reform research, development, and procurement practices. While systems theory might have working with the preparation for war, in the execution of war it led to the belief that one could quantify and define progress. McNamara applied a closed-system concept of business, to an open-system process of warfare – an egregious error. Ibid, 8-9.

[21] Herbert R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff*: (HarperCollins, 2011), 17-18.

[22] Ibid., 330.

[23] Some research, while possibly politically motivated does point to at least 70 lost tactical engagements on the part of American forces. Much depends on the definition of "loss." The

subverted their efforts by continually publicizing enemy propaganda, while either ignoring or minimizing successful South Vietnamese and Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) operations.[24] Walter Cronkite's statement, which aired during a special CBS News broadcast on 27 February 1968 that "it seems now more certain than ever, that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate," embodies the sense of abandonment perceived by many veterans as being peddled by the press.[25] James Robbins's *This Time We Win* argues that the Tet Offensive of 1968 was a resounding victory for the American armed forces but that the American people were unable to recognize it as such because of the way it was portrayed in the American media.[26]

The third group to receive blame for the loss of Vietnam is the armed forces. Like the accusations aimed at national-level leaders, some of these are personal, targeting not only institutions, but also individuals. The Army in particular, takes a hard beating on Vietnam – everyone from the four-star general to the draftee private. The Army had the preponderance of forces

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perception that US Armed Forces never "lost" a tactical engagement perpetuates the idea that skewed media coverage undermined support for the military and thwarted the successful prosecution of the war. http://www.g2mil.com/lost_vietnam.htm, accessed 12 September 2013.

[24] Also Free World Military Forces (FWMF).

[25] Guy Raz, "Final Words: Cronkite's Vietnam Commentary", 18 July 2009, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106775685, accessed 13 September 2013.

[26] Only a handful of Viet Cong breached the outer wall of the US Embassy in Saigon, yet Peter Arnett erroneously reported that the Viet Cong had seized the first floor of the Embassy. Coupled with the repeated replaying of a snippet of the firefight, this led to the perception that the attack was much more coordinated and successful than it was in reality. See Robert J. O'Brien, "The Attack on the American Embassy During Tet, 1968: Factors that Turned a Tactical Victory into a Political Defeat", (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 2009), www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA502004, accessed 29 April 2015.

fighting in Vietnam, and its generals were in command of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV).

Andrew Krepinevich argues in *The Army and Vietnam* "the United States Army was neither trained nor organized to fight effectively in an insurgency conflict environment."[27] According to him, the Army never overcame its institutional inadequacies. Similarly, in John Nagl's book, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, the Army is indicted for failing to learn from its experiences as the war progressed. In *War Comes to Long An*, Jeffrey Race argues that the American command failed to "adapt its strategy, organization, and policies to the nature of the conflict."[28] He argues further that neither the South Vietnamese government nor the US Army understood the fundamental nature of the war. Race interviewed many former village chiefs and military commanders who complained about corruption, lack of training, too few troops, and "inadequate propaganda."[29]

Lewis Sorley casts MACV's performance as a tale of two commanders. In *A Better War* he casts the blame squarely on General William C. Westmoreland for the failings of MACV to prosecute the war effectively. Sorley argues that Westmoreland never understood the nature of the war in South Vietnam. General Creighton Abrams, however, not only understood its nature, but was

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[27] Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*: (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 4

[28] Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An*; *Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 236.

[29] According to Race, these issues were superfluous. In his construct, the real story is why the communists won. They did so since they were able to focus their resources at the village level, while aligning local grievances with a national agenda. The communist narrative resonated with the Vietnamese population, while the South Vietnamese government's did not. Ibid., 63.

also on his way to winning the war at precisely the time his resources and support were being significantly reduced by a skeptical Congress. In contrast to Sorley's criticism of Westmoreland and favorable portrayal of Abrams, Gregory Daddis's recent work, *Westmoreland's War*, argues that Westmoreland largely had the correct strategy and that shifting political objectives thwarted its implementation.[30]

While much blame rests at the top, mid-level unit leaders and sundry staff officers do not escape scrutiny. They stand accused of willingly having gone along with inflated body-count numbers, turning a blind eye toward atrocities and not disciplining American Soldiers and Marines to fight effectively.[31] According to David Halberstam, the "wrong officers are promoted for the wrong reasons, the best officers, often unable to go along with the expected norm, the fake body count, the excessive use of force wither along the way."[32] The seminal study by the BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam,* blames much of the problem on the lowering of the standards at the US Army's Officer Candidate School (OCS).[33] According to this report, had OCS maintained it previous standards, officers such as Lieutenant William Calley would not have been commissioned and atrocities such as the *My Lai* massacre would not have been possible. This perception

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[30] Gregory A Daddis, *Westmoreland's War: Reassessing American Strategy in Vietnam.* (Oxford University Press), 2014.
[31] Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 696.
[32] David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest.* (New York: Random House, 1972), 657-8.
[33] BDM Corporation, Defense Technical Information Center (U.S.), and Scholarly Resources Inc. *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam. Volume VII*, (McLean, VA: BDM Corp, 1979) 3-8.

was summarized by one colonel's statement shortly after Calley's conviction that "we have at least two or three thousand more Calleys in the Army just waiting for the next calamity."[34] In short, analysts of this ilk assert that the behavior of a number of junior officers was both immoral and unethical. Similarly, junior non-commissioned officers and soldiers were depicted as undisciplined. A statement by Marine Colonel Robert D. Heinl Jr. aptly captures this perception, "by every conceivable indicator, our army that remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and non-commissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near mutinous."[35]

Project 100,000 did not help build up the public's image of the soldier. This effort, which also came to be known as McNamara's 100,000, was a remedial training plan for military recruits who were unable to pass either physical or written aptitude tests. It was created for two reasons: "[first,] to provide men from disadvantaged backgrounds with the training needed for them to succeed in the military and later in civilian life; second to provide more troops for the military to relieve the pressures of the draft quotas."[36] Inflamed race relations; drug abuse; and efforts (known as "fraggings") to murder unpopular officers were anecdotally noted as being commonplace.

Countering this line of argument is Ron Milam's work, *Not a Gentlemen's War*, in which he meticulously debunks this view and attributes much of the

[34] Ibid., 3-8, quoting Robert D. Heinl, "The Collapse of the Armed Forces," (*Armed Forces Journal*, CVIII, No. 19), 7 June 1971.
[35] http://libcom.org/history/vietnam-collapse-armed-forces, (accessed 14 April 2014).
[36] http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/resources/mcnamara/ (accessed 16 April 2014).

conventional wisdom regarding junior officers to the "angry colonel" literature from the end of the Vietnam War.[37] There are also myriad works dealing with the heroic individual Soldier at the tactical level. *The Village* by Bing West is a classic, and *Platoon Leader* by James McDonough, another classic, is required reading for many newly commissioned US Army lieutenants.

Despite the three macro-categories of blame, those debating the Vietnam War generally agree that there was a significant failure in policy and strategy at the highest levels of government. National-level leaders, either through indecisiveness, lack of comprehension, or moral cowardice failed to develop a winning strategy with which to conduct the war. But, as evident in the contrarian depictions of Generals Westmoreland and Abrams, and similarly bifurcated portrayals of Soldiers as either patriotic or miscreant, the verdict on military culpability in the war remains both lively and unresolved.

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The Crucial Role of MACV Headquarters

While no single work will bring this debate to a close, it is possible to examine in some detail a particular and meaningful portion of the armed forces' performance in the Vietnam War by focusing analysis at the operational level of war, where national military strategy is translated into tactical tasks. The business of turning strategy into tactics is the art and science of what

[37] One of the "angry colonels" is George Walton, author of *The Tarnished Shield: A Report of Today's Army*, New York: Dodd, Mead, 1973. Milam argues that much of the maligning of junior officers is based on officers circularly quoting one another, lack of primary source citations, and "platitudinous" statements. Milam devotes Appendix 2 of his book to the historiography of the blame laid on junior officers. See Ron Milam, *Not a Gentleman's War: An Inside View of Junior Officers in the Vietnam War.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 172.

military professionals in the middle parts of the command structure must do. Those middle parts are typically located in operational level headquarters like MACV. Such translation is difficult, but it is vital to the conduct of the war. According to Harold Winton, "[w]ithout competence in the middle parts of command . . . superior generalship and battlefield virtuosity alike are likely to be wasted."[38] During the Vietnam War, MACV Headquarters had the task of turning strategic guidance into tactical tasks and thus exerted a significant influence on the conduct of the war. But there is little, if any, serious work focused on its performance. Instead, MACV's work gets categorized within the amorphous catchphrase "the military."

The debate about military conduct in Vietnam orbits around two broad assessments of military effectiveness. The first body of literature indicts military leadership as being either immoral, incompetent, or both, which resulted in a lack of organizational ability to adapt to the enemy and prosecute the war effectively. This failure was exacerbated by subterfuge and disingenuous statements given both to Congress and the American public that sought to justify an ill-advised strategy of attrition. The second school argues that despite some deficiencies, the military performed well and was poised to win, had it not been for excessive political meddling in military affairs and the vexing "surrender mentality" of waning political support.

The works related to MACV are centered on its two most prominent commanders – Generals William C. Westmoreland and Creighton W. Abrams,

[38] Harold R. Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge: Six American Generals and Victory in the Ardennes.* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), xi.

Jr. Westmoreland has either been vilified for executing a failed strategy or vindicated for having been placed in an untenable position by President Johnson. That the works tend to focus on the individuals is understandable because there is a tendency for people to identify with the "great leader." Organizations do not engender the same human response as do individuals, whom we tend either to deify or demonize. There is also a fascination with the raw emotion and heroism displayed during combat. People identify with the human drama. The work of staff officers does not usually earn medals for heroism. All-night planning sessions, serious staff work, and bureaucratic maneuvering may lack the drama of a good human-interest story, but they are vital to the conduct of war. The work performed by the staff that establishes a meaningful framework for tactical actions in support of operational objectives, which are then aligned toward implementing the national strategy, is vital in war. Military battles – no matter how heroic – will in the end be pyrrhic if they squander resources in pursuit of irrelevant objectives. By examining a portion of the performance of MACV in detail, one can not only begin to develop a better understanding of how well or how poorly it performed this all-important work, but also solve a small but important part of the larger puzzle of American military performance during the Vietnam War.

As with other arguments about the Vietnam War, there are divergent opinions about MACV's effectiveness. These differences parallel the arguments about its commanders: either it performed generally poorly throughout the whole war, or it performed generally poorly during Gen Westmoreland's tenure

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but noticeably better under Gen Abrams. Whereas John Nagl, Andrew Krepenevich, and Jeffrey Race argue that military leadership never got it right, Lewis Sorley argues that the right commander made all the difference. General Westmoreland's departure led to a concerted effort to integrate all of the necessary elements of diplomacy, economic influence, information, and military force to bear on the war.[39] Daddis seems to take a third approach in arguing that "quite simply, the US Army had learned in Vietnam. The problem for Westmoreland remained one of translating strategic concepts into effective methods at the tactical level of war that made sense to those implementing his strategy."[40] Into this debate this dissertation dives. There does not yet exist an academic analysis of the effectiveness of MACV headquarters from an operational perspective. Unfortunately, as Daddis points out handicapping "any analysis of Army learning in Vietnam is the war's outcome." [41] This, for instance, is the problem with Nagl's analysis, which ignores "Clausewitz's warning against making 'judgment by *results*."[42]

As of this writing, there have not been any scholarly studies of MACV as a learning organization. Work has been done on the Army as an institution, but the Army institution and MACV are not synonymous. MACV is a subset of the

[39] Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam*. (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co, 1999), xiii.
[40] Daddis, *Westmoreland's War*, 115.
[41] Gregory A. Daddis, "Eating Soup with a Spoon: The U.S. Army as a "Learning Organization" in the Vietnam War." (Journal Of Military History 77, no. 1, 2013), 232. See also Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Everyman's Library, 1976, 1993), 194.
[42] Ibid.

larger Army, but its effectiveness was critical to the armed forces' performance in the Vietnam War.

Historical research and analysis in this gap will likely yield useful results that allow historians and other defense analysts to piece together the puzzle regarding American forces' performance during the Vietnam War. An investigation of MACVs effectiveness as a whole, or performance as a learning organization however, is beyond the scope of this study. But a functional focus on one or two significant aspects of the MACV staff's work is both feasible and potentially informative as to the work of the entire staff. For such a study to be useful, it must identify a function or functions that are particularly germane to counterinsurgency warfare. Military intelligence and psychological operations are two such functions.

The Particular Importance of Intelligence and Psychological Operations in Counterinsurgency

In counterinsurgency, the ability to influence the people is paramount, as both sides are attempting to win the support of a contested population. Legitimacy and allegiance are central to the struggle. A Maoist insurgency, a variant of which was executed by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, succeeds based on the insurgent's ability to move among the people as fish move in water.[43] The insurgent influences the population by living in and among them and by relying on the active support of some and the passive support of the rest. War is a human endeavor, and one must understand the

[43] Mao Zedong and Shawn Connors. *The Red Book of Guerrilla Warfare*. (El Paso, Tex: El Paso Norte Press, Special Edition Books, 2010), 49.

human aspect. Humans are complicated – they respond to a complex array of mental, moral, and physical stimuli that defy easy categorization. According to Clausewitz, "the passions that are to be kindled in war must already be present in the people," and whichever side is able to harness those passions will likely succeed.[44] The insurgent's ability to "know" the population is crucial to his survival and the success of his cause.

It is an oft-quoted maxim about counterinsurgency that one cannot kill one's way out of such wars.[45] One implication of the maxim is that these wars require clear thinking. And one of the manifestations of clear thinking is the effective integration of intelligence with psychological operations (PSYOP).

The understanding of military intelligence has been fairly straightforward and consistent over time. The concept in recorded history goes back at least to Sun Tzu, who wrote about the need for military knowledge.[46] Psychological operations, on the other hand, have gone by many different names: propaganda, psychological warfare, PSYWAR, PSYOP, IO, psyops, and PysOps. The audiences, intended effects, and definitions have defied an agreed-upon definition.[47] For Americans, psychological operations tend to be a necessary evil, but not a practice that is accepted as being a true part of the American warrior ethos. According to Susan Gough, the use of "'psychological tricks' is

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[44] Carl von Clausewitz, Michael Howard, and Peter Paret. *On War*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 89.
[45] David Howell Petraeus and James F. Amos. *Counterinsurgency: FM 3-24 (2006)*. (Boulder, Colo: Paladin, 2009),1-23.
[46] Griffith, *The Illustrated Art of War*, 41.
[47] Unless quoted, this study will use the terms PSYOP and psychological operations to refer to US efforts within South Vietnam, and PSYWAR to refer to the Government of South Vietnam efforts.

'dirty' and immoral," and have been viewed as "something that only the 'bad guys' did: first the Nazis, then the Soviets."[48] This understanding of the nature of "MindWar" has often hindered an effective employment of the craft.[49]

Clarity of terminology is important, and so a few key definitions and explanations are important to understand how the Army viewed psychological warfare during the Vietnam War. It is clear from archival records that MACV was interested and involved in the totality of the information campaign. The US Army Republic of Vietnam (USARV) produced quarterly progress reports, which are very instructive as to what the Army measured during the war. USARV's reports were largely focused on measures of performance and not measures of effectiveness.[50] Information Operations (IO) were considered key to MACV's success, but they were defined as responsible for internal command and troop information and US domestic consumption. While the Vietnamese included both of these functions within their psychological warfare department, the US split the functions into different divisions within MACV. At the national level, JUSPAO was responsible for both.[51] But at the tactical level, the command

[48] Susan L. Gough, "The Evolution of Strategic Influence", (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2003), 2.
[49] Paul E. Valley and Michael A. Aquino, "From PSYOP to MindWar: The Psychology of Victory", (Headquarters, 7th Psychological Operations Group, United States Army Reserve, Presidio of San Francisco, 1980), 1.
[50] Measures of Performance (MOP) are measures of what an organization is doing. Is it doing things well? For example, tons of supplies delivered, numbers of leaflets dropped, hours of television broadcast, Maintenance readiness rates. Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) are measures of an organization doing the right things. For example, did the supplies get to where they were needed, did the target audience read the leaflets and were there any changes in behavior, who watched the television and to what effect, was the right equipment available.
[51] For a detailed discussion on how the combination of PSYOP and Public Affairs undermined American trust for official statements see Robert J. Kodosky, *Psychological Operations American Style: The Joint United States Public Affairs Office, Vietnam and Beyond*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

information officers and psychological operations officers were two different people.

USARV defined information operations (IO) as a combination of Information, Command Information, News Releases, Hometown Releases, and Documentary Films. The primary purpose of Command Information was a well-informed command, with the impetus to "get the word down to the man who does the work."[52] Each of these categories was tracked with similar metrics to those of PSYOP. Each function also sought similar skills and attributes in its Soldiers, and similar equipment for production of its messages. This created an internal competition for resources within MACV.

Information Operations (IO)	**Psychological Warfare (PSYWAR)**	**Psychological Operations (PSYOP)**
Information Command Information News Releases Hometown Releases Documentary Films	The planned use of propaganda and other psychological actions having the primary purpose of influencing the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of hostile foreign groups in such a way as to support the achievement of national objectives.	These operations include psychological warfare and, in addition, encompass those political, military, economic, and ideological actions planned and conducted to create in neutral or friendly foreign groups the emotions, attitudes, or behavior to support the achievement of national objectives.

TABLE 1 – DEFINITIONS

PSYOP are impotent without intelligence, and intelligence needs PSYOP to generate opportunities for information. The two functions are interdependent and should be mutually supporting. In other words, in counterinsurgency one

[52] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, *Command Progress Report 2nd Quarter FY 66*, 160.03 from National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 A1 787

must synthesize an accurate cognizance of the enemy and the civilian population with those activities designed to influence the enemy's and the civilian population's mental impressions, allegiances, and thought processes.

Influence in this domain is gained as much by deeds that speak - *propagande par le fait* - as by presence and perception.[53] One of the roles of PSYOP in a counterinsurgency is to amplify the counterinsurgent's narrative, while dampening the insurgent's. PSYOP also seek to undermine the enemy's morale – a task for which the PSYOP practitioner must have intimate knowledge of the enemy's strengths, weakness, hopes, and fears. And in a counterinsurgency he must have a similar feel for the wants, needs, and aspirations of the people. The need for knowledge creates an inextricably intertwined relationship between psychological operations and military intelligence. If one does not know the target audience, he is unable to communicate effectively with it. If he does not know what motivates his adversary, he is unable to undermine his adversary's morale. This is exceedingly difficult, as populations are not monolithic. They are striated by complex relationships. Stathis Kalyvas, who has closely studied the nature of violence in civil war, "suggests that behind ostensibly political motivations often lurk personal enmities, family feuds, and local factionalism."[54] The one

[53] While propaganda of the deed traces its current manifestation to the Anarchy movement in France during the late 1800's, the concept (albeit a much more benevolent one) has also been attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi who is alleged to have exhorted his followers to "preach the gospel, and if necessary use words."

[54] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The Logic of Violence in Civil War", (accessed 04Aug2014), http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/ocvprogram/licep/1/kalyvas/kalyvaspaper.pdf, 9.

who can best understand the complex currents of this human domain will normally be the more successful in its navigation.

According to J.F.C. Fuller, wars "like all human activities, are matters of men and the wills of men in harmony or in opposition."[55] The connection between intelligence and PSYOP is vital to understanding the context of lessons learned in the fusion of targeting the enemy's mind.[56] But despite the fact that the scope and scale of effort poured into psychological operations during the Vietnam War was unprecedented in American military history, the subject receives scant scholarly attention. PSYOP in particular continue to vex military planners and strategists, and perhaps some insights derived from studying the MACV experience will inform ongoing and future military endeavors. The practice of military intelligence is also difficult. The challenge to "find, know, and never lose the enemy" sets a lofty standard of performance.[57]

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The Research Question, Its Background, and Its Significance

A major ingredient required for PSYOP to be effective is command emphasis. President Johnson directed the creation of the Joint US Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) to ensure that America's PSYOP and Public Affairs efforts were synchronized. JUSPAO was placed under the direction of Barry Zorthian, a highly capable United States Information Service officer (USIS), and ensconced within the MACV headquarters. JUSPAO reported to General

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[55] J.F.C. Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War,* (Fort Leavenworth, Kan: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1993), 56.
[56] Fuller argues the man has a three-fold nature – consisting of the soul, mind, and body. The will is the result of thoughts fixed in a constant direction by virtue of reason, and is part of the mind. Ibid.
[57] Excerpt from the US Military Intelligence Branch Creed.

Westmoreland, who emphasized the importance of PSYOP and even wrote some of his own PSYOP messages (as did General Abrams), which were then translated, placed on leaflets, and dropped across the countryside. All the requirements for effective PSYOP seemed to be in place at MACV. In fact, given the vast resources dedicated to support both intelligence collection and analysis and PSYOP messaging efforts, one might have expected a different outcome of the war. America's advantage in technology, coupled with the seductive allure of freedom, should have been enough to rally the South Vietnamese to their government and lead to a defeated and demoralized enemy. This, however, was not the case.

Despite the unprecedented command emphasis, General Westmoreland only makes one mention of PYSOP in his autobiography, *A Soldier Reports*:

> Psychological warfare detachments operated throughout South Vietnam, distributing leaflets, broadcasting over loudspeakers, trying in various ways to persuade the enemy to defect…Yet despite a major and persistent effort, including bringing civilian psychological warfare experts from the United States, results were disappointing. Except for an occasional platoon-size group, most defectors were individuals. Mass surrenders never developed despite our intense psychological warfare efforts, which apparently could not overcome the enemy's intensive indoctrination.[58]

If General Westmoreland's disappointment in PSYOP's performance was deserved, was the root cause of the failure organizational dysfunction, inadequate doctrine, or something else such as cultural stereotyping? Did PSYOP alter their tactics, techniques, and procedures based on the latest intelligence available? Did intelligence provide the necessary requirements for

[58] William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 282.

PSYOP to persuade the population effectively as to the worthiness of the RVN government and its allegiance?

Westmoreland's assessment leads to several unanswered questions. If he believed PSYOP were so important, why did they receive such scant mention in his memoirs? Did he really believe they were important? What about his successor General Abrams? In Sorley's *A Better War*, there is no mention of PSYOP. And in *Vietnam Chronicles*, there are only two mentions of PSYOP: a derisive comment about the lack of effectiveness of psywarriors, and a comment about ralliers (*Hoi Chanh*) being "the only thing in psyops that you can prove."[59] Snide comments from commanders often belie a lack of trust or respect in the capabilities of special staff sections. A military staff is an extension of the commander and thus often takes on attributes of the commander's personality, attitude, and prioritization of information and action. If the staff develops similar attitude toward PYSOP, then it would likely be reflected in the activity's relative prioritization.

At the beginning of the war, there does appear to have been prominence given to both intelligence operations and psychological operations at MACV headquarters. Whether this emphasis remained for the duration of the war is yet to be determined. Given the vast resources used in support of intelligence and the personal emphasis General Westmoreland placed on PSYOP, one might expect there to have been a coordinated effort between the two functions. The purpose of this research is to analyze the two functions themselves and the

[59] Lewis Sorley, *Vietnam Chronicles: The Abrams Tapes, 1968-1972*. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2004), 436, 587.

interaction of the two within MACV headquarters. Thus, the main question to be explored in this dissertation is "What can be determined about MACV's performance as a learning organization by examining military intelligence, psychological operations, and the coordination between the two within the headquarters?"

By answering this question, some gaps will be filled in regarding MACV's overall performance. If MACV was effective in its execution of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination, then one can infer that other staff sections were likely effective as well. Of course, the examination of these functions will overlap with an examination of the commanders. It is simply not possible to discuss the performance of the MACV intelligence and PSYOP staff sections without discussing the performance of the commanding general. This is particularly salient given the nature of discourse in Daddis's and Nagl's arguments. According to Daddis, Westmoreland had three essential tasks: to defeat the conventional threat from the North Vietnamese, to develop the Republic of Vietnam armed forces (RVNAF), and to pacify and protect the population of South Vietnam.[60] While Daddis acknowledges Westmoreland's inadequacies in the prosecution of the war, he tempers his criticism by exploring the context. America's belief in the power of the military to overcome social ills abroad was a key theme of the context in which Westmoreland developed his campaign.[61] Daddis concludes that whether or not Westmoreland exhibited excessive "hubris or naiveté, the reluctance to consider the

[60] Daddis, *Westmoreland's War*, 77.
[61] Ibid., 91.

limitations of US power abroad held lasting ramifications for American military strategy in South Vietnam."[62] According to Daddis, Westmoreland was neither negligent nor incompetent. He commanded an organization that brought about impressive tactical progress, while simultaneously suffering strategic setbacks.

Nagl's argument takes a different course. He argues that "the learning cycle began well" in Vietnam, but the institutional culture of the Army thwarted it because the identified shortcomings in counterinsurgency doctrine were "rejected because they failed to conform to the army's concept of how wars were to be fought and won."[63] He squarely blames the US Army for failing to be a learning organization. This was not merely a problem of institutional inertia. According to Nagl, the "US Army resisted any true attempt to learn how to fight a counterinsurgency."[64] Nagl does not assert that the Army failed to learn – only that is failed to learn anything outside of its preconception of warfare based on firepower. In fact, he finds that all of the technical and tactical innovations, of which there were many, were solely focused on supporting improvements in lethality. Changes to strategic approach, which were advocated by individuals such as Bob Komer and General Creighton Abrams were ignored. It was only under Abrams's command that any change occurred, and at that point it was "too little, too late."[65] Otto von Bismarck "suggested that fools learn by experience whereas wise men learn from other peoples'

[62] Ibid., 179.
[63] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam. (*Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005),198.
[64] Ibid., xxii.
[65] Ibid., xii.

experience."[66] The Army failed in this respect because it ignored the lessons of the British in Malaysia – this despite the fact that the British sent a contingent to assist MACV. The US Army also failed to learn from the French experience. In short, the US Army refused to listen to anything (or anyone) that questioned the verity of its firepower paradigm. If Nagl's conclusions are correct, there were no innovations within the PSYOP or intelligence fields because these were not directly related to firepower. Was the US Army as flawed an institution as Nagl argues?

In order to answer this question a standard is needed to test whether or not MACV, in its execution of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination, was a learning organization. Using such a standard as the basis for analysis, one should be able to determine how well each of those two critical sections worked both independently and together. Additionally, the analysis could potentially shed some light on the overall effectiveness of the MACV staff. This model must account for an ability to ensure the *right* things are being learned. If MACV displayed the characteristics of a learning organization within intelligence, PSYOP and the interaction between them, then it can be shown that a significant aspect of MACV was effective. These findings should provide insights that offer either additional support to or refutation of Nagl's arguments.

Before further developing the research methodology, it is important to summarize the major points thus far established. These findings provide the

[66] Ibid, xxi, quoted in Kenneth N. Waltz, Man, the State, and War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 220.

foundation for the development of the dissertation within the current body of scholarly work. They can be summarized as follows:

1. The current historical literature is divided about the performance of the Army in Vietnam and its ability to function as a learning organization.

2. There is a large gap in the literature analyzing the performance of MACV as a headquarters.

3. The operational level of war is vital to the successful conduct of military campaigns. Yet despite its importance, scant scholarship is devoted to its study in the Vietnam War.

4. Psychological operations and military intelligence are integral to counterinsurgency, and the two disciplines are codependent.

How will the Research Question be Answered?

The quest commences with a model found in David Garvin's book, *Learning in Action: A Guide to Putting the Learning Organization to Work*. His definition of a learning organization "is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, interpreting, transferring, and retaining knowledge, and at purposefully modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights."[67] He also offers five questions to determine if an organization warrants this description (Table 2).

1. Does the organization have a defined learning agenda?
2. Is the organization open to discordant information?
3. Does the organization avoid repeated mistakes?
4. Does the organization lose critical knowledge when key people leave?
5. Does the organization act on what it knows?

TABLE 2 – LEARNING ORGANIZATION

[67] David A. Garvin, *Learning in Action: A Guide to Putting the Learning Organization to Work*. (Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press, 2000), 11.

This dissertation will ask these questions of intelligence, PYSOP and the coordination between them. The key entities involved within MACV were the J2 (Intelligence), J3-PD (later the J3-11 – the PSYOP Directorate), the Joint US Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), and the 4th PSYOP Group, which was the operational arm for all of the PSYOP conducted within Vietnam.

This study will examine the Vietnam War in three chronological periods using the aforementioned methodology. These three phases of the war coincide with significant shifts in the situation is South Vietnam. The first phase is from the halcyon days of MACV when the command, the Congress, and the American public were largely supportive of the war effort. It extends from 27 July 1965, the day President Johnson announced his decision to escalate the ground war in South Vietnam, to 8 January 1968, the day the first skirmishes between North Vietnamese reconnaissance units and Marine patrols at *Khe Sanh* occurred, signaling the early beginnings of the Tet Offensive. The second period is in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive during which time MACV and the GVN won a stunning tactical victory over the Viet Cong, but lost the American public's confidence. This phase lasted from 8 January 1968, the start of the Tet Offensive to 8 June 1969, the day President Richard Nixon announced the first of many troop withdrawals from South Vietnam, ushering in what became known as "Vietnamization."[68] The final phase lasted from 8 June 1969 - 21

[68] President Nixon entered the White House with the intent of ending the Vietnam War. It was during discussions in April of 1969 that SecDef Laird coined the term "Vietnamizing" the war. The label stuck. On 8 June 1969 at the Midway conference, President Nixon first announced the withdraw of 25,000 US Combat troop. Henry Kissinger, *Ending the Vietnam War: A History of America's Involvement in and Extrication from the Vietnam War*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 81-82.

December 1971, the date at which the last PSYOP unit departed from South Vietnam.[69] It includes a significant portion of the period of Vietnamization as American forces were rapidly turning over functions and responsibilities to the RVNAF. It ends on the date the last PSYOP unit departed South Vietnam.

The chronological divisions outlined above will allow for testing the performance of intelligence, PSYOP and their coordination over time as the command of MACV changed hands, as other key leaders departed, as the system was tested by the Tet Offensive, and as national political administrations changed bringing forth the new strategy of Vietnamization.

The following table shows how the qualification of effectiveness will be determined within the analysis of intelligence, PSYOP, and their interaction. Thus, there are a total of fifteen possible points within each time period.

Level of Effectiveness	Score for Each Level	Total Score for the Period
Very Effective	5 of 5	14-15 of 15
Somewhat Effective	4 of 5	11-13 of 15
Marginally Effective	3 of 5	8-10 of 15
Ineffective	2 of 5	4-7 of 15
Dysfunctional	1 or 0 of 5	0-3 of 15

TABLE 3 – QUANTIFICATION OF GARVIN'S LEARNING CRITERIA

[69] 21 December 1971 was the date that the 7th PSYOP Battalion, which was last PSYOP unit in South Vietnam, deactivated.

If it can be determined, for instance, that during 1965-68 MACV's execution of intelligence, its execution of PSYOP and the coordination between the sections rated a positive response for all five of Garvin's litmus tests (Table 2), MACV will be rated as Very Effective for that period (see Table 3). If it is determined that MACV performed at this level during all three time periods, then it can be extrapolated that the headquarters performed well overall. The converse will also be true.

An example may prove useful (Table 4).

If during the July 1965 – January 1968 time period, it can be determined that MACV in its execution of intelligence, had a defined learning agenda and acted on what it knew, but was only partially open to discordant information, repeated mistakes, and lost critical knowledge when key people left, it would only have met two of the five criteria derived from Dr. Garvin's questions. Additionally, it would have partially met one and failed to meet two of Garvin's criteria. Thus, according to the metrics in Table 2, intelligence would be rated as Ineffective for that period. Similarly for PSYOP, if MACV had a defined learning agenda, acted on what it knew, and was open to discordant information, but repeated mistakes and lost critical knowledge when key people left, it would only have met three of the five criteria derived from Dr. Garvin's questions. Thus, according to the metrics in Table 2, intelligence would be rated as Marginally Effective for that period. For the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP, if MACV had a defined learning agenda, acted on what it knew, was open to discordant information, but repeated mistakes, and lost critical

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knowledge when key people left, it would only have met three of the five criteria derived from Dr. Garvin's questions. Thus, according to the metrics in Table 2, intelligence would be rated as Marginally Effective for that time period. Overall for the period, MACV would have met eight and one-half out of a possible fifteen criteria, thus rendering it a rating as a Marginally Effective learning organization (Table 3).

Garvin's Learning Questions	July 1965 - January 1968		
	Intelligence	**PSYOP**	**Coordination**
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	+	+
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	/	+	+
Did MACV avoid repeat mistakes with intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	-	-	-
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?	-	-	-
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	+	+
Total	**2.5**	**3**	**3**
	Total for Time Period		**8.5**

TABLE 4 – EXAMPLE OF MACV RATING

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

Description of the Evidence

There is abundant primary and secondary-source material available for the researcher to examine MACV's implementation of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination. The U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC) in

Carlisle, Pennsylvania; the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland; The Texas Tech Vietnam Archive in Lubbock, Texas; and Fort Leavenworth's Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) and Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) contain droves of primary-source material, including several recently declassified studies conducted during the Vietnam War on the effectiveness of the PSYOP campaign. While the focus of the studies are on PSYOP's performance and effectiveness, extensive evaluation was also conducted of the effectiveness of intelligence support to PSYOP. Additionally, unit after-action reports (AAR), operational report lessons learned (ORLL), senior-officer interviews, and the myriad studies conducted during and immediately after the war provide rich veins to be mined for insight. One dissertation and several monographs either cite primary sources or provide first-hand insight to the conduct of psychological operations during the Vietnam War. Much of the documentation related to intelligence remains classified, but there is enough material within the PSYOP literature to allow one to make an educated assessment of that function. The one solid source for intelligence comes from General Westmoreland's J2, Major General (ret.) Joseph A. McChristian. In *The Role of Military Intelligence, 1965-1967,* he gives a detailed account of the mechanics of intelligence operations. Philip Davidson, who succeeded McChristian as the MACV J2 also provides insight and perspective in his two published accounts of the Vietnam War: *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* and *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975.*

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To date, however, no synthetic work directly examines the relationship between intelligence and PSYOP. The studies conducted during and after the Vietnam War catalog instances of interactions and itemize successful and failed endeavors, but they lack a systemic analysis of the overall effectiveness of those interactions. Because the available literature on PSYOP during the Vietnam War contains only a few works on the subject, the conduct of PSYOP by MACV headquarters offers a particularly fruitful arena for inquiry.

Michael Barger's School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) monograph finds that "only seven published works examine a significant issue related to PSYOP in depth, only three of those are studies devoted specifically on PSYOP, and only one of those three concentrates on the military portion of the PSYOP effort in Vietnam."[70] Barger posited "that combat commanders saw PSYOP as more of a sideshow than a valuable combat multiplier."[71] He argues that psychological operations performed well, although certain combat commanders' perceptions of PSYOP were often not well integrated into broader operations. This dissertation builds upon some of his key insights and questions others, while delving further into answering the reasons why so many commanders misunderstood PSYOP. Building upon Barger's work is the detailed description of psychological operations history in Vietnam by Mervyn Roberts III.[72] His

[70] Michael G. Barger, "Psychological Operations Supporting Counterinsurgency: 4th Psyop Group in Vietnam." (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 2007),1.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Mervyn Edwin Roberts III, "United States Psychological Operations in Support of Counterinsurgency: Vietnam, 1960 to 1965." (University of North Texas, 2010).

thesis covers the period 1960-1965, and his work also helps to set the stage for the periods under analysis in this dissertation.

In his Army War College study *US Army Psychological Operations into the Year 2000*, Terry F. Greene cites the following anecdote from a U.S. Army report: "The body count and kill attitudes was [sic] manifested in the remark of a unit commander who boasted that his Chieu Hoi program consisted of two 105mm howitzers – one of which was marked 'Chieu' and the other 'Hoi.'"[73] He draws similar conclusions to Barger, i.e., that PSYOP were not understood by tactical commanders and were therefore poorly integrated into other operations. Similarly, he writes, "The emphasis was not placed on the political and psychological dimensions of this form of conflict, but on firepower and technology."[74] While both their findings are accurate as far as they go, there are also examples of very successful strategic and tactical-level PSYOP being conducted during the war.

Harry D. Latimer, a career Army officer, served as Chief of Plans, Policy and Research in the JUSPAO office and later wrote "U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam" during his post-doctoral fellowship at Brown University.[75] He found that the use "of intelligence in Vietnam by the US was only a partial success and use by the Vietnamese even poorer. Unfortunately, the MACV intelligence staff section . . . [was] caught up in emphasis upon

[73] Terry F. Greene, "US Army Psychological Operations into the Year 2000." (DTIC Document, 1993), 5.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Harry D. Latimer, "U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam Monograph on National Security Affairs." (Providence, R.I.: Brown University, 1973).

tactical operations and little heeded psychological operations needs, in spite of the best efforts of psyops liaison officers."[76]

Soon after the end of the US PSYOP effort in South Vietnam, R.W. Chandler, a career Air Force officer who had served in a PSYOP capacity, wrote a dissertation titled, "US Army Psychological Operations in Vietnam 1965-1972." He sampled all of the leaflets produced during the Vietnam War and examined their efficacy in terms of support to JUSPAO policy, cultural sensitivities, and their overall effectiveness in support of strategic aims. His work is an excellent chronology of the overall PSYOP campaign in Southeast Asia. It remains the seminal work to date.

Robert Kodosky's recently published book about the Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) argues that the failures of PSYOP were the combined result of stereotyping the Vietnamese people as primitive and the poor organization of JUSPAO.[77] He further argues that America had historically kept its activities to inform the American people and to influence other target audiences separated from each other. JUSPAO, however, combined the responsibility for conducting PSYOP within Vietnam with the responsibility for informing the American public about the conduct of the war. According to Kodosky, this dual focus had disastrous results.

Ron McLaurin's *Military Propaganda*, Christopher Simpson's *Science of Coercion*, Stanley Sandler's *Cease Resistance: It's Good for You!*, and Ernest

[76] Ibid., 16.
[77] Robert J. Kodosky, *Psychological Operations American Style : The Joint United States Public Affairs Office, Vietnam and Beyond.* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

and Edith Bardain's "Final Technical Report: Psychological Operations Studies – Vietnam, Volume I" are additional works analyzing PSYOP during the Vietnam War. The volume of material available from these studies is understandable given the nature of the unprecedented weight of the PSYOP effort in Vietnam. The military intelligence effort during the Vietnam War was also substantial. Yet the body of work on military intelligence support to psychological operations from an intelligence perspective is virtually non-existent. The current works on military intelligence during the Vietnam War focus primarily on the failures to predict the Tet Offensive, the failures to understand the character of the war, and the differences between the CIA's estimates of enemy strength and those of the MACV J2. James Wirtz's *The Tet Offensive: Intelligence Failure in War* highlights the problems in predicting Tet, as do two master's theses, "National Intelligence Failure: The Case of Tet 1968" and "The Tet 1968 Offensive: A Failure of Allied Intelligence" by Gerald Adams and Glenn Helm respectively. Michael Hiam's, *Who the Hell Are We Fighting?* and Sam Adams, *War of Numbers: An Intelligence Memoir* examine the differences in analysis between the CIA and the MACV J2. While studies on the effectiveness of intelligence were made during and after the Vietnam War, many of these remain classified. Additionally, much of the raw data related to military intelligence remains classified and beyond the scope of this dissertation. The records for the MACV J2 at the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland, for example, also remain classified. However, each of

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the previous PSYOP works details either explicit or implicit assessments of intelligence.

All told, there are eleven categories of source material available for this research. Each of these categories has sufficient explicit and implicit evidence to glean results for intelligence as well.[78]

1. Archival Material/Monographs/Dissertations
2. Orders/Directives
3. Operational Reports-Lessons Learned (OR-LL)
4. Doctrine
5. Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) changes
6. Internal Evaluation Reports
7. External Evaluation Reports
8. Unit Reports, Command Histories, Quarterly Progress Reports
9. Senior Officer Debriefing Interviews
10. Journal Articles
11. Secondary Sources

Roadmap of the Argument

Drawing from these sources the present study explores how well intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination were integrated at MACV by expanding on Garvin's litmus test questions in light of the available data (Table 1). Combining his questions with the above categories of data produces the following list of refined questions to be explored during each time period.

1. Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?
    a. What did intelligence seek to learn about itself, the enemy (VC/NVA), and the other South Vietnamese?
    b. What did PSYOP seek to learn about itself, the enemy (VC/NVA), and the other South Vietnamese?

[78] Many primary source documents from MACV related to intelligence remain classified. This study will not use any classified material.

c. What answers does analysis of mission statements, commander's critical information requirements, and archival materiel provide?

2. Was MACV open to discordant information about intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?
    a. Were there dissenting opinions? Were they heeded?
    b. What did internal evaluations find?
    c. What did external evaluation find?
    d. Were these findings acted upon?

3. Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes in intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?
    a. Where there Operational Reports/Lessons Learned (ORLL) trends? If so, what were they?
    b. Where there internal evaluation trends? If so, what were they?
    c. Where there external evaluation trends? If so, what were they?

4. Did MACV lose critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?
    a. What do senior officer interviews tell us?
    b. Were key insights captured in doctrinal changes?
    c. Were key insights promulgated in new/updated directives, orders, or other venues?

5. Did MACV act on what it knew about intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?
    a. What were the doctrinal changes?
    b. What were the Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) changes?
    c. What were the technological improvements?
    d. What were the changes to mission?
    e. What were the changes to intelligence requirements based on feedback from PSYOP?
    f. What were the changes to PSYOP based on intelligence analysis?
    g. What were the changes to operations or planning based on either of the previous two?

The results of this analysis will be measured against the criteria in Table 2, which will then be used to determine the overall effectiveness of MACV as a learning organization in its employment of military intelligence, psychological operations and their coordination.

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MACV's official command history serves as the foundation for building the chronology of key events and decisions, with the respective development of military intelligence, psychological operations, and their coordination examined within that chronology. The Army was very interested in the effectiveness of its psychological operations effort and commissioned several studies both internal and external to MACV. This additional data from archival research, internal MACV reports, and external studies provides insight into the effectiveness of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination will be examined using Garvin's tests of a learning organization.

The argument is thus organized into three phases, which each explore a specific period of the Vietnam War. Each phase contains five chapters, which provide a strategic overview of the period, explore how effectively both the intelligence and the psychological operations function at MACV performed, examine the extent to which MACV coordinated their efforts, and then draws conclusions about MACV's overall performance in these three areas during the period.

Phase 1: MACV's Halcyon Days, July 1965 – January 1968

This phase examines the development, effectiveness, and coordination of military intelligence and PSYOP within MACV prior to the Tet Offensive of 1968. This period is from 27 July 1965 to 8 January 1968, when the US armed forces were rapidly building up in South Vietnam and taking the lead in the prosecution of the war. The flow of men and materiel was largely unimpeded as commanders asked for and received virtually everything they requested. This

phase explores the relationship of intelligence and PSYOP as both functions expanded within MACV and sought to gain understanding of the enemy and produce results. The intelligence effort grew significantly. The MACV J2 section went from 125 to 467 authorized personnel; and the intelligence structure within South Vietnam grew to include the 525th, 135th, 149th, and 519th MI Groups. Additionally, entities such as the Combined Intelligence Center Vietnam (CICV) were created to assist with the collection, analysis, and production of "timely, accurate, adequate, and usable information."[79]

PSYOP forces grew from the initial support provided by the 7th PSYOP Group in Okinawa, to the newly designated 4th PSYOP Group, which consisted of four battalions. This effort was set within the largest US Information Operations effort in history, with the creation of the Joint US Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) under Barry Zorthian.

Some tactical-level anecdotes from the four Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ) will be studied to provide context for the operational-level decisions, but the analysis will primarily be from the perspective of MACV.[80] General Westmoreland's stressing the importance of PSYOP in the conduct of the war is

[79] Joseph A. McChristian, Major General, USA, *The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, Department of the Army, (Washington, D.C. 1994), 6, http://www.history.army.mil/books/Vietnam/mi/, accessed 11 August 2014.
[80] South Vietnam was organized by the ARVN and divided into four corps tactical zones, I-IV CTZ. These designations were also used by the United States. These CTZs were redesignated as Military Regions (MR 1-4), on April 30, 1971. Given the chronological timeframes being examined in this dissertation, the term CTZ will be used throughout. Gordon L., Rottman, and Duncan Anderson. *The US Army in the Vietnam War 1965-73*. (Oxford: Osprey, 2008), (ebook – page number is unavailable).

a significant theme, as is the effect his emphasis had on support provided by the J2 and subordinate commanders at the CTZ and division levels.[81]

Building PSYOP and intelligence force structures while engaged with the enemy, key players sought to integrate into a rapidly expanding staff; organize effectively based on analysis of the mission, enemy, terrain, troops, time and civilians (METT-TC); and understand the enemy in order to exploit his vulnerabilities. The rapid buildup of forces created its own challenges, however, and PSYOP forces in particular struggled to meet commanders' expectations.

Phase 2: Tet Changes Everything, January 1968 – June 1969

This period marked a crucial inflection point in the war, as the Tet Offensive occurred at the end of January 1968. The outcome of the Tet Offensive set the stage for much of the future actions throughout the remainder of that year and into 1969. Though achieving a huge psychological victory that resounded loudly in the United States, the Viet Cong were largely combat ineffective after the Tet Offensive. The insurgency was at a point of significant vulnerability at precisely the time that US forces were at their strongest.

This chapter will show how the PSYOP effort used intelligence to focus its efforts against enemy vulnerabilities. Exhaustive studies by third-party

[81] The Army did a remarkable job during the Vietnam War collecting lessons learned from the overwhelming majority of units involved. The sheer volume of these reports is remarkable. To properly scope this dissertation, and avoid too tactical of a focus, the lower level reports are being purposely omitted from the analysis.

researchers polled the Vietnamese population, culled through thousands of interrogation reports, and used the latest computer technology to analyze vast quantities of data in order to fuse intelligence with the PSYOP effort. These staff processes occurred against the backdrop of significant upheaval. While US military strength was at its peak during this period, there was much internal turmoil within the command and the political structures. Lyndon Johnson announced in March that he would not seek his party's nomination for re-election, General Abrams took over command of MACV from General Westmoreland in June 1968, and in November Richard Nixon's "secret" plan to end the war enabled him to defeat Hubert Humphrey by a narrow margin.

The evidence here indicates that PSYOP and intelligence continued to work together through the turmoil, while at the apex of their respective capabilities in relation to the enemy. Many of the programs, such as *Chieu Hoi* showed significant progress. Politically, however, the conditions had been set for the significant reduction of US forces over the next several years.

Phase 3: Vietnamization – June 1969 to December 1971

This chapter studies the thirty months from 8 June 1969 - 21 December 1971, during which there was a rapid withdrawal of US forces, with functions either turned over to the South Vietnamese government or stopped altogether. The South Vietnamese PSYOP effort was structured differently than the US effort - at times causing friction and misunderstanding. South Vietnamese PSYWAR units focused primarily on political indoctrination and loyalty. This is understandable given the numerous *coup d'etat* that occurred in South

Vietnam. This internal preoccupation hindered efforts to exploit Viet Cong vulnerabilities. The departure of the last PSYOP units from South Vietnam in 1971 brought to a close American strategic and tactical level PSYOP efforts.

The section examines how as both functions and resources became constrained, intelligence and PSYOP mutually supported each other and were integrated to maintain focus on the enemy, while operating under the pressure of withdrawal. The focus of analysis during this phase of the war is more tactical than the previous phases because MACV headquarters' mission had changed and the successful redeployment of US forces became the primary mission. By the 2nd quarter of the 1971 Fiscal Year (January to March of 1971), the US Army Vietnam (USARV) Command Progress Report no longer mentioned either the ACofS G5 or the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) sections. There was no reporting on Information Operations (IO), Civic Action, or PSYOP. The Assistance in Kind (AIK) funds were anticipated to be 75.9% (FY71) of FY70 funds, and the focus of reporting returned to measures of performance, with the most significant topics being items such as tons shipped, numbers of tire retread, Operations and Maintenance (OMA) statistics, and minimizing overtime pay for the Department of the Army (DA) Civilians working in Vietnam.[82] The US Army had ceased to focus on the enemy and instead became focused on controlling costs while redeploying as much materiel as practicable. Thus, MACV learning

[82] Assistance in Kind (AIK) funds were those congressionally authorized funds spent to assist the South Vietnamese government execute internal stabilization strategy. The funds were used for infrastructure improvements, as well as educational and health care needs.

became measured largely by how well it helped successive units to transfer responsibility for intelligence, PSYOP and the coordination between the two to the RVNAF. By December 1971, the largest PSYOP effort in US history simply ceased to exist.

Conclusions

This chapter synthesizes the conclusions of the three phases of the war, answers the research question, and provides suggestions for additional research. Key to this chapter is the capturing of major findings about MACV's intelligence and PSYOP organizational effectiveness, internal staff relationships and their impact on operations, and the inherent challenges and successes weathered by these efforts. In so doing, it will also evaluate the coordination between intelligence and PSYOP as an indicator of MACV's performance as a learning organization. By examining the results according to the questions listed in Table 1 and the criteria listed in Table 2, it will determine the overall effectiveness of MACV at learning about intelligence, PSYOP and their coordination. This analysis will assist in providing insights to MACV's overall effectiveness and provide insights toward answering other nagging questions in the historiographical debate about MACV's performance in the Vietnam War. What were the differences in MACV's performance between the commands of General Westmoreland and General Abrams? Where there differences between time periods? What effect did Vietnamization and the drawdown have on MACV's effectiveness? Were there positive or negative trends over time? What

culpability do the Army leaders of MACV bear regarding the charges of incompetence? How well did this interaction of PSYOP and intelligence display the attributes of a learning organization? What does this portend for the rest of the MACV headquarters? The chapter ends with suggestions for further research regarding MACV's effectiveness in the Vietnam War.

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PHASE I

MACV's Halcyon Days, July 1965 – January 1968

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2

Strategic Overview, July 1965 – January 1968

Just like the Alamo, somebody damn well needed to go to their aid. Well, by God, I'm going to Viet Nam's aid!
Lyndon Johnson

While American involvement in South Vietnam prior to 1965 was officially in an advisory capacity, it was not without risk. Captain Roger Donlon was awarded the first Medal of Honor of the Vietnam War on 5 December 1964 for his actions five months earlier in an area northwest of Da Nang.[1] During the award ceremony, President Lyndon Johnson reinforced America's commitment to the South Vietnamese when he said, "let any who suggest that we cannot honor our commitment in Vietnam find new strength and new resolution in the actions of this brave man and his comrades."[2] Donlon's act of heroism would be repeated in many similar ways throughout South Vietnam over the next several years. Yet no amount of tactical success or individual American heroics would stem the tide of North Vietnamese support to the Viet Cong. The hope that they would, however, underpinned the President's statement that morning in December 1964 and would provide the context behind the logic of the ever-increasing American escalation in Vietnam through the summer of 1969.

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[1] During the fight, the North Vietnamese used loudspeakers to conduct psychological operations against Captain Donlon and his South Vietnamese allies.
[2] Michael E. Ruane, "Roger Donlon got the Vietnam War's first Medal of Honor 50 years ago", *The Washington Post*, 4 December 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/roger-donlon-got-the-vietnam-wars-first-medal-of-honor-50-years-ago/2014/12/04/fab3f290-7a31-11e4-9a27-6fdbc612bff8_story.html, accessed 6 December 2015.

After a brief review of the years prior to 1965, this chapter examines the development, effectiveness, and coordination of military intelligence and psychological operations within MACV in the thirty months prior to the Tet Offensive of 1968. The narrative begins on 27 July 1965, the day Johnson announced the decision to escalate the ground war in South Vietnam. It ends on 2 January 1968, the day a squad of US Marines just outside of Khe Sanh destroyed a North Vietnamese reconnaissance patrol.[3] That skirmish was the first direct military action signifying the imminent start of the Tet Offensive. During this time, US armed forces significantly built up strength in South Vietnam and took the lead in the war's prosecution. The rapid buildup of forces created its own challenges, however, and PSYOP forces in particular struggled to meet commanders' expectations.

Setting the Stage

On 27 April 1960, Admiral Harold D. Felt, the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Command (CINCPAC), directed the introduction of US psychological warfare (PSYWAR) personnel to South Vietnam to assist with training the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF). But the frictions that existed between President Diem and his American supporters prevented a timely deployment of these assets.[4] Diem viewed the threat from internal sources to

[3] Phillip B. Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975.* (Novato, Calif: Presidio Press, 1988), 554.
[4] Philip E. Catton, *Diem's Final Failure: Prelude to America's War in Vietnam.* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 95.

be much more acute than did his US counterparts.[5] The Vietnamese viewed PSYWAR from a Nationalist Chinese model, which included troop education and information. The Americans did not. A result of this tension was that the first PSYOP Mobile Training Team (MTT) did not arrive in Vietnam until early February 1962; and it was limited to advice, assistance, and training of RVNAF forces on technical functions.[6]

Not surprisingly, President Diem's assassination on 2 November 1963 brought about significant changes within South Vietnam. US national policymakers had planned in early 1963 that the US would pull out of Vietnam by the end of 1965.[7] Following Diem's death, however, American policy changed to one of increased commitment to the government of South Vietnam.[8] The assassination and subsequent coup also resulted in a purge of Diem loyalists, devastating the GVN intelligence-collection system, which essentially had to be rebuilt.[9] In the immediate aftermath of the coup, a concomitant flurry of organizational activity occurred within MACV headquarters including rapid increases in the levels of military intelligence and PSYOP support requested by military commanders.

As 1964 unfolded, MACV underwent a significant number of changes. On 1 January 1964, MACV transferred PSYOP responsibility to the new

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[5] Ibid., 33.
[6] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1966*, (Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1967), 554.
[7] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1964*, (Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1965), 173.
[8] Ibid., 180.
[9] MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1964*, 42.

psychological warfare/civic action (Psywar/CA) branch because the two functions were seen to be complementary. Three weeks later, on 27 January 1964, General William Westmoreland arrived in Saigon. He appeared to possess the quintessential qualities of American military professionalism – bearing, confidence, and tactical expertise - and would be the poster child of America's military abilities throughout this time period. William Childs "Westy" Westmoreland was born on 26 March 1914 in Saxon, South Carolina. He earned the rank of Eagle Scout at age 15 and spent a year at the Citadel prior to his appointment to the United States Military Academy (USMA) in 1932. He and Creighton Abrams, who later succeeded him, were classmates. When Westmoreland graduated in 1936, he held the highest cadet rank, that of first captain. He was originally commissioned as an artillery officer. In WWII he saw combat in Tunisia, Sicily, France, and Germany. After the war, he transferred to the infantry, completed airborne training, and eventually assumed command of the 187th Airborne Regimental Team in Korea. After returning from Korea, he attended Harvard Business School where he completed a three-month management course. In 1960, Westmoreland became the superintendent at West Point. He served as the deputy commander of MACV for five months until he took over as commander on 20 June 1964, a position he would hold for four years.

On 15 May 1964, in a bureaucratic coup of its own, MACV obtained Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) approval for a reorganization plan, despite the

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CINCPAC's opposition.[10] This reorganization created five branches within the MACV J3: Operations, Operational Plans and Analysis (OP&A), Psywar/CA, and the Operations Information and Joint Operations Center.[11] To capitalize on these changes and the coup-induced GVN change in attitude toward accepting assistance, the MACV J3 developed plans for five US PSYOP Mobile Training Teams (MTT) to advise, train, and assist the Vietnamese in certain critical areas such as "radio management, Viet Cong propaganda research, printing management and production, psyops instruction, and motion picture production management."[12] By the end of 1964, the consensus within MACV was that the MTTs had made a "significant contribution to the long-term improvement of RVNAF psychological warfare operations."[13] To sustain and enhance these improvements, the CINCPAC suggested to COMUSMACV that a permanent US Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity Pacific (USABVAPAC) detachment be established in Vietnam, similar to those already operating in Japan and Korea. The technical experts manning this organization would eliminate the need for more MTTs and additional TDY personnel. They would also mitigate the effect of short, temporary-duty tours on the continual loss of institutional knowledge.[14] Training operators, however, was much different than generating bureaucratic support for the program. While MTTs were able to

[10] Interestingly, staff maneuvering had bypassed MACV's higher headquarters and had managed to get a decision from the JCS, which overrode its immediate superior. This trend of external meddling in the internal affairs of MACV would significantly affect the staff processes of military intelligence and psychological operations see MACV, *Command History, 1964*, 11.
[11] Ibid., 52.
[12] MACV, *Command History 1966*, 72.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

train Vietnamese soldiers on the mechanical fundamentals and technical production of PSYOP material, the philosophical change in approach would prove exceptionally difficult to implement. The South Vietnamese government was now ostensibly more open to US directed PSYOP, but continued to hold the view that PSYOP was an inwardly, rather than outwardly, directed function.

MACV reorganization and growth affected intelligence agencies as well. These changes occurred at both the strategic and tactical levels. At the strategic level, the MACV J2 nearly doubled in strength from 76 to 125 and the GVN J2 was reorganized to resemble more closely the US structure for intelligence collection and analysis.[15] The focus at this level was on coordination, integration, and training with South Vietnamese counterparts, while at the tactical level the creation of the Sector Operations Intelligence Centers (SOIC) sought to centralize intelligence within each sector or province. The MACV J2 was focused on enemy order of battle, and centralization of intelligence was the most efficient way to ensure a consolidated picture of enemy strength.[16] By the end of 1964, MACV reported that these strategic and tactical changes facilitated the timely targeting of Viet Cong guerilla forces by both US and Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) air strikes. Additionally, ARVN ground units had taken the offensive and were successfully striking Viet Cong base areas.[17]

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[15] Ibid., 40.
[16] This approach was effective in the understanding of main force NVA regiments and VC militia, but problematic when required to analyze local Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI).
[17] MACV, *Command History 1966*, 48-9.

Prior to 1965 the primary use of the MACV J2 was to "support and improve the Vietnamese intelligence effort and to keep COMUSMACV, CINCPAC, and the US national agencies informed of the enemy situation."[18] One manifestation of this support was the MACV J2 translation service, which translated Ministry of Defense documents to facilitate intelligence sharing. One such document is a Ministry of Defense J2 analysis from late 1964 based on interrogations and captured enemy documents. The document predicted that the VC would engage in a propaganda campaign in 1965 that would distribute leaflets and utilize banners with the following themes:

1. Promote the neutralization of the South Vietnamese government
2. Alienate the Americans
3. Create an anti-war spirit among US Army personnel
4. Foil the GVN conscription plan
5. Infiltrate loyal cadre into political parties in Saigon as fifth columnists

This assessment proved to be an accurate description of VC and NVN-directed political warfare against the GVN/US.[19] It also demonstrated two other things. First, that the MACV J2 had some coordination with the South Vietnamese Ministry of Defense and was translating documents related to enemy propaganda and ensuring these documents were in US intelligence channels. Second, that the raw intelligence did exist from which to plan counter-propaganda campaigns. Sun Tzu opined that "what is of supreme importance

[18] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1965*, (Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1966), 465.
[19] Report "VC infiltration into Saigon and Cholon", Republic of Vietnam Ministry of Defense J2/High Command, Translated by MACV J2, 12 July 1964, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472_6075007864_Box 1.

in war is to attack the enemy's strategy," and here was a basis for doing just that.[20]

Other documents also provide insight into VC propaganda efforts and their concern with using effective proselytizing to counter US and GVN PSYOP.[21] But, the lack of qualified translators often slowed the rate of production, with one document languishing in limbo for seven months before being translated. This shortage of Vietnamese linguists would plague the embassy, intelligence, and PSYOP communities throughout the war.

Prior to 1965, the US military intelligence and PSYOP organizations were growing and evolving in their respective missions, but their coordination at MACV was practically non-existent. Because there were no US PSYOP being conducted against either the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese, there was no interaction between PSYOP and intelligence during this period. The J2's focus was on improving GVN intelligence support to targeting and knowledge of enemy order of battle. PSYOP were focused on training GVN forces on the latest technical means of delivery. Intelligence analysis and reports began to be produced within MACV, while PSYOP support was provided external to MACV by the 7th PSYOP Group, located in Okinawa, and through MTTs and a Broadcasting and Visual Activities detachment.

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[20] Sun Tzu and Samuel B. Griffith, *The Art of War*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 115.

[21] Report "All Village [Party] Chapters", Vinh Cuu District Military Proselyting Section-Independent Democratic and Neutral Vietnam, Translated by MACV J2, 18 June 1965, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472_6075039365_Box 2.

From Set Designer to Lead Actor

During the period under examination the war was far from over, but progress was being made. Thus, the prevailing logic was that US resolve demonstrated to the North Vietnamese the futility of their continued efforts. Similarly, US training and materiel support to the South was thought to be enough to defeat the Viet Cong, who were assessed to be virtually powerless without the support of the North Vietnamese. Later events would prove these predictions inaccurate. This is not to suggest that MACV had a Pollyanna view of the situation in South Vietnam. Despite the progress being made in the development and integration with GVN armed forces, the challenge of fostering an effective, responsive, and legitimate South Vietnamese government was recognized as being both vital and problematic. General Westmoreland's cable to Secretary of Defense McNamara in late September 1964 stated "unless there are reasonable prospects of a fairly effective government in South Vietnam in the immediate offing, then no amount of offensive action by the US either in or outside South Vietnam has any chance by itself of reversing the deterioration now underway."[22] That analysis would prove to be prescient.

The situation is South Vietnam was however, fluid; and conflicting assessments clouded the judgment of policy makers. Reporting from 1964 had indicated that US and RVNAF forces were steadily improving their capabilities and intelligence coordination in the fight against the Viet Cong. While accurate, these reports incorrectly reinforced the narrative that US technology, training,

[22] Robert S. McNamara and Brian VanDeMark. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam.* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 159.

and materiel could transform the situation in South Vietnam. The reports did not capture the whole story.

Johnson's landslide victory of November 1964 and the relative consensus at the polls displayed by the American people sharply contrasted with the events unfolding in South Vietnam's fledgling democracy. GVN disarray in the wake of intrigues, scandals, and coups exacerbated the problem of countering North Vietnamese propaganda.[23] Soon after taking the oath of office, President Johnson received assessments from South Vietnam that reported, "as 1965 began the VC were winning the war. Throughout the country, the military and political initiative was with the enemy."[24] The GVN was either unwilling or unable to respond effectively to the VC. The heroic actions of men such as Captain Donlon at the tactical level and increased US diplomatic and materiel commitment at the strategic level had not convinced the North Vietnamese that their goal of conquest was unattainable. Indeed, they appeared to have the opposite effect, leading to increased North Vietnamese support to the VC.

Johnson drew upon analogies from WWII and Korea to formulate his estimate of North Vietnamese motivation and an appropriate US response.[25] As Johnson saw it, the communists' objective was the "total conquest" of Vietnam. He was correct in his assessment of communist objectives. In support of their goal, the North Vietnamese had begun infiltrating "complete, trained,

[23] Ibid., 2.
[24] MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 1.
[25] Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965,* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 117.

and ready NVA battalions, regiments, and even divisions to South Vietnam."[26] Johnson reasoned that if the communists succeeded in Vietnam, they would proceed to conduct "wars of liberation" around the world.[27] He defined the US objective as "the independence of South Vietnam, and its freedom from attack" because there were "great stakes in the balance," he argued that the "central lesson of our time is that the appetite of aggression is never satisfied. The US government viewed support to the GVN as the cornerstone of a peaceful world order. To withdraw from one battlefield means only to prepare for the next."[28] Because failure in Vietnam was not an option, increased US assistance to South Vietnam became a foregone conclusion.

US military support to the GVN at the beginning of 1965 was relatively small and lacked a direct combat role.[29] That would change drastically over the next three years as the convergence of GVN dysfunction, NVN escalation, and growing pressure for quantifiable progress led to US forces taking the lead in the war's prosecution in all elements of national power: diplomatic,

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[26] Bruce Palmer, *US Intelligence and Vietnam,* (Washington D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1984), 35.

[27] Joint US Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) Briefing Book, June 13, 1965, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG306_230_47_10-11_7-1_Box 229.

[28] Ibid. For interesting analysis on the use of analogies see Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,1992). Lessons learned from Vietnam would later be invoked in a similar manner to justify American involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. See David Kieran. *Forever Vietnam: How a Divisive War Changed American Public Memory*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press 2014).

[29] The US Army had approximately 15,000 soldiers stationed in South Vietnam with roughly one-third advising RVNAF units, and two-thirds in combat support and service support to both RVNAF units and US Advisors. The Air Force commitment consisted of 4,400 personnel, the Marines about 700, and the Navy 200. Support to the GVN was not a unilateral US effort, however. Although the US mission was the largest, the South Vietnamese also had assistance from approximately 400 Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) from six other nations: Australia, China (Taiwan), Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand. Over the next two years, this US-led coalition's involvement would soon expand rapidly in commitment and expectation. See MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 3.

informational, military, and economic. The development of military intelligence and psychological operations at MACV reflected these changes. Unbeknownst to Johnson, by the time he ordered the 3rd Marine Battalion to land at Da Nang in March 1965, there were already at least five North Vietnamese Regiments operating in the south.[30] The war would prove to be more difficult than originally envisioned.

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[30] Victory in Vietnam: the official history of the people's army of Vietnam, 1954—1975, the Military History Institute of Vietnam. (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 142-3.

3

Intelligence, July 1965 – January 1968

There are but two powers in the world, the sword and the mind. In the long run the sword is always beaten by the mind.

Napoleon Bonaparte

On 13 July 1965, Major General Joseph A. McChristian became the first Soldier in charge of the MACV J2. McChristian began his career when he enlisted in the Army in 1933, later receiving a commission as an armor officer.[1] He served in WWII, rising to the position of Chief of Staff, 10th Armored Division. In 1945 he began working in the intelligence field when he was selected by General Patton to be the G2 for Third Army. McChristian subsequently served in a number of intelligence assignments ranging from the Army Attaché to Greece, to the Chief of the DoD War Room during the Cuban Missile Crisis.[2] Prior to his assignment to Vietnam, he served for two years as the G2, U.S. Army Pacific (ARPAC), where he became familiar with the situation in South Vietnam. On one of his many trips throughout the Pacific he had already briefed Westmoreland on a proposed reorganization of the MACV intelligence organization and infrastructure. It appeared that he was well prepared for the role of MACV J2.

[1] Bill Hess, "Military Intelligence Pros Honored", *Sierra Vista Herald*, 2 July 2 2000, http://www.svherald.com/content/bill-hess/2009/09/18/16609, accessed 11 January 2015.
[2] http://huachuca.army.mil/files/History_WhosWho.pdf, accessed 11 January 2015.

Soon after assuming his duties, McChristian presented an intelligence update to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, who had arrived in Vietnam to get a first-hand accounting of progress.[3] McChristian informed McNamara that increased US involvement in South Vietnam required a concomitant increase in the scope of intelligence activities.[4] The escalating involvement of US forces in South Vietnam increased the appetite for all manner of intelligence. Special technical resources such as radio direction finding (RDF) and photo and visual reconnaissance, which had been provided to RVNAF on a case-by-case basis, were now routinely requested and expected to support US and US-advised RVNAF units.

The MACV J2 was required to validate all enemy order-of-battle information, advise and coordinate with GVN intelligence authorities, vet all B-52 targets, and validate the targets of the air campaigns in Laos and North Vietnam (NVN). This increased stress of target validation taxed the J2 infrastructure.[5]

Intelligence Reorganization within MACV

McChristian recognized that the increased work load and responsibilities being levied on the MACV J2 required restructuring. He reorganized the MACV J2 into eight divisions: the Management Division, the Intelligence Division, The Plans and Training Division, The Intelligence Operations Division, The

[3] Unnamed Author, "The MI Tradition, Winning Smart", accessed 13 October 2014, http://huachuca.army.mil/files/History_BriefHistoryMI.pdf, 36.
[4] Joseph A. McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence, 1965-1967*: (Department of the Army Washington, DC, 1974), 16.
[5] MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 465.

Counterintelligence Division, the Meteorological Office, The Foreign Liaison Office, and the Special Assistant for RVNAF Affairs.[6] McChristian then set the organization to work on finding and knowing the enemy, with a particular focus on the VC's order of battle.

On 1 January 1966, the MACV J2 estimated VC/NVA strength at 229,759, with an organized combat strength of 19 regiments and 107 battalions. The force ratio of friendly to enemy forces of 3.5 to 1 was unchanged since early 1965.[7] The enemy was infiltrating and building at the same rate as FWMAF deployments and RVNAF force generation. Johnson's decision to escalate had not appreciably changed the North's ability or willingness to support the VC. Attrition of enemy forces thus became a primary mission and manifested itself through increased combat operations aimed at destruction of enemy forces. PSYOP supported this mission and were aimed at the morale, recruitment, cohesion, and psychological effectiveness of enemy forces. Because of the increase of VC/NVN forces, MACV believed more US forces

[6] By the end of December of 1965 the requirement for intelligence support had reached a crescendo as the J2's Reconnaissance branch provided support to operations STARLIGHT, TIGER HOUND, SILVER BAYONET and ongoing US/FWMAF ground operations. STARLIGHT was as USMC operation in I CTZ during Aug 1965, TIGER HOUND was the aerial interdiction campaign against the *Ho Chi Minh* trail in Laos and began in Dec 1965, SILVER BAYONET was the code name for the *Ia Drang* valley operations. See also MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 465

[7] Enemy order of battle estimates were not yet the hotly disputed item later to take center stage in a disagreement between the CIA and MACV. Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara mistrusted MACV's estimates and ordered an unprecedented request that the CIA develop an order of battle estimate, a topic that had been traditionally been handled solely by military intelligence. Sam Adams, an outspoken CIA analyst, was convinced that his numbers were correct and ultimately took his complaint to the public. This situation became caustic in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive in 1968. Adams' accusations of malfeasance on the part of senior leaders eventually led to the 23 January 1982 CBS production of "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception" and subsequent libel suit brought against CBS by General Westmoreland.

would be required to defeat them. Such an infusion, the thinking went, would allow RVNAF units to maintain security in the villages and hamlets. A secure environment would ensure the Vietnamese people supported the GVN, thus defeating the VC and further reinforcing the idea of the 17th Parallel as a political dividing line between North and South Vietnam. This line of reasoning would prove incorrect, as Robert McNamara later observed, "we failed to analyze our assumptions critically, then or later."[8]

Difficulties with Evaluation Metrics

The belief that metrics could measure progress was a deeply held tenet of faith at MACV. In late August 1966, the J2 was directed to keep cumulative data on areas in RVN (by grid square) that had been searched, entered, swept or examined. This data was to be used to locate the enemy and to measure progress.[9] The belief in metrics was not only unquestioned, but also foundational to MACV's understanding of effectiveness. This mentality caused an errant focus by MACV then on the quantity rather than the quality in the metrics collected. Significant problems with data included inflated numbers by GVN officials, and various agencies obtaining their own data caused confusion in the overall intelligence estimate. To deal with this issue, Westmoreland assigned a J2 MACV officer to the Mission Coordinating Group to achieve more effective coordination in the reporting system.[10] While this arrangement did not assist with evaluation criteria, the addition of the J2 representative to this

[8] McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 33.
[9] MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 544.
[10] Ibid., 545.

group created another point of integration with PSYOP because the mission group already had an assigned JUSPAO representative. This venue for coordination between intelligence and PSYOP was not deliberately planned to support them, but the by-product of an attempt to solve the issue of data veracity.

At the close of 1966, on the basis of captured enemy documents and interrogations of *Hoi Chanh*, the MACV J2 and the JGS assessed that seven NVN divisions subordinate to the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) operated in Military Region 5.[11] Based on this intelligence, McChristian approached Westmoreland with an interesting proposition – McChristian wanted Westmoreland to delay and significantly change an operation that was already set to commence. General Westmoreland trusted McChristian and an example of that trust was demonstrated by Westmoreland's agreeing to delay and change Operation Junction City.[12] The operation began on 22 February 1967 and was one of the largest U.S. operations and the only major airborne operation of the Vietnam War. The aim of the operation was to locate and destroy the Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN), which by some analyst accounts was the functional VC equivalent of the Pentagon. The operation failed to find COSVN but did lead to the capture and destruction of a significant amount of VC materiel. The operation had significant short-term

[11] This conservative estimate did not include the additional one possible and one probable division-level units operating in the area. This brought the total enemy forces available to COSVN at the end of 1966 to nine division headquarters with personnel strength totaling 280,600. Military Region 5 was designated by the DRV and included the provinces south of the DMZ to *Khanh Hoa* and *Darlac*. See Frankum, *Historical Dictionary of the War in Vietnam*, 291.
[12] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence, 56.*

tactical success, but failed to secure long-term strategic results. McChristian's intelligence work had secured Westmoreland's trust and paid dividends with the tactical results it generated, but there were still many inadequacies with the support the MACV J2 provided to the PSYOP effort.

Despite the increased efforts by the US and GVN, the enemy had managed to expand its forces by almost 50,000 personnel. Increased combat operations and supporting PSYOP had failed to stem the tide. The race to find the crossover point had begun.

Doctrinal Changes in Intelligence

The earliest version of *Combat Intelligence,* FM 30-5, examined in the course of this study is dated 1940 and underwent at least four revisions prior to 1965. The term PSYOP was not mentioned in the earliest edition, but according to the earliest version of military intelligence doctrine, Army intelligence did have the responsibility of analyzing enemy propaganda.

The 1960 edition of FM 30-5 stated that the purpose and scope of the manual "furnishes guidance concerning combat intelligence at division through theater army," thus drawing a distinction between *strategic* intelligence and *combat* intelligence.[13] This distinction between the two levels of intelligence was maintained in the 1963 revision, which also contained many references as to how intelligence supported psychological operations. The different requirements for *strategic* and *combat* intelligence were not merely academic

[13] Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Field Manual 30-5: Combat Intelligence: U.S. Army Doctrine.* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 6 January 1960), 4.

quibbling. Their differing requirements influenced the organization, responsibilities, analysis, implementation, and dissemination of finished intelligence. This difference caused problems with the ability of psychological operations to glean useable intelligence effectively. The character of the war in Vietnam tended to blur the lines of strategic and combat intelligence. The initial tactical structure of Army formations did not facilitate the collection of the required intelligence for the political fight going on within the village. Nothing in the intelligence doctrine was inherently incorrect, but the unfortunate effect of the framing of the nature of the enemy created barriers to the adequate sharing of intelligence at the tactical level. The doctrine assumed that Army tactical units would be involved in linear battles against peer or near-peer enemies.

The MACV J2, as previously mentioned, was focused on order of battle information. This fact makes sense since the doctrinal understanding of military intelligence did not envisage the information required to support Revolutionary Development being needed at the sector level. One key to understanding MACV's initial operational approach toward the intelligence function and the fixation on enemy order of battle is in the 1964 edition of FM 30-5 (change 1 in particular). An example from doctrine illustrates the conceptual difference between *strategic* and *combat* intelligence:

> Information from prisoners of war on political and economic conditions within the enemy area may be important in the production of strategic intelligence but of little value for combat intelligence. Information of identifications of enemy units and

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> characteristics of enemy equipment are used in the production of both combat and strategic intelligence.[14]

Most of the knowledge required by PSYOP, and civic action, was considered strategic intelligence. Based on Army organization, strategic intelligence was not the focus of the division through the theater level of war. According to Army doctrine therefore, MACV should not have been concerned with strategic intelligence. To MACV's credit, the J2 and the J3 recognized the shortfall and began collecting, examining, and in a limited way disseminating that intelligence.[15]

The 1964 version of *Combat Intelligence* did list military and paramilitary measures and activities related to unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency, and psychological operations.[16] It did not, however, list PSYOP or Civil Affairs officers as special staff officers from whom to gather or with whom to coordinate intelligence. Interestingly, it did assert that prisoners of war were valuable sources of information, particularly in the immediate battle area, of the effects of our psychological operations.[17]

Another key was the concept of limited war, in which intelligence requirements were primarily of a combat intelligence nature. The doctrine stated, "although the immediate emphasis in intelligence operations is determined by the requirement to support the existing operational situation,

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[14] Ibid., 6.
[15] MACV, *Command History, 1966,* 557.
[16] Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Field Manual 30-5: Combat Intelligence, Change 1: U.S. Army Doctrine.* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 19 June 1964), 64.
[17] Ibid., 21.

the consequences of a sudden extension of the conflict, particularly to a general war, dictated that intelligence operations be conditioned to this possibility."[18] The bulk of the MACV J2 collection and analytical effort was applied to enemy order-of-battle metrics precisely because the existential threat in Vietnam was a transition to general war.

Doctrinally, the field army level was where an increase in the "non-physical" nature of intelligence began.[19] In Vietnam however, significant G5/S5 (Civic Action) duties were being performed on battalion-level operations. These civic action operations increased considerably the intelligence required for the non-physical characteristics of the area such as economics, politics, sociology, and psychology. These needs for societal intelligence were requirements for which the MACV J2 was initially unprepared.

The MACV J2 structure that McChristian built and Davidson maintained was clearly based on the fundamentals of Army intelligence doctrine. While the MACV J2 did respond to specific requests for other sorts of information, and even issued special intelligence studies, these were by exception and not the primary focus of day-to-day intelligence analysis.[20]

The Year of Decision

McChristian had spent the previous eighteen months getting the MACV J2 reorganized, which left 1967 as the year of execution for the development of

[18] Ibid., 8.

[19] Ibid., 14.

[20] MACV J2, Subject: "Intelligence Estimate of the Situation Vietnam – Basic Data as of 19 March 1967", The Army Historical Education Center (AHEC), US Army War College, Carlisle, PA.

effective intelligence. By the time he left Vietnam in July 1967, McChristian had constructed an intelligence apparatus consisting of several thousand personnel to advise the GVN and collect and analyze the vast sums of data generated to assess the enemy situation.[21]

By the spring of 1967, nearly twenty-four months after McChristian took over, the MACV J2 had accumulated a coterie of experienced staff. But the relentless turnover of experienced personnel and the continual influx of improperly or poorly trained replacements presented a problem with the retention of institutional knowledge. To ameliorate this situation, the J2 attempted to capture lessons learned prior to key individuals' departures. An example of the effort is an operational report – lessons learned (ORLL) from the 525th MI Battalion dated from April of 1967. The report stated that the program for "debriefing of Key Intelligence Personnel has proved very valuable to the J-2 and staff of the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam" and that without this program, valuable information and expertise would be lost due to preponderance of short tours.[22] McChristian wrote a letter about this program expressing his appreciation and its encouraging results. Senior officers within MACV recognized the deleterious effect personnel turnover had on the command and took steps to prevent the loss of knowledge as key personnel departed South Vietnam.

[21] Palmer, *US Intelligence and Vietnam,* 41
[22] Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 525th Military Intelligence Group, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 14 May 1967), 3

Bounty Program

During 1964 and 1965 USIS, USAID, the US Embassy, and USMACV held a series of discussions on the possible establishment of a rewards program designed to target VC leaders on a dead-or-alive basis. By mid-January 1965 an ad hoc committee, formed at the request of the Secretary of State, had completed its study and recommended a pilot program be implemented in four provinces: Quang Ngai (500 north of Saigon, on the coast), Tay Ninh (Northwest of Saigon on the Cambodian border), Long An/Hau Nghia (immediately west of Saigon), and Quang Tri (north of Hue and on the 17th Parallel). These four were chosen to test the program, since two provinces were thought to be under heavy VC control and the two others under government control.

The pilot program would last for six months and rewards would range from 200,000 to 500,000 piasters for different members of the VC. The bounty program would act as a stick and the *Chieu Hoi* Program would act as the carrot. The goal of these programs was to both psychologically and physically distance the VC from their support. Under this plan, the MACV J2 would be responsible for identifying and cataloging VC personnel and preparing a wanted list. The J2, prior to its time under McChristian, initially balked as the plan went through staffing, because the section did not believe overt US participation in the program would work.[23]

[23] Operations Report - Lessons Learned, 3-66: The PLEIKU Campaign. Headquarters, 1st Air Cavalry Division, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 10 May 1966, 42.

By April 1965, however, the entire mission council had approved the plan but the 'political vacuum' in the GVN prevented its implementation. By 1967, the bounty program had a new life and a new name. Project Takeoff, was designed to ensure US/GVN collaboration in intelligence to identify hard-core VC so that National Police (NP) could eliminate them at the hamlet and village level.[24]

On 16 June 1967, Westmoreland approved a CORDS proposal to coordinate and manage a US joint civil/military program to attack Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI). It would use GVN/US intelligence already being gathered, but provide additional coordinating centers and committees at all levels.[25] This recommendation followed a 19 March 1967 MACV J2 intelligence report, which found that the VC "insurgency base must remain in place to control the people. Individual members, therefore, are vulnerable to detection and apprehension. These trained individuals are absolutely essential to the entire VC war effort. Capturing, defecting or killing these personnel at all levels, particularly at the province and higher levels, would deal the insurgency a crippling blow."[26]

This process was termed *Infrastructure Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation* (ICEX). At the highest US level, the ICEX committee consisted of the DEPCOMUSMACV for CORDS, special assistant to the ambassador, the

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[24] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1967, Volume II*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1967, 602.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Intelligence Estimate of the Situation, Vietnam, Basic Data as of 19 March 1967, United States Army Heritage and Education Center (AHEC), Carlisle, PA, J-2.

MACV J2 and J3, and the CORDS Chief of Revolutionary Development Division.[27] The PSYOP chief was not included on the committee, although this program would require significant PSYOP support to be effective.

Despite the new name and renewed emphasis on the part of the US mission in South Vietnam, the program lacked progress because of lukewarm support by the Vietnamese. A special assistant to the US Ambassador made overtures to Brigadier General Nguyen Ngoc Loan who ran the South Vietnamese National Police, and would later be immortalized in Eddie Adams' photo of the execution of the VC suspect, Nguyen Van Lem. Loan's support was deemed critical for the program, and while he agreed that the program had merit, his response was still "somewhat short of enthusiastic."[28]

In spite of Vietnamese reticence, the US pressed on with the program's development and implementation. US advisors encouraged province chiefs to form Provincial Intelligence Coordinating Centers (PICC) and Provincial Interrogation Centers (PIC), and at the district level to form District Operations and Intelligence Coordination Centers (DOICC). US officials found this process incredibly frustrating given overall lack of GVN support.[29] Despite the lack of GVN support, the US forced through the idea at the local level and the initial goal of 74 DOICCs was surpassed with 103 completed by year's end.[30] By the

[27] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 602.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

end of December 1967, the GVN acquiesced to US pressure and assigned the role of eliminating the VCI to the NP.[31]

General McChristian's Debriefing and Departure

McChristian's own debriefing provides many insights into the challenges and successes of the MACV J2 during his 24-month tenure, which ended on 1 June 1967.[32] His lasting legacy was the intelligence infrastructure he created. His first project was the Combined Intelligence Center Vietnam (CICV), created to develop mutual trust and facilitate information sharing between the Americans and the South Vietnamese. McChristian also instituted a military intelligence detachment exchange program, under which US detachments were placed with ARVN divisions and "South Vietnamese detachments to U.S. corps-level headquarters, divisions, and separate brigades."[33] This program helped create a culture of shared intelligence understanding. A major shortcoming, however, was that the infrastructure was designed to support the J2, rather than the entire headquarters.

Another high priority was the establishment of the Combined Military Interrogation Center (CMIC) in Saigon for tactical and strategic exploitation of human sources such as captives and returnees. This center was also of great benefit to the US, given the persistent shortage of Vietnamese linguists that had hampered US efforts to interrogate human sources. According to

[31] Ibid.
[32] Subsequent chapters will analyze the extent to which those insights were sustained, implemented, or relearned.
[33] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, 13

McChristian, “as a result of the combined concept, the over-all interrogation effort profited as the native fluence [sic] of the South Vietnamese was complemented by U.S. Technical expertise.”[34]

The central entity of the CMIC was the requirements branch. While the center maintained interrogation and language expertise, the requirements branch collected, validated, and matched unit requested for information to likely sources. The requirements branch was divided into five teams.

1. Enemy order of battle outside Vietnam.
2. Enemy order of battle inside Vietnam.
3. Enemy tactics, weapons, equipment, psychological operations, and political order of battle (the enemy infrastructure).
4. Counterintelligence: sabotage, espionage, and subversion directed against allied facilities or men.
5. Enemy infiltration.[35]

Thus, the structure of the J2 was weighted toward enemy order of battle. This emphasis, as previously mentioned, was in accord with the significance given to order of battle in US Army doctrine.[36] While the J2 was structured to provide timely, useful intelligence, it too was plagued by inappropriate measures of performance. For instance, during “the first four months of 1967 the center distributed 675 interrogation reports and 1,068 intelligence information reports. Each interrogation report was reproduced in 350 copies and sent to 92 different addresses worldwide.”[37] While these numbers are impressive, they do not indicate whether the reports were read, or if they were readily accessible to

[34] Ibid., 16
[35] Ibid., 17
[36] Department of the Army. Department of the Army Field Manual 30-5: Combat Intelligence, Change 1: (U.S. Army Doctrine. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army), 19 June 1964.
[37] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence, 1965-1967*, 17.

those who needed the intelligence. According to Bruce Palmer, "Many US commanders in Vietnam believed that the MACV intelligence organization was too highly centralized and focused on MACV at the expense of lower command echelons. MACV J2 relied too heavily on information from electronic means."[38]

Additionally, the J2 lacked trained intelligence personnel to conduct knowledgeable analysis. There were also indications of both inter-agency and inter-service rivalry. The MACV J2 was not privy to all CIA operations and intelligence, and McChristian believed it was difficult to develop a "combined holistic picture of the enemy situation."[39]

Despite these difficulties, by the spring of 1967 General Westmoreland was convinced that the crossover point of successful attrition had been reached.[40] This conviction would eventually lead Westmoreland to issue a directive on 29 October 1967, that stated, "The war has passed the point at which losses inflicted on the enemy exceed his current replacement input."[41] Enemy forces, he believed, would no longer be able to generate forces at the rate they were losing them. Westmoreland's appreciation was at least partially contradicted by the CIA's estimate that there had been no diminution in enemy strength.[42] Furthermore, McNamara noted in his memoirs, as of 23 May 1967

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[38] Westmoreland's decision to be the J7 drove some of this requirement. Staffs exist to support the commander's decision cycle. In this case, the computer technology required to conduct the sort of analysis required by the DoD was not available at lower echelons. In fact, much of the data needed to be transmitted to Washington, processed, and then returned to Vietnam. The over-reliance on technical solutions ended up handicapping tactical operations. Quote from Bruce Palmer, *US Intelligence and Vietnam*, 42

[39] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence, 1965-1967*, 51.

[40] McNamara, *In Retrospect,* 238.

[41] MACV, *Command History 1968*, 21.

[42] McNamara, *In Retrospect,* 238.

the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) remained able to expand its main-force units in the south by increased infiltration and recruitment.[43]

This apparent contradiction between MACV's and the CIA's analysis of enemy strength created more doubts for McNamara, who as time went on became increasingly pessimistic about the war's outcome. Some of the difficulty arose from the nature of the fight. As Bruce Palmer noted, "the origins of this controversy over enemy strength estimates stem basically from the nature of the war, more political and psychological than military, and involving a cunning mixture of conventional and unconventional warfare. The lack of major decisive battles, of identifiable 'front lines', and of other characteristics of conventional warfare frustrated US civilian and military leaders and forces US policymakers to seek other measures of progress."[44] The combination of Westmoreland's intuition and the ambiguity of the situation drove the MACV J2 to focus on metrics that supported indications of progress. Similar logic also applied to PSYOP, with similarly disappointing results. In another example of ineffective metrics, MACV reports on the tonnage of bombs dropped continued to increase; but as that happened, so did the rate of enemy infiltration. These data led McNamara "to conclude that no amount of bombing of the North – short of genocidal destruction, which no one contemplated – could end the war."[45]

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Palmer, *US Intelligence and Vietnam*, 48-49.
[45] McNamara, *In Retrospect,* 244.

General Davidson becomes the MACV J2

Philip Buford Davidson, Jr., was born on 26 November 1915 in Hachita, New Mexico. He graduated from USMA in 1939 and during WWII served as the assistant intelligence officer for the 96th Infantry Division. He later served as a squadron commander in the Third Army under General Patton. After the war, he was assigned to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, as an instructor at the Army's School of Intelligence. Following this assignment, Davidson served as the chief of the Plans and Estimates branch in General Douglas MacArthur's Far East Command intelligence office. Davidson would have the distinction of serving during two intelligence "surprises": Chinese troops crossing the Yalu River in Korea and the VC's Tet Offensive. In 1965 he succeeded McChristian as the G2, U.S. Army Pacific (ARPAC) when McChristian went to Saigon. As the G2 at ARPAC, Davidson realized that his headquarters had nothing to do with the Vietnam War. [46] He changed this by initiating a program that sent 90-100 people on temporary duty (TDY) to support McChristian's efforts to revamp MACV's intelligence infrastructure.[47] Davidson would follow McChristian's footsteps again when on 1 June 1967 he took over as the MACV J2.

Davidson arrived in Vietnam on 23 May 1967 and had only a week overlap with McChristian. Davidson thought this to be "grossly inadequate."[48] The truncated overlap is curious, especially given McChristian's belief in the MACV J2's debriefing program and his awareness with the problem of the effect

[46] Phillip B. Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War.* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1990), 5
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid., 6.

turnover had on the institutional knowledge resident in Vietnam. Davidson posits a couple of reasons for this lack of turnover time. The first issue was the "numbers game of May 1967."[49] The incident in question happened just prior to McChristian's departure and was about a cable he tried to get Westmoreland to sign without its having been routed through the normal MACV staffing procedures. The cable assessed an increase in enemy strength estimates by 116,000.

Davidson's possible explanations for McChristian's behavior include the belief that McChristian wanted the credit for the significant shift in the intelligence estimate. Either McChristian would have hand-carried the cable to Washington on his departure, or his name would have at least been attached to the cable.[50] According to Davidson, Westmoreland did not sign the cable when McChristian request he do so. Rather, he held it, staffed it, and then dispatched it. This incident highlights an additional dysfunction within MACV's J2. As in almost all human organizations, strong personalities and ambitions led to infighting and jealousy.

Each personnel change within MACV created similar possible points of friction. The more senior the person involved, the great potential for significant issues. There was a distinct difference in philosophy between McChristian and Davidson. McChristian was a conservative intelligence analyst. He relied on facts rather than conjecture, which made his intelligence products resemble historic analysis with little anticipatory content. Davidson's approach was one

[49] Ibid., 41.
[50] Ibid.

of predictive analysis about the enemy's intentions.[51] General Creighton Abrams, the MACV deputy commander, gave Davidson some counsel shortly after McChristian departed. Abrams told Davidson "your predecessor has built the machine, but I don't think he could have used it to do what now has to be done. That historical intelligence he turned out was alright when we were planning 'catch-up' ball, but it won't fill the bill now."[52] Not only was there a new MACV J2, there was now also new guidance regarding the production of intelligence. The structure that the MACV J2 had built under McChristian would probably be necessary, but it would be insufficient for MACV's future needs. The gathering and categorizing of data and discerning of patterns of enemy activity contributed to predictive analysis, but it was not enough. Casting one's analysis into the future requires an act of creative imagination and the moral courage to stake one's professional reputation on unknown outcomes.

The next seven months would present several challenges to the MACV J2, with the change in focus from pattern analysis to predictive behavior being the first. An additional distraction was the presence of Ambassador Robert Komer and the Civil Operations and Revolutionary (also "Rural") Development Support (CORDS) organization. On 1 June 1967, just at the transition of MACV J2s, Komer proposed to Westmoreland that CORDS be permitted to establish a separate intelligence agency to focus on the intelligence

[51] Ibid., 11.
[52] Ibid., 12.

requirements of pacification.[53] A few days later, MACV held a conference to discuss the proposal, the results of which were already a foregone conclusion according to Davidson. His perception was that Westmoreland was content to allow Komer to fight the pacification war and was prepared to resource Komer so that when pacification failed Westmoreland would not be blamed.[54] As previously mentioned, the MACV J2 had been focused almost exclusively on order of battle and not on the economic, political, and psychological information needed to fight a counterinsurgency. The creation of a CORDS intelligence function would have provided such information. It should be noted that neither MACV's official history nor any other official statements corroborate Davidson's somewhat cynical analysis.

Similar to McChristian's first week on the job as MACV J2, Davidson was also scheduled to brief McNamara who was coming to South Vietnam for an update tour. McNamara's trip, however, was postponed due to the Arab-Israeli war. This was fortunate for Davidson, who was not comfortable with the briefing McChristian had prepared prior to his departure. Davidson set the MACV J2 to prepare what was in his words the best military intelligence brief he had ever prepared. Yet when McNamara did come to South Vietnam, he sat through Davidson's presentation all the while working on other papers.[55] McNamara's indifference might have had something to do with the fact that Westmoreland ended every presentation with the stock phrase "The North

[53] Ibid., 8.
[54] Ibid., 8-9.
[55] Ibid., 14.

Vietnamese and Viet Cong have the will and capability to conduct a protracted war of attrition at current levels of activity indefinitely."[56] Despite McNamara's indifference, both Westmoreland and Abrams were effusive in their praise for the briefing, with Abrams excitedly exclaiming, "That's the stuff I want to hear!"[57]

The next six months were mired by a tug-of-war between the MACV J2 and the CIA. Davidson's time was consumed with a focus on order of battle. In late August 1967 and early September 1967, a Langley conference was held in an attempted to fix the intelligence figures for the VC Self Defense (SD) and Secret Self Defense (SDD) forces. Both the CIA and MACV agreed the number was around 120,000, but the issue was whether these forces, comprised largely of civilians, should be included in the enemy order of battle.[58] The CIA's position was that these should be included, and MACVs was that they should not.

'The crux of the difference between the CIA and MACV estimates stemmed from diverging estimates of the veracity of source documents. Sam Adams, an outspoken analyst at the CIA, relied on captured enemy documents only, but MACV relied on all-source intelligence.[59] The CIA also viewed the war as a southern insurgency and not a fight with the north, despite the presence

[56] Ibid., 10 quoted from Affidavit of Joseph A. McChristian, *Westmoreland v. CBS*, 20 April 1984, 4.
[57] Ibid., 14.
[58] Ibid.,43.
[59] Phillip B. Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War.* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1990), 46

of 53,000 NVA in South Vietnam – an equivalent of four PAVN divisions.[60] The divide between the CIA and MACV became so acerbic, that by 13 November 1967 when the Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) was published with the compromise numbers between MACV and CIA, Adams quit his post as a Vietnamese analyst and was reassigned within CIA.[61]

Davidson's writings after Vietnam are as insightful for what they do not mention as for what they do. Davidson makes no mention of psychological operations. His entire focus seems to be on defending MACV's methodology for estimating enemy strength. One thing is clear from the above survey – order-of-battle estimates, particularly strength figures, still dominated the MACV J2 to the exclusion of other intelligence requirements necessary not only for pacification, but also for effective psychological operations.

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Summary

McChristian capably oversaw the development of the MACV J2 from its initial role of advising ARVN and providing updates to senior US policymakers, to one of providing timely, actionable intelligence to US combat units. He left Davidson with a solid intelligence infrastructure. Davidson, however, was largely consumed by the battles with Ambassador Komer over the creation of a separate intelligence staff for CORDS and with the CIA over enemy order-of-battle estimates. Military intelligence suffered, however, from a lack of qualified linguists and analysts, and from a concentration on understanding the enemy

[60] Ibid., 47.
[61] Ibid., 51.

order of battle. Intelligence predictions at the end of 1967 would set the stage for the accusations of an intelligence failure that resonate in the historiography of the Vietnam War.

Analysis

Did MACV Have a Defined Learning Agenda for Intelligence?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this period of the war. It had a defined learning agenda for intelligence, albeit one that was insufficiently flexible. It sought to learn about the enemy order of battle and determine enemy fighting strength. In this respect, it built an admirable structure for collecting all-source intelligence. It did not, however, display the same zeal toward the political infrastructure at the province and village level. While it sought to learn about the enemy and its own requirements to discover the enemy, it never questioned the underlying assumptions about the VC's fundamental objective of undermining and eventually supplanting the Saigon government.

Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence?

MACV rates a "No" for this period of the war. MACV was not open to discordant information regarding the quality or conclusions of its intelligence analysis. It did seek outside expertise on matters in the form of ARPA studies regarding the Vietnamese people, and these studies were included in the support provided to the *Chieu Hoi* program. MACV became defensive in the face of any questioning of the logic of its enemy order-of-battle methodology and

conclusions. As the debate with the CIA turned acrimonious, MACV's position regarding the correctness of its own estimates ossified.

Also, complaints about MACV's J2 infrastructure, collection priorities, lack of support to subordinate commands, and inaccurate order of battle assessments, however, did not get an open reception from MACV. The MACV J2 tended to guard its estimates on enemy strengths and weakness. This tendency led to Secretary McNamara's request that the CIA conduct an independent order-of-battle analysis. Westmoreland, however, trusted McChristian and did not take the same personal involvement with intelligence that he did with PSYOP.

Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with intelligence?

MACV rates a "No" for this period as it repeated mistakes. The biggest mistake was in the transition between McChristian and Davidson. Both men were aware of the need to maintain institutional knowledge. McChristian instituted an infrastructure and lessons learned program to mitigate such losses. He did not apply those standards to himself. There should have been a more seamless transition between the two, especially given their role as the MACV J2. The MACV Chief of Staff should not have allowed such a short overlap between the two individuals. The change over at that level is a very vulnerable time for the organization. The outgoing individual is attempting to maintain his legacy, and the incoming individual is attempting to assert his influence. The quibbling over enemy order of battle estimates distracted from the task of understanding the enemy, and prevented the progress to the next

level of understanding enemy motivations and vulnerabilities, both of which are crucial in a counterinsurgency.

Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence left the command?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this period as it did avoid the loss of critical knowledge. While there was clearly friction in the transition between McChristian and Davidson, the MACV J2 was able to continue functioning and producing intelligence. Davidson continued McChristian's pursuit of enemy order of battle analysis to the detriment of other forms of intelligence – those necessary for the successful implementation of PSYOP. On a positive note, the transition provided the opportunity for growth within the MACV J2. The intelligence required in 1965 and 1966 was not necessarily the same as that required in 1967. The change, in this case, created learning opportunities within MACV. McChristian's departure allowed for the creation of a new intelligence structure to support CORDS. Regardless of the rationale portrayed by Davidson, Komer had a need for intelligence at the province and village level in regards to the VCI that was not the top priority for the MACV J2.

Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence?

MACV rated a "Yes", because it acted on what it knew about intelligence. Its intelligence analysis and production allowed successful operations such as Junction City, and thwarted the NVN plan to move into their Phase III, which was Mao's "strategic offensive" phase of mobile, semi-conventional maneuver warfare. McChristian created an impressive intelligence infrastructure for the

collection, categorization, and creation of useable intelligence on enemy locations. This intelligence underpinned Westmoreland's ability to use mobility to his advantage. Without successful intelligence, this would not have been possible. The J2 grew in size, scope, and scale to accommodate the huge intelligence requirements of supporting the influx of US combat forces. While generally seen as a success, there were several critiques of the organization McChristian developed. MACV intelligence was too highly centralized, too focused on order of battle, and too reliant on technical means of intelligence collection. Despite this criticism, the changes were deliberately thought out and intended to meet the requirements placed on the organization.

Net Assessment

Since MACV met three of the five criteria for intelligence during the July 1965 to January 1968 time period, it is rated as **Marginally Effective** as a learning organization when applied to the intelligence function within the MACV J2 (Table 5).

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Garvin's Learning Questions	July 1965 - January 1968
	Intelligence
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence?	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence?	**-**
Did MACV avoid repeat mistakes with intelligence?	**-**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence command?	**+**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence?	**+**
Total	**3**

TABLE 5 – INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT, 1965-1967

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

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Psychological Operations, July 1965 – January 1968

> *To seduce the enemy's soldiers from their allegiance and encourage them to surrender is of special service, for an adversary is more hurt by desertion than by slaughter.*
>
> *Flavius Vegetius Renatus, c. 378 AD*

In March 1965 Carl Rowan, the director of USIA, visited South Vietnam to assess the agency's efforts.[1] At the time, the United States Information Service (USIS), Saigon, coordinated radio broadcasts, leaflets, and pamphlets.[2] Upon his return to the U.S., he recommended to President Johnson that US PSYOP efforts be expanded and realigned. Maxwell D. Taylor, the US Ambassador to South Vietnam, working in conjunction with those higher-level discussions, submitted a reorganization plan to the Vietnam Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (VICC). He proposed that the U.S. commence "regular but random psyops against NVN."[3] CINCPAC would lead the effort utilizing both RVN and American resources. The VICC approved the plan in April 1965.[4]

As Johnson and Taylor formulated the policy and plans for expanding the PSYOP effort in Vietnam, MACV began making changes as well. On 5 May 1965 it established the Political Warfare Advisory Group Directorate (POLWAR)

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[1] MACV, *Command History 1965*, 253.
[2] Martin J., Manning and Herbert Romerstein. *Historical Dictionary of American Propaganda.* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2004). <http://ebooks.abc-clio.com/?isbn=9780313058639>, 303.
[3] MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 253.
[4] Ibid.

to advise and support the GVN efforts, specifically the General Political Warfare Department (GPWD). The GPWD did not have an American equivalent. It included staff sections responsible for "political indoctrination, psychological warfare, military security, social services and the three chaplaincies (Roman Catholic, Buddhist, Protestant)."[5] The GPWD, built on a Nationalist Chinese model, also dealt with public relations and troop recreation. It was primarily focused on its own soldiers not the enemy. The Political Indoctrination Section "concentrated on boosting morale and patriotism in the armed forces and on countering enemy propaganda."[6] Given Vietnam's recent history of coups, the GVN leadership was extremely sensitive about this department, not wanting it to have either too much autonomy or be overly controlled by any one political faction.

For the U.S., the POLWAR director served under the MACV J3, with direct access to the MACV CofS when required.[7] The placement of PSYOP within the J3 was in accordance with existing PSYOP doctrine.[8] On 14 May 1965, based largely on Carl Rowan's advice, President Johnson approved several programmatic changes, which led to the creation of the Joint US Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO).[9]

The director of JUSPAO served as the US Mission Coordinator for PSYOP and assisted in the development of the national psychological operations plan.

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[5] Jeffrey J. Clarke, *Advice and Support: The Final Years, 1965-1973.* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1988), 30.
[6] Ibid., see also Project CHECO, "Psychological Operations by USAF/VNAF in SVN", 28
[7] MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 253.
[8] Department of the Army, Department of the Army Field Manual 33-1: Psychological Operations: (U.S. Army Doctrine. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 18 May 1965), 9.
[9] MACV, *Command History 1965*, 253.

This plan was submitted to the US Mission PsyOps Committee, of which the MACV J3 was a member. With so many agencies actively involved in PSYOP, MACV's official history noted that responsibility was initially divided with JUSPAO working "media content with the GVN and leaflet development, the US Embassy political section with policy considerations, and POLWAR with targeting, delivery means and other technical aspects of the program."[10] Despite this guidance, misunderstandings of roles and responsibilities continued through 1967.[11]

The US Begins Conducting Psychological Operations in Vietnam

While the US steadily increased support to GVN efforts in the South, it simultaneously implemented unilateral efforts in the North. The initial leaflets were dropped from the 17th Parallel north to the Red River Delta in North Vietnam and designed to explain the logic behind the Rolling Thunder bombings and warn the population away from the targeted areas. On 12 July 1965, the US Mission Council approved a 3-month PSYOP program prepared by JUSPAO, which increased the scope of the original effort.[12] Target areas were expanded to include "the major routes to Hanoi and Haiphong and the outskirts of those two cities."[13] The new program had several objectives: to warn NVN citizenry away from probable targets, to explain the logic of those

[10] Ibid., 459.
[11] Project CHECO, "Psychological Operations by USAF/VNAF in SVN", 6.
[12] 15 July - 15 October 1965.
[13] MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 459.

bombings, to blame the necessity for the bombings on the NVN government, and to "agitate the NVN citizenry against their government and its policies."[14]

The initial leaflet drops into North Vietnam had an unexpected benefit.[15] In addition to the general success of leaflet operations in NVN, the program also provided valuable experience in terms of the complex coordination involved with printing leaflets "in Okinawa, [the] centralized storage and bomb loading in Saigon and Bien Hoa, [and the] delivery of bombs to Korat and Da Nang." [16] Leaflet themes incorporated national and religious holidays and intended to exploit the sentiments those holidays were thought to invoke. The leaflet developers had consulted cultural experts to identify the most evocative themes. MACV relied on external advice from entities such as the Counterinsurgency Information Analysis Center (CINFAC), an element of the American University's Special Operations Research Office (SORO).[17] Leaflet number twenty-one demonstrated the influence from these cultural research reports, citing "national hero Tran Binh Trong's willingness to die a Vietnamese ghost rather than as King of China, and that when the CHICOM-influenced Lao Dong Party ceased its aggression in the south, all would live in peace."[18]

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[14] Ibid.
[15] During 1965, the US dropped 77 million leaflets, 340,000 newspapers, and 20,000 gift packages in North Vietnam. MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 459.
[16] Ibid.
[17] One report, *Notes on Psychological Opportunities in the Republic of Vietnam,* provided a basis for the PSYOP programs instituted during 1965. Studies such as this one showed that the US was considering the effects of PSYOP prior to the introduction of combat forces to South Vietnam. See Andrew D. Sens and Joseph M. Macrum. *Notes on Psychological Opportunities in the Republic of Vietnam.* (Washington: Counterinsurgency Information Analysis Center, Special Operations Research Office, 1965).
[18] MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 459.

The US PSYOP Effort Grows

President Johnson's decision on 27 July 1965 to embark on a major ground war in Southeast Asia further expanded PSYOP objectives and created the requirement for greater interagency planning, oversight, and coordination.[19] In response, the Mission Council created a NVN Leaflet Targeting Group comprised of US Embassy, JUSPAO and POLWAR representatives who sought to coordinate the now overt PSYOP directed against the NVN.[20]

In August 1965, MACV recommended that the Joint Table of Distribution (JTD) add fifty-seven PSYOP-trained officers to support the expanded GPWD advisory effort.[21] The GVN PSYWAR effort was established in parallel with the US unilateral effort in the North, with the eventual goal of giving all PSYOP responsibility to the GVN. Recognizing the need for government legitimacy, US advisory efforts sought to bolster GVN's ability to communicate with and influence its own people.[22]

On 7 September 1965, USMACV published what proved to be the watershed document for the PSYOP mission in Vietnam. Directive 525-3, "Minimizing Non-Combatant Battle Casualties" was issued barely a month after the Gulf of Tonkin incident and indicated MACV understood the link between

[19] McNamara, *In Retrospect,* 204.
[20] MACV, *Command History 1965*, 459.
[21] Ibid., 254.
[22] GVN PSYWAR had three main components: troop action, enemy action, and civic action.

combat operations and pacification efforts.[23] It stated that "the use of unnecessary force leading to noncombatant casualties in areas temporarily controlled by the VC will embitter the population, drive them into the arms of the VC, and make the long range goal of pacification more difficult and more costly."[24] This directive was issued prior to the Pleiku campaign and the fighting in the *Ia Drang* Valley.[25] Annex A to Directive 523-3 directed commanders to integrate tactical psychological operations with civic action and combat operations. Commanders who failed to implement PSYOP and civic action in coordination with combat operations were thus not only ignoring doctrine, they were also ignoring Westmoreland's orders.[26]

In late October 1965, the three-month PSYOP campaign was deemed a success based on intelligence collection and reporting that "deceitful propaganda arguments" caused NVN officials serious concern.[27] While the intelligence indicated that PSYOP had an effect on the North Vietnamese, other indicators cited by internal analysis were based on measures of performance.[28]

These errors of causality logic continued to vex MACV analysts and were the beginning of a trend that would continue to plague American efforts to

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[23] Military Assistance Command Vietnam. USMACV Directive 525-3, "Minimizing Non-Combatant Battle Casualties", 7 September 1965, Virtual Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech, Accessed 13 October 2014, 252.
[24] MACV, *Command History 1965*, 252.
[25] For an excellent first-hand description of the fight in the *Ia Drang* see Harold G. Moore and Joseph L. Galloway, *We Were soldiers Once and Young: Ia Drang, the Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam*, (New York: Random House, 1992).
[26] General Westmoreland was not fixated solely on firepower as the solution to the problems in South Vietnam. The battle of *Binh Gia* in December 1964 had shown him the conventional threat. Directive 525-3 proved he had not forgotten about the unconventional one.
[27] MACV, *Command History 1965*, 459.
[28] Ibid.

assess the war's progress. For instance, reporting stated that 44,268,000 leaflets and 10,000 small gift packages were dropped over 90 target areas during the six months ending 15 October 1965.[29] These data merely indicated what was performed, without any analysis of the effect on the enemy. The assumption seemed to be that material saturation would sway the target audience, even though PSYOP doctrine warned against simplistic analysis.[30] PSYOP take a long time to develop results and are often not able to be immediately linked to specific effects. High-profile Secretary of Defense visits, MACV Directives, personal involvement by Westmoreland, and new programs developed by JUSPAO proved too toxic a mix for effective evaluations. Given the focus of MACV on PSYOP, the temptation to report results prematurely appears to have been irresistible.[31] This pressure was not, however, all negative. It did drive the development of innovative technical solutions.

In mid-December 1965, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) approved the deployment of the 6th Tactical PsyOps Battalion. By the end of 1965, the total PSYOP commitment had grown from a few MTTs to approximately five hundred personnel.[32] This deployment was intended to be the apogee of PSYOP units in the RVN. By the end of 1965 MACV acknowledged that "psyops units had assisted materially with psyops support to the *Plei Me-Ia Drang* campaign in II CTZ, to Operation 'New Life' in III CTZ, and to many other less publicized

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Department of the Army, *Field Manual 33-1: Psychological Operations*, 18 May 1965, 54.
[31] Palmer, *US Intelligence and Vietnam*, 1984, 50.
[32] The addition of the 5th Air Commando Squadron (PsyOps) in late December, rounded out the year's deployments. Interestingly, this unit was initially OPCON to the 2nd Armored Division and was exclusively committed to support of PSYOP.

operations."[33] Despite this optimistic assessment, much work remained. A State Department research memo dated 21 December 1965 concluded that while the introduction of US forces had changed the Communists' calculus regarding a quick military victory, it had not diminished their determination regarding the war's prosecution.[34]

Technical PSYOP Innovations

PSYOP continued to seek more effective ways of communicating with the Vietnamese people. During McNamara's November 1965 visit to Vietnam, he decided to support the introduction of television to RVN, both as a morale factor for US forces and as a PSYWAR tool for GVN. Codenamed Project Jenny, the plan called for the initial airborne platform to begin broadcasting for two hours a day within three months. Forty hours per week of studio broadcasting would begin in Saigon within nine months, and a seven-station system for a 55-hour telecasting week was to be completed within twelve months. In *Psychological Operations American Style*, Robert Kodosky derides this US effort to introduce television, claiming that the Vietnamese only watched it because of the novelty and did not understand or enjoy the American-style programs.[35] Contemporaneous intelligence reporting, however, refutes his claim. According to American intelligence reports, the VC and the NVN were deeply concerned that Americans "poisoned male and female youths' [minds] with debauched

[33] MACV, *Command History 1965*, 255.
[34] Palmer, *US Intelligence and Vietnam*, 38.
[35] Robert J. Kodosky, *Psychological Operations American Style: The Joint United States Public Affairs Office, Vietnam and Beyond*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 165.

ideologies, drinking, gambling and cowboy films."[36] While the intelligence supporting this work came later, it validated the initial decision to implement television and American-style shows to the South Vietnamese population as a means of highlighting the benefits of a free society.

On 3 January 1966, the GVN authorized the United States to establish television stations to enhance the morale of US forces.[37] As part of the agreement, the U.S. pledged to assist the GVN with an indigenous television capacity. Technically and financially, it made sense for the Armed Forces Radio and Television (AFRTS) to operate both systems. Concern about the perception of a US-operated GVN channel and contract simplification led to the construction of two channels by the Department of Defense (DoD). In order to ensure the legality of the funding, USAID reimbursed the DoD for the channels used exclusively by the GVN.[38]

MACV was not only fighting with VC and NVN units, it was also in the television set sales business because USAID requested MACV to assist with procurement. The first order for two thousand sets was for civilian use, with a planned total of 3,500 to be distributed in hamlets throughout Vietnam. GVN planned to sell additional sets to private individuals as a moneymaking

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[36] Department of Defense Intelligence Information Report, "Report by Ba Bien Province People's Revolutionary Youth Group", report number 6027041068, 13 Jan1968, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472_6027041068_Box 11.

[37] These stations would be established at *Saigon*, *Can Tho*, *Da Nang*, *Hue*, *Nha Trang, Qui Nhon, Pleiku, Ban Me Thuct, and Quand Ngai*. The choice of these locations enabled broadcasts to reach the majority of South Vietnam's population with some signal bleed-over into areas of interest in neighboring countries.

[38] MACV, *Command History 1966*, 318.

venture.[39] The effort to place television sets throughout South Vietnam commenced in earnest because Operation Jenny was set to begin on 20 January 1966, but technical difficulties delayed the first broadcast until 7 February.[40]

Westmoreland also became involved in technical aspects of PSYOP. He directed that MACPD study procurement of lightweight printing presses for divisions, separate brigades, and regiments to enhance quick-reaction leaflet operations. MACPD concluded that the "Multilith Offset Duplicator Press," which could produce five thousand leaflets an hour would enable this capability. Westmoreland approved the recommendation on 18 October 1966.[41] Until this point, most PSYOP leaflets were being printed offshore on Okinawa and either flown to Vietnam or sent by ship. This was certainly not responsive to the needs of tactical PSYOP.

In December 1966 a second heavy, mobile print press in support of IV CTZ became operational for the 19th PSYOP headquartered at Can Tho, with reproduction operations located at Bihn Thuy Airbase. Westmoreland

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[39] It is interesting to note the difference in approach to this problem. The US sought to place television sets throughout the country in order to build an influence venue. The GVN looked at the opportunity as a moneymaking scheme. Differences in approach and motivation would plague the US/GVN relationship throughout the remainder of US involvement. Regardless of the differences though, Westmoreland supported the efforts to legitimize the GVN. He was concerned about television sets from the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) finding their way into the black market, which would undermine GVN efforts to sell them; so strict ration controls were set in place at the exchanges. Television sets were ordered, imported, and distributed prior to Tet.

[40] The aircraft used in support of Operation Jenny were also state of the art command and control (C2) platforms, radio relay platforms; providing uninterrupted C2. They were 3xC-121 aircraft provided by the Oceanographic Air Survey Unit, Naval Air Station, Maryland. The aircraft could also provide two-line crypto circuits. Both the 7th AF and MACSOG expressed requirements for Airborne C2 centers. MACV, *Command History 1965*, 319-320.

[41] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 689.

demonstrated his continuing interest in PSYOP by directing a feasibility study on the introduction of miniature, air-dropable single or double-channel radios with preset frequencies, over which would be broadcasted messages to enemy personnel. In finalizing plans for the operation, the MACV J3 requested the J2 provide information on VC/NVA troop concentrations in western Pleiku and Kontum Provinces for appropriate drop zones for the radio receivers. The operation was scheduled to commence a six-month test starting in July 1967.[42] PSYOP were obviously increasing throughout Vietnam, but further expansion became beset by frictions.

A New Year, New Expectations

Americans tend to view the time surrounding the New Year's celebration with a sense of optimism and hopefulness, and MACV certainly entered 1966 with this attitude. The VC had been denied a quick victory. The US military had performed well in its first major direct combat test, and *Time Magazine* had designated General Westmoreland its "Man of the Year."[43] Efforts by PSYOP to bolster the image of the GVN and by the MACV information office to improve the image of the American Soldier and the American mission seemed to be succeeding.

The 6th PSYOP Battalion was activated on 5 February 1966. It was assigned to US Army Republic of Vietnam (USARV) with operational control (OPCON) to MACV. The cadre of the headquarters element was formed largely

[42] Ibid., 660-1
[43] http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19660107,00.html, accessed 28 September 2014.

from personnel already assigned to the Vietnam Detachment of the US Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity Pacific (USABVAPAC), which originally had augmented and advised GVN efforts. PSYOP organizational evolution continued on 10 February 1966, when three tactical PSYOP companies were activated, incorporating elements of seven previously deployed PSYOP detachments.[44]

Initial analysis of psychological operations and the implementation of Directive 525-3 indicated shortages of assigned PSYOP personnel on the Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).[45] Thus, on 24 March 1966, the commanders of I and II FFORCEV were solicited by the MACV staff to recommend solutions to the shortage of PSYOP staff personnel at brigade, division, and Field Force levels. The USARV Deputy Commanding General, Lieutenant General Jean E. Engler, received their recommendations on 6 June 1966 and was encouraged to expedite the request so commanders might have the forces required for their PSYOP mission.[46] General Westmoreland's belief in the efficacy of PSYOP clearly influenced his commanders' PSYOP priorities.[47]

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[44] Recall that these deployments, along with an Air Commando Squadron, were intended to be the culmination of required operational PSYOP support in Vietnam. MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 555.

[45] Some of the strain was based on an increase in operational tempo. For instance, on 20 February 1966, a quick reaction leaflet was developed in support of the US 1st Infantry Division during operation MASTIFF in III CTZ. Leaflets were used in support of indirect fires by fixing the VC in place or by driving them in a direction toward B-52 strikes. This was an interesting non-doctrinal use of PSYOP, and displayed a creative coordination between PSYOP and maneuver at the tactical level. It is an informed use of "psychological fires" that shows evidence of an advanced understanding of the potential use of tactical PSYOP. From this operation, it also can be inferred that MACV Directive 525-3 was being implemented in the III CTZ. MACV, *Command History 1966*, 568.

[46] Ibid., 555.

[47] In April 1966, II CTZ PSYOP units supported Operation LINCOLN with 24/7 aerial broadcasts of CHP themes, which introduced night harassment techniques. PSYOP techniques were not limited to formulaic responses, checklists or playbooks. Combat units were experimenting with new tactics and techniques based on intelligence, imagination, and technological innovation. Unfortunately, PSYOP innovation often took the form of gimmicks

Evaluations of PSYOP Performance

On 25 April 1966, USARV published its "Evaluation of US Army Combat Operations in Vietnam."[48] This document contained several findings that influenced both psychological operations and intelligence. The study reported that brigade and division staffs required "augmentation of a civil affairs section" to be effective because US Army tactical units were performing tasks not originally in their Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).[49] It found a shortage of S2 personnel at the battalion level for maintaining continuous operations because many S2 personnel were being given additional duties in the S5 section.[50] Because some units also used S3 personnel for the CA function, "the recurring use of unit and special staff officers to perform the S5 function indicates a requirement for an S5 section at battalion."[51] The underlying problem was that Army TOEs were not configured for counterinsurgency warfare in Vietnam.[52] The study also found that the "requirement for psychological warfare personnel at brigade and division is being marginally satisfied by attachment of teams from a psychological warfare company. Assigned personnel are required at divisional level to coordinate this effort."[53] Because not all battalions were conducting PSYOP, changes were

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designed for windfall results. This operation was in *Pleiku* against the same NVA units that had participated in the battle of the *Ia Drang* Valley in November 1965.

[48] Evaluation of US Army Combat Operations in Vietnam (ARCOV), Volume 5. Annex D, Command, Control, and Communications, 25 April 1966, United States Army Heritage and Education Center (AHEC), Carlisle, PA.

[49] Evaluation of US Army Combat Operations in Vietnam (ARCOV), D-7.

[50] Ibid., D-3-4.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., D-7.

[53] Ibid.

required to meet the demands of MACV Directive 525-3.[54] Units were also dividing the functions of PSYWAR and Civil Affairs. Commanders were interpreting MACV Directive 525-3 as if those functions were compartmented, rather than complementary.

It is not surprising then that seventeen of twenty-one battalion commanders responded that there was no requirement for psychological warfare personnel at battalion level and only four commanders felt that psychological warfare personnel should be included in a battalion S5 section.[55] Westmoreland briefed all incoming battalion and above commanders of the need for PSYOP and the fact that they were the primary PSYOP officers in their units. Additionally, the general attitude seemed to be that anyone could write a leaflet. Given these two trends, it seems likely that expertise provided by PSYOP-trained personnel was not valued at the tactical level. The findings regarding civic action also support this conclusion. The report found a significant lack of coordination between civic-action and PSYOP. Battalions conducted a large number of civic action programs; but PSYOP were not usually conducted at battalion level, and battalion personnel were rarely used for this purpose. The report found that "a psychological operations warfare

[54] Some units were better than others at integrating PSYOP, largely due to the influence of unit commanders. For instance, all battalions of the 1st Cav, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and the 1st BDE, 1/101 Airborne Division conducted PSYOP on one or more tactical operations. But only 1 battalion of the 1st Infantry division did. In these events, a combination of the S2 and S3 supervised the PSYOP operations. S2s were putting in 9.2% of their time during planning and 4.9% during supervision (11 battalions in 20 operations). The S3 averaged 3.5% of his time on both planning and supervision on (7 battalions in 10 operations). Evaluation of US Army Combat Operations in Vietnam (ARCOV), Volume 5. Annex D, D-3-6.
[55] Ibid., D-3-8.

capability is not required in this action."[56] One example in the report demonstrated the focus on metrics that permeated MACV reporting and the idea of PSYOP as something separate from Civic Action. The report stated that during Operation New Life, "15 tons of wheat, rice, corn meal, cooking oil and evaporated milk [were] distributed."[57] Additionally, "Brigade engineers repaired 27 miles of road, built 11 bridges and cleared a 600 by 1000 meter area for a new village site."[58] The report concluded that "government was reestablished in 2 villages and 22 PSYOP operations loudspeaker missions and 9 leaflet drops were flown" in addition to 134 tons of rice being removed from VC caches.[59]

The metrics focused on easily measurable data, rather than on population attitudes or meaningful measures of security. The equation of security with roads repaired and leaflet drops displays a linear, conventional combat approach to warfare. MACV desperately wanted to win the counter-insurgency fight, but it was unable to comprehend the correct metrics to measure, and therefore focused on the wrong sorts of missions.

While "New Life" seemed to be a well-coordinated military operation, it was based on faulty assumptions regarding the population and the effectiveness of PSYOP. The author of the report clearly did not understand the capabilities, limitations, and employment principles for psychological operations to be effective. The report also captured the prevailing attitude of commanders who

[56] Ibid., D-3-9.
[57] Ibid., D-7-4.
[58] Ibid., D-7-4.
[59] Ibid., D-7-4.

believed that “the system of attachment of psychological warfare teams to divisions and brigades as required is adequate.”[60] PSYOP were viewed as producing an add-on effect and were not integrated within an overall operational concept. Commanders equated PSYOP with measures of performance. Despite these obvious shortcomings, MACV continued reporting that the most “extensive and efficient psychological operations to date” bombarded the enemy.[61]

The findings of the intelligence evaluation were that “the addition of a G5/S5 staff section would materially assist all of the G2/S2 staff sections by providing them a source of information gathered from indigenous personnel during the conduct of civil affairs/civic action activities.”[62] While increased knowledge from civic-action operations was seen as beneficial to intelligence, no such connection was reported between PSYOP and intelligence.

The report stated “one of South Vietnam's political facts of life was that programs agreed upon at the national level were frequently emasculated, sabotaged, or simply ignored by officials at lower levels who enjoyed considerable autonomy. Misuse of funds and other corrupt practices had long

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[60] Ibid., D-7-14.
[61] Stanley Sandler. *To Free from Oppression: A Concise History of U.S. Army Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, and the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School*. (Fort Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Directorate of History and Museums, 1994), 72.
[62] Review and Analysis of the Evaluation of Army Combat Operations in Vietnam: (Short Title ARCOV). (Fort Belvoir, Va: Dept. of the Army, Headquarters, United States Army Combat Developments Command, Office of the Commanding General, 1966), Volume 2. Annex A, Intelligence, A-6.

been endemic."[63] Throughout 1966 inflationary pressures and price increases of up to 40-percent undermined confidence in the government. It would prove to be a difficult year for the South Vietnamese. In Hue for instance, religious tensions with the Buddhists were exacerbated by the 100-percent cost-of-living increase in the last six months of 1965.[64] No amount of PSYOP could change that reality, but it did not stop MACV from trying.

On 10 May 1966, in another instance of Westmoreland's direct involvement in PSYOP, he ordered "a special leaflet [be] developed, printed, and loaded into leaflet bombs" and targeted to construction workers "in and around the Hu Gia Papp area, to discourage construction workers repairing damages in that area."[65] As the year progressed, Westmoreland continued to direct tactical PSYOP. On 25 May 1966, his concern about recent intelligence in the I CTZ led him to direct the Commanding General of III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) and the Development Advisor of I Corps to plan a combined US/RVNAF PSYOP campaign to reverse the trend of people in the area "non-identifying" with the GVN.[66] Unfortunately, these episodes of direct involvement and

[63] The North benefited politically from the intense purges conducted during the 1950s. *Ho Chi Minh* had succeeded in either executing or suppressing his opposition. South Vietnam did not enjoy this luxury. The freedom in South Vietnamese society, while a welcome part of democracy, also exacerbated religious, ethnic, and regional tensions. Leadership coups were a part of life in South Vietnam, but did not lead to purges and power consolidation. Governmental power remained tenuous in the South, and leaders were unable to foster the sense of unity required to wrest the nationalist narrative away from the North Vietnamese. MACV, *Command History 1966*, 8.
[64] Ibid., 8.
[65] Ibid., 568.
[66] Ibid.

dictated leaflets contributed to the perception that anyone could write PSYOP leaflets.[67]

On 11 June 1966, Westmoreland directed the MACV J5 to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current MACV PSYWAR organization.[68] The J5 completed the study and briefed Westmoreland on 23 July 1966. He agreed to prioritize personnel and equipment at the tactical level and focus the strategic level in Saigon on finding enemy weaknesses and honing previously successful techniques.[69] However, Westmoreland disapproved the recommendation to establish a MACV J7 section dedicated to PSYOP and remarked that "he was the MACV PSYWAR Officer, and that all commanders would assume this same responsibility by increasing greatly their efforts in PSYWAR."[70] Without a J7, the nexus of integrating PSYOP and intelligence at MACV rested solely with the commander. Westmoreland's emphasis on the importance of PSYOP was admirable, but his lack of understanding of the nature of PSYOP is difficult to reconcile. His failure to establish an office to assist him in this vital function severely inhibited MACV's ability to integrate PSYOP with other functions, most notably with intelligence. In short, his logic was faulty. Establishing a staff section dedicated to PSYOP would have enhanced the command's ability to conduct effective psychological operations not weakened it. The unintended consequence of Westmoreland's interest was that "US and Allied field commanders had requested more PSYWAR support," which increased demand

[67] Kodosky, *Psychological Operations American Style*, 28.
[68] MACV, *Command History 1966*, 556.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

beyond the originally planned capacity of the 6th PSYOP battalion.[71] According to Barger, this command emphasis had an unintended effect, which "resulted in a large PSYOP effort focused on the means of delivering messages that were marginally effective but easily measurable."[72]

A report by II Field Forces command in October 1966 found "the entire VC structure is vulnerable to imaginative and realistic psywar operations. Continued distortions of the truth cannot be sustained by the enemy especially in the wake of the GVN triumph in the elections."[73] It then reported metrics on PSYOP leaflets produced and distributed and numbers of *Hoi Chanh*. It did not, however, provide any insights into what was meant by "imaginative and realistic."[74]

By mid-November 1966, it was clear that expanded emphasis and demand on PSYOP resources had again outstripped capacity. Thus, the MACPD recommended that the 6th PSYOP Battalion be expanded to a group, that staffing levels with the MACV headquarters be increased from twenty-three officers and nine enlisted to fifty-one officers and twenty-five enlisted, with two

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[71] MACV, *Command History 1966*, 556.
[72] Michael G. Barger, "Psychological Operations Supporting Counterinsurgency: 4th Psyop Group in Vietnam." (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 2007), 172.
[73] II Field Forces Vietnam, "Operational Report for Period Ending 31 October 1966", (Headquarters II Field Force Vietnam, 15 November 1966) 12.
[74] A total of 741 ralliers were reported in the III Corps Tactical Zone, with a large number of ralliers credited in part to increased ARVN/US/FWMAF activity during this quarter. On the other hand, in *Tay Ninh* Province the number of ralliers dropped from a monthly average of 50 to 15. Although US/FWMAF units had recently been introduced into this province, they had devoted much of their effort to base development. The number of ralliers in *Tay Ninh* Province was expected to increase as large scale tactical operations commenced. Ibid., 27.

additional professional US civilian PSYWAR officers.[75] All maneuver battalions were also to be issued hand-held loudspeakers.

Growing Pains

As 1967 unfolded, Westmoreland became convinced that the security situation was improving to the point that more focus could be given to pacification operations. He argued that the, "political, economic and psychological victory is equally important and support of Revolutionary Development is mandatory."[76] Even Premier Ky recognized both the importance and the difficulty involved with Revolutionary Development, when in an address at Canberra, Australia, on 19 January 1967 he noted "we may take more casualties in this combined military-psychological role than we would in a purely military situation."[77] With the perceived improvements to the security situation, MACV increased its emphasis on PSYOP toward Revolutionary Development (RD).[78] A shift was also underway, whereby "under Westmoreland pacification became an integral part of MACV concept of operations."[79]

During pacification operations, PSYOP supported civic action, medical treatment, and distribution of relief supplies by giving maximum credit to the

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[75] Ibid., 558.
[76] Gregory A. Daddis, *Westmoreland's War: Reassessing American Strategy in Vietnam*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 231.
[77] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 577.
[78] "*xay dung nong thon*" - really should be "rural construction" not "revolutionary development" See Race, *War Comes to Long An*, 210.
[79] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 12.

GVN.[80] These efforts were intended to dissuade the population from supporting the VC. Both FWMAF and GVN soldiers' actions were crucial in this regard because a lack of respect for human rights and property rights undermined the positive psychological impact that Civic Action might have on the population.[81] The main PSYOP objective directed against the VC/NVN was to "sow dissections and to demoralize and confuse the enemy" forcing him into *Chieu Hoi* by showing the hopelessness of his cause.[82]

The GVN, however, partially undermined its own efforts because it had not established itself as a dynamic alternative to the NLF.[83] No amount of PSYOP could fix the difference between popular expectations of government effectiveness and the reality of marginal efficacy. Nevertheless, based on optimistic assessments with the first new hamlets under the GVN's latest land-reform program, ambitious plans were made to change the focus of PSYOP to support RVNAF efforts and increase the support of the people for GVN.[84] These increased responsibilities caused even greater strain on the available PSYOP resources and expertise. Intelligence would also be strained, as the typical enemy order-of-battle analysis did not lend itself to the analysis required for evaluating the level of security in a village, support to the central government, or economic progress.

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[80] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 572 For a detailed description of the failures of MEDCAP in support of combat operations in Vietnam see Malsby, "Into Which End Does the Thermometer Go?".
[81] MACV, *Command History, 1967, Volume II*, 573.
[82] Ibid., 572-3.
[83] Ibid., 626.
[84] Ibid., 634.

Increased support to RD led to more compartmentalization within MACV. The MACPD, which was responsible for integrating and executing national and tactical-level PSYOP policy developed by JUSPAO, also had to coordinate with the Military Assistance Command Civil Operations and Revolutionary (or Rural) Development Support – Psychological Operations Directorate (MACCORDS-POD) to ensure synchronization of PSYOP at the regional level. MACPD was also responsible for equipment support, contingency plans, recommending and initiating PSYOP programs, and monitoring the US and Vietnamese staff in GVN POLWAR elements. MACPD's advisory role to GVN PSYWAR included elements of political warfare planning, propaganda production and dissemination, political indoctrination and motivation, social-service activities and chaplain affairs.[85] As the psychological operations effort continued to expand, the relentless fixation on immediate results drove the continued collection of metrics. By the beginning of the year, PSYOP reported it could produce four hundred million leaflets per month.[86]

Studies of PSYOP Performance

In April 1967, dissatisfied with the lack of demonstrable progress and deluged with data on PSYOP production, Westmoreland directed the MACV J5 to conduct another study of PSYOP's effectiveness. The study identified one major weakness in the program as the lack of a research and development capability, which resulted from personnel shortages in critical skills, most

[85] Ibid., 635.
[86] Ibid., 633.

notably Vietnamese expertise.[87] Prompted by these findings, Westmoreland sent a letter to the Director of Defense Research and Engineering in late April 1967, suggesting that Advanced Research Products Agency (ARPA) conduct a PSYOP effectiveness review. Previous studies identified reorganization and expansion issues as the problems, but changes in these areas failed to produce results. The ARPA study was expected to take about six months to complete and was given the following tasks:

1) Develop ways to measure campaign effectiveness.
2) Determine target audience vulnerabilities.
3) Provide detailed examples of how to exploit those vulnerabilities.[88]

These questions made sense because they were in line with the steps of the propaganda development cycle. PSYOP doctrine stated, "research and analysis, propaganda development, and dissemination should all be closely scrutinized by pretesting and feedback."[89] The first step in the cycle is a determination of requirements based on operational need. The second and third steps are an audience vulnerability assessment and a determination of the best dissemination method. But Westmoreland went a step further. He recommended additional ARPA studies to develop innovative approaches to PSYOP based on Vietnamese culture, folklore, and superstitions. He also suggested that ARPA study methods of pre-testing leaflets, which PSYOP doctrine specified, "must be constantly analyzed and adjusted for errors and

[87] Ibid., 642.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Field Manual 33-1: Psychological Operations,* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 18 May 1965), 18.

weaknesses."[90] The belief that Vietnamese customs, folklore, and superstition were the key to effective PSYOP is an indication that Kodosky's criticism is warranted. He argued that the lessons learned from the Philippines and copied in Vietnam were "the easy PSYOP, smoke and mirrors, practical jokes, vampires and the Huk."[91] Westmoreland expected immediate results, and when they did not happen he seems to have assumed that the PSYOP conducted by MACV was somehow at fault.

In June 1967 the Army Scientific Advisory Panel (ASAP) issued its "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Army Psychological Operations." Because almost every military action had both psychological and political consequences, it recommended a holistic approach toward PSYOP.[92] The panel was impressed with the changes made by the Army in adapting to the counterinsurgency environment in South Vietnam, but found ways in which the "Army can further adapt its plans, career programs, doctrine, training procedures and research activities to improve its long-term capabilities for waging this sort of war."[93]

While the Army had made "substantial technical progress… it has not been as successful in producing more effective content."[94] MACV's emphasis on quick results and easy measurements led to a reliance on technical solutions and mass production. The underlying content of the messages was assumed to be correct. "The Army PSYOP Improvement Program, although well

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[90] Ibid.
[91] Kodosky, *Psychological Operations American Style,* 93-4
[92] Army Scientific Advisory Panel Report, "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Army Psychological Operations", June 1967, 4.
[93] Ibid., 3.
[94] Ibid., 4.

worked out to improve tactical PSYOP for conventional warfare, is designed to improve a program that is assumed to be correct in every major assumption. This program makes little effort to adapt the Army's PSYOP system to the realities of the new insurgency situation."[95]

The study also found that PSYOP in South Vietnam had an increased urgent need for political, economic, and social intelligence in addition to traditional military intelligence. It recommended that Army intelligence agencies acquire the capabilities to fulfill the needs "demanded by the political and psychological dimension in stability operations."[96] PSYOP also had to refine its approach to civilians and be "prepared to deal with broader political matters that affect the relations of the enemy soldier to a community and is less associated with narrow military concepts of the psychology of an enemy soldier."[97]

MACV was clearly grasping at an answer for what it perceived to be a lack of PSYOP effectiveness. The command commissioned multiple, overlapping studies and acted on results without allowing time to assess the effectiveness of those changes. On such example occurred with the J5 study that MACV had requested back in April. The results of the J5 study came in after the results from the ARPA study. But, there does not appear to have been a coordinated examination of the two studies. Instead, MACV took action based on the J5 study's findings and created the Research and Analysis Branch in

[95] Ibid., 10.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid., 11.

June 1967 with plans to use a computer system to conduct better assessment of the PSYOP effort.[98]

But less than a month after forming the Research and Analysis branch, PSYOP were still not meeting Westmoreland's expectations. On 5 July 1967 he directed the MACPD to "study methods of presenting PSYOP performance in more meaningful terms, emphasizing the tangible results achieved rather than leaflets, broadcasts and similar statistics."[99] He directed this study before the results of the ARPA-directed studies had been completed. This instance was another example where Westmoreland appeared to be impatient with the lack of quantifiable PSYOP results, or he was unaware of the time lag between the implementation of a PSYOP program and the results.

MACPD briefed the CofS and MACV J3 on 13 August 1967 on the J5 study's findings. Based on that discussion, the CofS and MACV J3 collectively reached the conclusion that the only meaningful measure of PSYOP effectiveness was the *Chieu Hoi* Program.[100] The command clearly recognized that PSYOP were not being measured adequately and that there was a lack of rigor in the program. Part of this issue stemmed from the lack of a J7 within MACV. "Too many cooks spoil the broth" is an apt aphorism to describe the situation.

In a display of just how many different entities were attempting to plan, implement, and measure PSYOP effectiveness, in July 1967 a PSYOP

[98] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 642
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

subcommittee of CORDS met to study the psychological operations functions and relationships to the other MACV and CORDS staff sections. The original bifurcation of effort between JUSPAO and MACV had worked, but the expanded scope and scale of coordinated with CORDS efforts at pacification increasingly caused a need for reevaluation.[101] In June 1967 Mr. Barry Zorthian, the director of JUSPAO, had pointed out "the size and magnitude of our military effort have raised requirements for psychological support to such a level that some of the existing divisions of operational responsibilities are no longer valid. Moreover, as a result of the organization evolution within the Mission, we have a number of anomalies and inconsistencies which should be examined and sorted out."[102]

Without coordinating with other PSYOP entities, the CORDS PSYOP subcommittee conducted a comprehensive examination of MACV PSYOP structure, manning, and mission.[103] After heated deliberations, which included discussions on the deactivation of JUSPAO and merging its responsibilities into MACV, the committee presented the following recommendations:

> 1) PSYOP responsibility in HQ MACV be assigned to one staff element.
> 2) Conduct a separate study of PSYOP organization in the field at an early date.
> 3) Transfer JTD slots for military personnel from JUSPAO to MACV.
> 4) Transfer responsibility for securing imprest funds directly to MACV (MACCORDS).[104]

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[101] Ibid., 636.
[102] Ibid., 636.
[103] Ibid., 637.
[104] Imprest funds are fixed-cash or petty-cash funds in the form of currency or coin that have been advanced as "Funds Held Outside of Treasury". Historically, agencies have used imprest funds to make a variety of payments to all classes of payment recipients. Agencies typically used imprest funds to reimburse employees for expenses, to make small purchases, to make

> 5) Upon approval of these recommendations, prepare a draft National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM), redefining the responsibilities for PSYOP in Vietnam resulting from this study. [105]

As evidence of the ongoing bureaucratic infighting, neither JUSPAO nor MACCORDS concurred with the study's recommendations, yet they were forwarded to Westmoreland on 1 September 1967.[106] Westmoreland was clearly looking for some different thinking on PSYOP because he concurred and forwarded the plan to Ambassador Bunker who approved the plan on 23 October 1967 stating, "it seems…, that the procedures outlined should result in a more efficient and effective prosecution of psychological operations within the US Mission."[107]

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Initial Results of the PSYOP Studies

In October 1967, the MACV J5 conducted a follow-up study to its April study and found satisfactory improvement in the program related to personnel and equipment resources for PSYOP. Tactical shortages in equipment and personnel remained, but logistical support had made satisfactory improvement. With continued progress, the report predicted, the system should soon be effective.[108] The J5 study found systemic issues with having MACCORDS and MACPD interacting with JUSPAO. The lack of a single manager for PSYOP within MACV created problems with distribution of policy, instruction, and the

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emergency beneficiary payments, and to pay informants, among other uses. http://fms.treas.gov/imprest/questions.html, accessed 05 January 2015.
[105] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 638.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid., 645.

collection and sharing of PSYOP intelligence. Westmoreland's decision to be the *de facto* J7 was continuing to cause coordination and integration problems within the command. The J5 also noted the lack of PSYOP expertise in PW interrogations.[109] The J5 made eight recommendations, which will be examined in more detail in the next phase to determine the degree they were implemented. These recommendations were:

> 1) ARPA reports on PSYOP be submitted to the J5 for consolidation of recommendations to COMUSMACV relative to PSYOP.
> 2) That the current ongoing revision of MACV Directive 10-1, Organization and Functions--Psychological Operations, specifically address the study's conclusions.[110]
> 3) MACPD in conjunction with the J2, determine steps to incorporate PSYOP needs during interrogations, to expedite processing and reporting of PWs and returnees, and to develop appropriate combined procedures with ARVN.
> 4) ACofS, J4, and MACPD initiate a staff review on or about 1 February 1968 to determine effectiveness at operating level of supply and maintenance support for PSYOP equipment, to include US, ARVN, ROK and Thai forces.
> 5) Department of the Army (DA) be advised through CINCPAC of the urgent need for expediting expansion of the 6th PSYOP battalion to group size and be further requested to furnish a time schedule for implementation (USARV/J1 action).
> 6) MACPD determines the validity of the proposed equipment needs and takes follow-up action as appropriate.
> 7) ACofS J1 continue the development of a comprehensive program to focus command interest at all levels upon the urgent necessity of assuring troop conformance to proper standards of military conduct and discipline, and additionally, that J1 encourage the increased indoctrination of US troops in the background religious, culture, and customs of the Vietnamese.
> 8) ACofS conduct follow-on appraisals of PSYOP semiannually, as of 1 May and 1 November each year for the previous six-months period and, further, that this function be included in the MACV Organization and Functions Manual.

[109] Ibid.
[110] An updated version of MACV Directive 10-1 was issued in December 1967.

General Westmoreland approved the study's recommendations in November 1967.[111]

The wider PSYOP community also conducted a study in support of the Westmoreland-requested ARPA study. The PSYOP intelligence study was commissioned by the 7th PSYOP Group in Okinawa.[112] The findings were deemed so important that a draft of this supporting study was issued to the field prior to the final version of the ARPA study. Despite repeated recommendations, reorganizations, and requests for support, this study found many problems remained with PSYOP/intelligence integration.

There were endemic problems with training, dissemination, and integration. Many PSYOP personnel did not know the proper Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) procedures for requesting information. When proper requests were made, they were delayed by routing the information through the CINCPAC J2 to the MACV J2, then to MACPD. The routing should have been directly from DIA to MACPD.[113] MACPD had its own share of bureaucratic bungling because MACPD also required all intelligence information destined for the 6th PSYOP Battalion to be routed through itself, which delayed distribution.[114] Furthermore, of all the Automated Data Processing (ADP) requests sent to the CICV in May of 1967, only three came from a PSYOP

[111] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 646.
[112] 7th Psychological Operations Group. *Report on Psychological Operations Intelligence in Vietnam*, Headquarters, 7th Psychological Operations Group, Target Analysis Section, 15th PSYOP Det (STRAT), 7th PSYOP Group, (APO S.F., 96248, 17 November 1967).
[113] Ibid.,10-A.
[114] Ibid., 3.

unit.[115] The report also found that research and analysis at the national level was too general to be of use at the tactical level.[116]

Westmoreland's prioritization of PSYOP was not having its intended effect. MACV did not understand either how to implement PSYOP, or how to evaluate it. It also failed to fund it appropriately. One indication of this inadequacy was that PSYOP personnel were unable to purchase unclassified books and periodical subscriptions with which to develop PSYOP libraries. Millions of dollars were spent printing, shipping, and dropping leaflets, but the few hundred dollars required to purchase professional libraries for PSYOP companies and detachments in the field were unavailable. The closest bona fide PSYOP library was on Okinawa. What little material PSYOP personnel did have, they obtained with personal funds.[117]

Several items are clear from the ongoing studies and recommendations. First, PSYOP was a priority to the MACV commander. Second, the degree of integration of PSYOP with other staff sections including JUSPAO, the J1, J2, and J4 was not effective. Third, although MACV did not give some of the changes to PSYOP organization enough time to demonstrate progress, it did recognize that the changes it made were not meeting expectations. Fourth, because of the lack of progress, new analysis was conducted both by internal staff sections and external agencies to uncover the root causes for these failures. On several occasions MACV reevaluated the effectiveness,

[115] Ibid., 6-B.
[116] Ibid., 8.
[117] Ibid., 5.

organization, and implementation of its PSYOP program. However, overlapping studies, incomplete adoption and implementation of findings, and unrealistic expectations regarding PSYOP effectiveness metrics colluded to produce a plethora of incompletely implemented recommendations.

End of Year Initiatives

The culmination of PSYOP in Vietnam during the first period of the war was the 1 December 1967 reorganization and expansion of PSYOP. The 6th PSYOP Battalion was redesignated as the 4th PSYOP Group, with increased authorizations from 331 US military personnel to 946 US military personnel and 173 Vietnamese civilians.[118] The 4th PSYOP Group in particular would become the powerhouse behind JUSPAO's massive psychological operations effort. Subordinate reorganization occurred as well, with the 244th PSYOP Company redesignated the 7th PSYOP Battalion, the 245th PSYOP Company the 8th PSYOP Battalion, and the 19th PSYOP Company the 10th PSYOP Battalion. Four days later, the 246th PSYOP Company was redesignated the 6th PSYOP Battalion. This expansion severely overtaxed the PSYOP personnel system, as there were now only 41 trained PSYOP specialists out of 346 officer positions, and only 40 percent of the 4th PSYOP Group's officers had been trained at the JFK Warfare center.[119]

[118] Barger, "Psychological Operations Supporting Counterinsurgency", 54.
[119] Stanley Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You!": A History of U.S. Army Combat Psychological Operations (2d edition).* (Washington, D.C.: American Institutes for Research, 1999), 265.

On 6 December 1967 JUSPAO issued PSYOP Policy Number 49, "Exploitation of VC Vulnerabilities," which focused attention on the recently published report on *Chieu Hoi* and VC weaknesses.[120] It directed that PSYOP focus on the particular VC vulnerabilities of war weariness, hardships and deprivations, homesickness and nostalgia for friends and relatives, and differences between VC cadre's promises and behaviors. The study noted that there were tensions between northern soldiers and southerners, that most rallying was *against* the VC and not *for* the GVN, and that social origins determined how far one could advance in the VC ranks. Each of these items was a source of frustration, friction, and potential fracture within the VC. The policy document also recognized that the VC had taken several steps to counter the threat posed by the *Chieu Hoi* program. They maintained tight discipline and strict control of their members, they continued political indoctrination sessions, and they fostered fear of GVN mistreatment at the *Chieu Hoi* centers. Concerning dissemination, the report found that loudspeakers were very effective at night and that word-of-mouth campaigns at local markets posed a threat to the VC because villagers even in VC-controlled villages had to go to market. It also found that the primary source of information for rural inhabitants were radios and loudspeakers and that the BBC was a trusted news source. Further, leaflets that caricatured or ridiculed the VC tended to backfire. It stipulated that messages should focus on political rationale and criticism of VC methods. Under the terms of this directive, the 4th PSYOP

[120] Simulmatics Corporation, and United States. "Improving Effectiveness of the Chieu Hoi Program Revised Final Report." (Cambridge, Mass: The Corporation, 1967).

Group was now responsible for ensuring all of this guidance was implemented. Interestingly, the debriefing of LTG Stanley Larson, Commanding General, I Field Force from 1 Aug 65 to 31 July 67, noted that it was "impossible to determine the exact relationship between the number of leaflets and loudspeaker missions flown in psychological warfare and the number of returnees (*Chieu Hoi*)."[121] It was evident, however, that PSYOP were an important factor in the CHP because returnees were using the safe-conduct passes, and follow-up interrogations indicated the program was influencing their decision to rally to the GVN.[122] In a statement that would prove prescient for the remainder of the war, Larson stated that "over the past year, [we] have found ourselves in the curious position of seeing the success of our military operations out-strip GVN's ability to follow through with revolutionary development programs."[123] This would be a common theme regarding the GVN's performance across many aspects of operations.

On 11 December 1967, MACV issued the revised Directive 10-1, "Organization and Functions, Psychological Operations." This document incorporated many of the changes addressed by the J5 study of October. The year closed with a JUSPAO issued PSYOP Policy number 51 on 28 December 1967 that listed the top three PSYOP priorities for the New Year as bolstering

[121] Stanley R. Larsen, (Lieutenant General, USA). "Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG Stanley R. Larsen, CG, I Fielded Forces Command, Period 1 August 1965 through 31 July 1967." (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 31 July 1967), 32.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., 39.

the Government of Vietnam (GVN) image, supporting the *Chieu Hoi* program, and improving Revolutionary Development.[124]

Summary

The Vietnam War became the largest US information operations effort to that date and JUSPAO policy guidance came from the highest level of the US diplomatic effort and was designed to integrate all elements of national power in the information domain. JUSPAO set policy and objectives but lacked the ability to execute psychological operations in the field. To meet the increased requirements, US Army PSYOP forces expanded over those three years from a handful of Mobile Training Teams (MTT), to an entire PSYOP Group, consisting of four battalions.[125] US government policy, military doctrine, and academic expertise each supported the belief that PSYOP could affect populations' attitudes, beliefs, and actions.

During this first phase of the war, PSYOP forces grew from a handful of Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) operating in South Vietnam and offshore development and production support from the 7th Group in Okinawa to the newly designated 4th PSYOP Group, which consisted of four battalions. As a point of reference to the scale, the 7th PSYOP Group in Okinawa oversaw all of the PSYOP in Korea, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam prior to the creation of the 4th PSYOP Group focused *only* on Vietnam.

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[124] Frank L. Goldstein and Benjamin F. Findley. *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies*. (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1996), 233.

[125] As a point of reference to the scale, the 7th PSYOP Group in Okinawa oversaw all of the PSYOP in Korea, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam prior to the creation of the 4th PSYOP Group focused *only* on Vietnam.

MACV built a significant PSYOP force structure while engaged with the enemy as key players sought to integrate into a rapidly expanding staff; organize effectively based on analysis of the mission, enemy, terrain, troops, time and civilians (METT-TC); and understand the enemy in order to exploit his vulnerabilities.

Analysis

Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for PSYOP?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this time period. While MACV did not have a defined learning agenda for PSYOP, General Westmoreland did. He was the de facto J7 and actively sought to learn about the effective execution and evaluation of PSYOP. Although the development of PSYOP within MACV was initially *ad hoc* and largely driven by Westmoreland's pursuit of quick results, the command did conduct myriad studies on the effectiveness of PSYOP. MACV spent the majority of its PSYOP effort attempting to determine how to assess effectiveness. By the end of 1967, the focus on the *Chieu Hoi* Program provided one meaningful measure of the effectiveness of MACV's PSYOP program.

Was MACV open to discordant information PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Yes" for this time period, because it was open to discordant information regarding PSYOP. In many cases, lessons learned about the tactical implementation of PSYOP were collected and shared throughout the command. Additionally, MACV actively sought expert advice from academics and research establishments for the best way to analyze,

understand, and target the enemy. Unfortunately, some ideas about PSYOP combined with impatience degenerated into "gimmickery" and other attempts at quick results, which often had the reverse effect on the population.

Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with PSYOP?

MACV rated a "No" during this time period, because it clearly did not avoid repetition of mistakes with PSYOP. MACV repeatedly learned the same lessons. There were many tactical improvements in the execution of PSYOP, but the fundamental problems at MACV with the creation of PSYOP themes and the strategic targeting of PSYOP were not learned. MACV demonstrated an overreliance on technological means of delivery. While these innovations certainly increased the reach of the message, at the heart the messages did not particularly resonate with the Vietnamese population. Studies indicated that familial ties and devotion to the land could be exploited to break ties with the VC. But these same ideas had been discovered in the early 1960s and were not transferred to the efforts when the new crop of PSYOP professionals arrived. Continual complaints about the level of training for assigned PSYOP personnel also indicate repeated mistakes.

Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from PSYOP left the command?

MACV rated a "Yes" during this time period. During this thirty-month period of rapid expansion and shift from a series of short duration temporary duty tours, PSYOP was able to increase both the speed of production and dissemination of PSYOP material. PSYOP personnel were able to adjust to the

rapid influx of technology, while continuing to provide themes, which assisted with the increase of *Chieu Hoi* rates. The changeover of lower level personnel did not seem to have an effect on the technical production of PSYOP material. Significant changes would occur during the next time period. The first commander of the 4th PSYOP Group would depart Vietnam in 1968, and so this question will be evaluated in detail during the next time period.

Did MACV act on what it knew regarding PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Yes" during this time period. It sought to learn a great deal about PSYOP and acted on many recommendations. The results of this action were, however, mixed. MACV increased its technical means of engaging the South Vietnamese population by introducing television and radio, but failed to increase the number of face-to-face engagements, which were repeatedly found to be the most effective means of communication.[126] The many studies conducted in 1967 each sought to ascertain the reasons for a lack of mass defections on the part of the VC and NVN forces. The underlying reason, however, was an ineffective GVN, which was beyond the scope of what PSYOP could influence. Finally, the lack of a J7 at MACV was a serious hindrance to the performance of PSYOP. This deficiency was identified in several of the internal and external studies of PSYOP, but on each occasion Westmoreland refuse to accept the recommendations to correct it.

[126] William R. Desobry, "Debriefing Report of BG William R. Desobry, August 1965 - January 1968", APO: Headquarters, US Army Advisory Group, IV CTZ, MACV Advisory Team #96, 1968, 94.

Net Assessment

MACV met four of the five criteria evaluated for PSYOP during this time period and therefore rated as **Somewhat Effective** for PSYOP during this time period (Table 6).

Garvin's Learning Questions	July 1965 - January 1968
	PSYOP
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for PSYOP?	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding PSYOP?	**+**
Did MACV avoid repeat mistakes with PSYOP?	**-**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from PSYOP left the command?	**+**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding PSYOP?	**+**
Total	**4**

TABLE 6 – PSYOP ASSESSMENT, 1965-1967

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

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As they prepared for the Tet holiday in 1968, MACV and the newly formed 4th PSYOP Group were optimistic. They were sure that this next year would mark another turning point in the war's effort. They had no idea how correct they would be. In the next chapter, we will explore the effectiveness of the coordination between intelligence and PSYOP.

5

Coordination of Intelligence and PSYOP, July 1965 – January 1968

Two are better than one, because they have a good regard for their toil.

Ecclesiastes 4:9

This chapter is divided into seven sections that examine the ways intelligence and PYSOP coordinated their activities. The first section provides a brief overview of the interactions of intelligence and PSYOP during this time period. The second section explores the doctrinal foundation for the interaction of intelligence and PSYOP at MACV. The third section examines the *Chieu Hoi* Program, which was the most important effort on which the two sections coordinated. The fourth section evaluates staff integration. The last three sections provide a brief summary of the chapter, an analysis of their coordination based on Garvin's test questions, and finally a net assessment of the effectiveness that coordination.

Overview of Coordination

During this period, there was little direct interaction between the MACV J2 and MACPD. The root causes were three-fold. First, Westmoreland's decision to be the *de facto* MACV J7 hampered the interaction of the two staff sections.[1] His decision made him the integration point for intelligence and

[1] MACV, *Command History 1966*, 556.

PSYOP, largely relegating the MACPD to an administrative role. This decision contributed to intelligence briefings being directed vertically rather than horizontally. His decision also retarded what would have been normal staff functions. One anecdote from April 1966 is illustrative of the role Westmoreland played as the J7.

In the early morning hours of 13 April 1966, the VC executed a well-planned attack on Tan Son Nhut airbase (TSN), aided in part by an uncoordinated and slow response from base security personnel.[2] According to MACV's official history, Westmoreland stated "that TSN Air Base remained vulnerable to mortar attack because of the built up areas and density of population in the immediate vicinity."[3] In his judgment, both population density and popular support of the VC facilitated the mortar and rocket attacks. He was convinced that the way to change the population's mind was through the targeted use of PSYOP because no amount of increased patrolling would defeat the indirect fire threat to TSN.[4] In addition to an increase in patrolling and other increased security measures, "an active psywar program was undertaken" to convince the local population not to support the VC.[5] Westmoreland's intuition about the necessity of PSYOP was insightful, but his

[2] Ibid., 202
[3] Ibid.
[4] The attack also extensively damaged both aircraft used in support of Operation Jenny. In another example of the precedence given to psychological operations, the television broadcasts were so important that the crews were provided the support required to effect repair on one of the aircraft in time to permit uninterrupted broadcasting of the two hours per day five day per week schedule. MACV, *Command History 1966*, 320.
[5] Ibid.

expectation of quick results would lead to an increased level of frustration when those expectations failed to materialize.[6]

The second cause of dysfunction was that too many entities at high levels were attempting to manage the PSYOP fight. The frequent formation of committees made it difficult for the staff-to-staff coordination necessary to integrate intelligence and PSYOP. Little interaction occurred outside of committee meetings. Newly perceived problems were "solved" by forming new committees.[7] This practice undermined normal, day-to-day, staff integration. An example of this is evidence that by the end of 1966, the J3 had to request that the J2 provide intelligence to PSYOP on enemy locations. This should have been a normal staff function, had there been a J7.

Finally, personalities played a roll. McChristian's decision to require official requests for support and his lack of enthusiasm for personal relationships hindered mutual effort among the staff sections. This barrier, coupled with PSYOP's lack of 3M readers, access to interrogation facilities, and poorly trained operators inhibited direct interaction between intelligence and PSYOP personnel.

Thus the interactions that did occur between the functions were indirect and based on an input/output transactional system, rather than normal staff functions. The MACV J2 did produce some compelling intelligence about the

[6] William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 282
[7] MACV, *Command History, 1966,* 557.

motivations, vulnerabilities, and strategies of the VC.[8] As intelligence operations expanded during 1966, several assessments led directly to changes in PSYOP tactics and messaging. Interrogation of enemy captives and *Hoi Chanh* produced assessments that meager rice rations and inadequate medicinal supplies had eroded VC combat effectiveness.[9] This analysis led to a focus on those themes in *Chieu Hoi* messages, which demonstrated coordination between the MACV J2 and the psychological operations community.

It is also clear from the JUSPAO policies issued, the leaflets delivered, and the changes to themes over the period in question that PSYOP were utilizing that intelligence. The J2 was at least marginally attempting to answer PSYOP questions about the enemy. Because there is no evidence of direct interaction, however, this was in all probability shared indirectly.

Doctrine and the Coordination of Intelligence and PSYOP

The first official manual of the US Army dates back to 1778, when the fledgling Continental Army was in relative disarray compared with the very professionally trained British Army and their Hessian mercenaries. Confronted with this significant dilemma, General Washington sought assistance from a Prussian officer, Major General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben. Baron von Steuben developed and published the *Regulations for the Order and Discipline*

[8] MACV J2, Subject: "Intelligence Estimate of the Situation Vietnam – Basic Data as of 19 March 1967", The Army Historical Education Center (AHEC), US Army War College, Carlisle, PA.
[9] *Hoi Chanh* was the Vietnamese term meaning "rallier" or "one whom returned to the righteous side" was the name given to those who rallied under the *Chieu Hoi* Program.

of the Troops of the United States, which became known as the "blue book," which was widely distributed throughout the Continental Army and remained the Army's official military guide until 1812.

From the time of the American Civil War on, the US Army developed field manuals (FM) to cover specific aspects of warfare. The need for a larger standing Army post-WWII necessitated a continual refinement of the doctrine required to support the fielding, training, and equipping an industrial-age warfare force. Two of these specializations in doctrine occurred in the fields of military intelligence and psychological operations.

Intelligence Doctrine and Coordination with PSYOP

The earliest version of *Combat Intelligence,* FM 30-5, examined in this study was dated 1940. The term PSYOP was not mentioned in the earliest edition, but military intelligence did have the responsibility of analyzing enemy propaganda. The doctrinal relationship between PSYOP and intelligence continued to develop during the four revisions published prior to 1965. Key to understanding MACV's initial operational approach toward the coordination of intelligence and psychological operations, and the fixation on enemy order of battle is the conceptual difference between *strategic* and *combat* intelligence in the 1964 edition of FM 30-5. The different requirements for *strategic* and *combat* intelligence are not merely academic quibbling; rather those differences influenced the organization, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence.

The character of the Vietnam War blurred the lines of strategic and combat intelligence. The MACV J2, as previously mentioned, was fixated on

order of battle information. This fact makes sense since the doctrinal understanding of military intelligence did not envisage the information required to support Revolutionary Development being needed at the sector level. An example from doctrine illustrates this point:

> Information from prisoners of war on political and economic conditions within the enemy area may be important in the production of strategic intelligence but of little value for combat intelligence. Information of identifications of enemy units and characteristics of enemy equipment are used in the production of both combat and strategic intelligence.[10]

By doctrine, the knowledge required by PSYOP and civic action was considered strategic intelligence. Based on Army organization, strategic intelligence was not the focus of the division through the theater level of war. According to Army doctrine therefore, MACV should not have been concerned with strategic intelligence. To MACV's credit, the J2 and the J3 recognized the shortfall and began collecting, examining, and in a limited way disseminating that intelligence.[11]

The 1964 version of *Combat Intelligence* listed military and paramilitary measures and activities related to unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency, and psychological operations. [12] It did not, however, list PSYOP or Civil Affairs officers as special staff officers from whom to gather or coordinate intelligence. Additionally, prisoners of war were noted as valuable sources of information in

[10] Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Field Manual 30-5: Combat Intelligence, Change 1: U.S. Army Doctrine.* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 19 June 1964), 6.
[11] MACV, *Command History 1966,* 557.
[12] *Army Field Manual 30-5: Combat Intelligence, Change 1*, 64.

the immediate battle area and for the effects of our psychological operations, but as previously mentioned ignored economic and political information.[13]

Doctrinally, the field army level was where a significant increase in the "non-physical" nature of intelligence lay.[14] In Vietnam however, significant S5 (Civic Action) duties were being performed on battalion level operations. These civic action operations considerably increased the intelligence required for the nonphysical characteristics of the area such as economics, politics, sociology, and psychology.

The MACV J2 structure that McChristian built and Davidson maintained was clearly based on the fundamentals of Army intelligence doctrine. While the MACV J2 did respond to specific requests for information, and even issued special intelligence studies, these were by exception and not a primary aspect of day-to-day intelligence analysis.[15]

PSYOP Doctrine and Coordination with Intelligence

Modern American PSYOP began during WWII with further refinement through Korea and the early years of the Cold War.[16] The result of that 25-year history was that the American Army entered Vietnam with a well-defined PSYOP doctrine for the first time in its history.[17]

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[13] Ibid., 21.
[14] Ibid., 14.
[15] MACV J2, Subject: "Intelligence Estimate of the Situation Vietnam – Basic Data as of 19 March 1967", The Army Historical Education Center (AHEC), US Army War College, Carlisle, PA.
[16] For an excellent discussion of the development of PSYOP from WWII through Vietnam see Susan L. Gough, "The Evolution of Strategic Influence", Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2003.
[17] Barger, "Psychological Operations Supporting Counterinsurgency", 8.

In 1965, PSYOP was doctrinally divided into two categories: strategic and tactical.[18] Strategic PSYOP was directed behind enemy lines, targeting either civilian populations or military formations. It was integrated into the overall strategic plan.[19] Tactical PSYOP was directed toward enemy troops on the front lines in support of tactical objectives.[20] One finds a similar distinction in military intelligence doctrine.

PSYOP doctrine also detailed the commander's responsibility in successful PSYOP execution. It stated that the commander's initial planning guidance should be informative enough for the staff to consider and evaluate PSYOP during the planning of their respective estimates. During the mission analysis phase, commanders should determine PSYOP objectives required to assist in accomplishing the mission. Additionally, commanders and staff officers must consider psychological aspects during all phases of military planning and their potential impacts on all courses of action.[21] Commanders in Vietnam ran the gamut from good to awful, but the ones who ignored PSYOP in their planning were in clear violation of doctrine.

Besides the tactical level directive to commanders, FM 33-1 had some very specific guidance to the higher headquarters staff sections for the strategic execution of PSYOP. Specific to our purposes are the details provided for the intelligence and operations sections. [22] While doctrine placed the responsibility

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[18] Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Field Manual 33-1: Psychological Operations,* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 18 May 1965), 48.
[19] Ibid., 48.
[20] Ibid., 50.
[21] Ibid., 8.
[22] Ibid., 9.

for integrating PSYOP intelligence with the staff intelligence officer, the following steps were required of the PSYOP officer to support that effort.

1. Formulate detailed intelligence requirements.
2. Prepare the PSYOP portion of the collection plan.
3. Present requests to the intelligence officer for collection.
4. Collect and submit intelligence through intelligence channels to the PSYOP requesting agency.
5. Record information in the PSYOP journal and workbook and on the situation map.
6. Prepare the PSYOP intelligence estimate based on the information received, to include exploitable psychological strengths and vulnerabilities.[23]

Thus, the responsibility for relevant intelligence rested squarely on the shoulders of intelligence *and* psychological operations officers. Their working together was integral to the overall effort. Without this cooperation and coordination, the "timely, accurate, and useful intelligence at all levels of command" would not occur.[24]

PSYOP intelligence was divided into two categories: background studies and current data.[25] The intelligence requirements for tactical and strategic PSYOP planning were similar in nature but different in scale.[26] Strategic PSYOP required more background studies and cultural understanding to support national level PSYOP objectives. Tactical PSYOP was more dependent on current intelligence since it frequently required quick action to exploit a fleeting target or ephemeral situation.[27]

[23] Ibid., 22-23.
[24] Ibid., 21.
[25] Ibid., 21.
[26] Ibid., 51-2.
[27] Ibid., 52.

Doctrine also stated that while PSYOP must be evaluated properly, the difficulty in distinguishing between "the effect produced on enemy morale by fire and shock action and that produced by PSYOP" was problematic.[28] Secondly, because of PSYOP's cumulative effects, many results could be latent and more difficult to discern. Again, according to Army doctrine, "because of these limitations, it is important to examine all information on the effects of friendly PSYOP."[29]

As the Army deployed to Vietnam in 1965, it did so with a solid PSYOP doctrine from which to plan, to articulate needed intelligence support, and to evaluate its efforts. PSYOP entered the fight in South Vietnam with a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of staff officers regarding that support. Westmoreland's decision to not create a J7 impeded the implementation of an otherwise solid doctrine for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP.

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The Special Case of Chieu Hoi

The most intense cooperation between intelligence and PSYOP during this period occurred in support of the *Chieu Hoi* Program (CHP), which the U.S. had proposed to the South Vietnamese as a program of reconciliation to weaken the insurgency. The Diem government was not interesting in this program however, until it learned that a similar amnesty policy in the

[28] Ibid., 54.
[29] Ibid., 54.

Philippines had produced substantial dividends.[30] In an attempt to duplicate that success, President Diem established the CHP on 17 April 1963.[31]

The CHP was designed to encourage insurgents to abandon the VC and join in the building of South Vietnam as a nation. It also aimed to undermine community and family support for the insurgents by destroying the belief that friends and family were obliged to support any relatives in the insurgency.[32] It sought to accomplish these goals by providing job training, political indoctrination and in some cases a basis for acceptance into the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN).[33]

Intelligence reports that the North Vietnamese were very concerned about the effects of the *Chieu Hoi* program on morale, recruitment and unit effectiveness also led to increased US pressure to implement the program fully. The total number of ralliers in 1965 was 11,123 - double the number of ralliers in 1964. It seemed that this effort was bearing fruit. Many factors besides increased PSYOP were likely involved, such as South Vietnamese improvements to the CHP and a concomitant change to the VC's relative position of strength. There were increased hardships in the VC's life along with more friends and family having been aided by civic action. [34]

While the CHP was lauded by the US as the most fruitful PSYOP effort, the South Vietnamese government did not enthusiastically support it. For the

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[30] Lewis Sorley, *The Vietnam War: An Assessment by South Vietnam's Generals*. (Lubbock, Tex: Texas Tech University Press, 2010), 702.
[31] *Chieu Hoi* means "Open Arms" in Vietnamese. MACV, *Command History 1966*, 558.
[32] MACV, *Command History 1965*, 452.
[33] J.M. Carrier, and C.A.H. Thompson, “Viet Cong Motivation and Morale : The Special Case of Chieu Hoi”, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1966), v.
[34] MACV, *Command History1965*, 452.

South Vietnamese, CHP was complicated. Diem had tentatively embraced the program, but following his assassination it languished as a legacy of his regime and subsequently receive little support from the GVN. Critics of the *Chieu Hoi* program complained that it was just a cover for VC to infiltrate the government, or to use the time in a CHP center as a sort of rest and relaxation or "R&R", where they would be well fed and recover from the stresses of their harsh living conditions. Then, there was concern about the reintegration of "traitors" back into society. Finally, there was the concern with lowered morale in the RVNAF. A quote by South Vietnamese Lieutenant General Dong Van Khuyen sums up this sentiment. "If the communists who killed our people and soldiers, were treated with clemency and forgiveness, they reasoned, why should the government be too harsh toward the men who, during the performance of their duties, committed the error of desertion?"[35] Many South Vietnamese military leaders believed that the CHP exacerbated desertion rates in RVNAF units because of "lenient policies towards the Chieu Hoi."[36]

Against the backdrop of these allegations, the military intelligence community published a detailed analysis of who the *Hoi Chanh* were and their likely reasons for defection.[37] The US recognized that each *Hoi Chanh* was one less VC on the battlefield and that the costs of not embracing this program would be significant in terms of US lives lost. So, the "Mission Council formed an interagency ad hoc task force to investigate the CHP and recommend

[35] Lieutenant General Dong Van Khuyen, "The RVNAF", in Sorley, The Vietnam War, 35.
[36] Sorley, *The Vietnam War,* 35.
[37] Also "Quy-Chanh".

measures which might improve the program."[38] One US estimate calculated the cost of each *Hoi Chanh* at $127, while the cost to kill each VC was $300,000.[39]

The 1966 CHP Campaign

For the start of 1966 a massive campaign was planned to support defections during the Tet holiday at the end of January.[40] This was planned to be the "greatest PSYOP effort every (sic) conducted in the Vietnam War" with saturation of CHP messages planned for 9-20 January.[41] JUSPAO and MACV worked together to ensure that the 92 million leaflets were delivered in time to support the program. This campaign required carefully orchestrated logistical planning and execution, because three-quarters of the leaflets and other PSYOP materiel were produced on mainland Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines and then flown into South Vietnam.[42]

Both RVNAF and MACV conducted a multi-media command information campaign to educate field commanders on the program. US officials were encouraged by the initial results, with the daily return rate at the end of Tet nearly doubling the pre-TET numbers (eighty-four up from forty-five). Ambassador Lodge even noted that Premier Ky who seemed lukewarm as late

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[38] The plan they developed included more US support, the construction of regional CHP centers in each corps and changes to operational procedures. Additionally, six USAID advisors and four US military liaisons would be assigned in support of the program and by the end of 1965 three of the USAID advisors were on the job. The GVN agreed to construct a National *Chieu Hoi* center with scheduled completion in early 1966. A lack of qualified contraction bids delayed construction of the regional centers. MACV, *Command History 1965*, 452.
[39] Bob Considine, "Pacification cadres", (Philadelphia Inquirer, 19 SEP 1967), cited in Frank L. Goldstein and Benjamin F. Findley. *Psychological Operations Principles and Case Studies*, (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala: Air University Press, 1996), 100.
[40] MACV, Command History 1965, 453.
[41] MACV, Command History 1966, 558.
[42] MACV, Command History 1965, 559.

as August 1965 now seemed enthusiastic. Unfortunately, the early enthusiasm was premature. Of the returnees during Tet nearly 2,762 civilian refugees had been counted in the numbers. Even so, a large number of returnees cited "Chieu Hoi appeals as an important factor in their decisions."[43]

In early February, PSYWAR authorities conducted a preliminary appraisal of the campaign and recommended more extensive support be given to tactical units. The progress of the CHP was closely monitored, and in what was taken as a sign of success, several higher-ranking returnees including an NVN first lieutenant and a VC regional force platoon leader rallied in mid-March.[44] Additionally, VC terrorist attacks against *Chieu Hoi* centers increased during the same time frame, which was assessed as indicating the potential threat that the CHP posed to the VC.[45] Additional defections in April of political cadre seemed to indicate a further decline in enemy morale. These issues moved the GVN to provide greater support to CHP through its Ministry of Information and *Chieu Hoi* (MICH).[46]

During April, a Joint *Chieu Hoi* PSYOP committee was formed comprised of JUSPAO, USAID, MACV, MICH and GPWD representative. This group prepared a combined GVN/US PSYOP campaign for May of nine standard leaflets with fifty million copies slated for delivery from US Army printing facilities on Okinawa and Japan. Unfortunately, as this effort was getting under way new CHP numbers came in for April reflecting a drop in numbers.

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[43] Ibid., 559.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 560.

The average daily rate of seventy-four in February and March (adjusted down to account for previous errors) dropped to fifty-four for April.[47] This drop in numbers alarmed Washington authorities who immediately sought additional information about the program in an attempt to analyze the perceived failure.[48] Officials in Saigon viewed the results differently. The numbers had dropped, but establishing causal effect was complicated. Many improvements were under way including improved GVN attitude and increased information saturation about the CHP across the South. Time had also distanced the "Diem taint" from the program and leaders in GVN were more willing to embrace the concept.[49] Change in GVN was slow, opined Saigon officials, and the drop in *Chieu Hoi* rates on a month-to-month basis was not necessarily a cause for alarm.

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The RAND Study

In May 1966 the RAND corporation, under the direction of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs and the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), released a report on VC motivation and morale.[50] Its findings served as a basis for both continuing and bolstering the program. This study utilized 302 interviews as well as the biographical data on 1,348 ralliers to understand the motivation and morale issues associated with the CHP.[51] By the end of 1966, 20,242 *Hoi Chanh* rallied to the GVN,

[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 561.
[50] Carrier and Thompson, "Viet Cong Motivation and Morale".
[51] Carrier and Thompson, "Viet Cong Motivation and Morale", v.

which was double the number in 1965.[52] The majority of ralliers came from the delta region of CTZ IV, which supplied forty-nine percent of the ralliers from 1963-1965.[53] Most of these ralliers were low-level troops, however.

The RAND report found that the chief factors for rallying were a sense of the growing hardships suffered by the VC, the growing sense of war weariness and disappointment at the VC's unfulfilled promises, polices, and actions, and a growing favorable perception of the CHP.[54] Additionally, some VC had been forcibly conscripted, some were eager to escape airstrikes, and others mentioned a growing disillusionment with VC tactics, their long-term proposition of success or the death of a loved-one/relative at the hands of the VC. These findings were subsequently placed into PSYOP themes. Interestingly, the RAND study found that even long-term indoctrination "did not preclude this relatively easy transfer of loyalty, especially where self-interest was involved."[55] Remembering that these were often the same pool of recruits from which the GVN drew its soldiers, it is understandable to see why the GVN organized its PSYWAR Battalions with an internal vice external focus. Easily transferred loyalty was a two-edged sword. This Vietnamese concept of PSYWAR though would continue to cause friction with the American way of PSYOP.

RAND also delved into the particulars of how information passed to the *Chieu Hoi*. RAND found that various means should continue to be employed -

[52] MACV, Command History 1966, 558.
[53] Carrier and Thompson, "Viet Cong Motivation and Morale", vi.
[54] Ibid., vi.
[55] Carrier and Thompson, "Viet Cong Motivation and Morale", 1966, ix.

but that often friend, family, or fellow-soldier played the critical role.[56] Only seventy-four percent knew about *Chieu Hoi* prior to rallying, and of those who had heard of the program many were often convinced or reassured by relatives. Twenty-six percent rallied on blind faith. Importantly, when the VC member's personal experience contradicted GVN propaganda the credibility of PSYOP messages declined. Deeds and words need to tell the same story to maximize the effect on the VC, or in Latin - *facta non verba*.

Coordinated Chieu Hoi Support

In July 1966 a J2 intelligence officer was assigned to full-time duty to USAID Saigon to coordinate the exploitation of the *Hoi Chanh*. Additionally, three military officers were assigned coordination duty at the Corps level, and a fourth officer was slated for the same assignment. Each of the CTZ would now have a J2 officer specifically focused on coordinating the intelligence gleamed from interrogations of *Hoi Chanh*.[57] Westmoreland "felt that the MACV sub-sector advisory teams were hard-pressed to meet all their responsibilities, which included support for the CHP, but he assured the Deputy Ambassador that they would provide all possible assistance within their capabilities."[58]

Leaflet production was now at sixty million per month, with twenty new leaflets. An additional thirty-five different loudspeaker tapes had been developed with 3,000 copies distributed to the now twenty-four loudspeaker planes as part of the 5th Air Commando Squadron and other PSYOP operations.

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[56] Ibid., xi.
[57] MACV, Command History 1965, 561.
[58] MACV, Command History 1965, 564.

Radio Saigon had daily CH programing as well as a weekly segment on the Voice of Freedom. JUSPAO cultural drama teams, and films (in production) were also in use that had CHP themes.[59]

After a 27 July 1966 press conference, in which Gen Tri, the new leader of MICH, promulgated that CH would be guided by the goals of national solidarity, governmental responsive to public opinion, and respect for the law, discussion and negotiations with rival political and dissident groups, and growing recognition for basic rights and freedom of thought by citizens, gradual development of a society of responsible individuals and groups. After this talk, Washington authorities were again enthralled by the program and directed that the program be a top priority for 1967 with a greatly expanded role.[60] Piaster funding for the program would need to be increased in 1967. MACV planned to improve support to the program by increasing local tactical PSYOP support to aid in inducements, stream-line the surrender process, and improve interrogation techniques at the point of defection, similar to the Malayan experience "in PSYOP, counterintelligence, and combat patrols."[61]

In another example of intelligence and PSYOP collaboration efforts, yet another change was made to the appeals. A test poster was prepared in early August with fifty photos and names of known VC with appeals to the peasants to contact them and attempt to convince them to defect. The mission council also commenced study on ways to get en entire VC unit to defect. A mid-

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 562.
[61] Ibid., 563.

August high-level returnee suggested that appeals currently worked well with low-ranking VC, but failed to sway VC cadre. The suggested that the cadre should be targeted based on "varying rights and privileges among the different ranking cadres and the inconsistencies and dissections between castes of northern and southern origins."[62]

During July and August, MACV intelligence analysts found several indications of VC concern with the CHP: assassinations of *Hoi Chanh*, orders for more assassinations, VC plans to attack *Chieu Hoi* centers, espionage targeting CHP, captured documents describing VC plans for countering CHP propaganda, and ground fire at aircraft on PSYWAR missions in areas which had previously been quiet.[63] Further indications that the CHP was successful came in early September when intelligence reporting indicated that the VC were organizing to train draft dodgers to use CHP and become espionage agents and instructing VC to use CHP "safe conduct" passes to surrender when escape was impossible.[64]

By the end of 1966, MACPD, JUSPAO and MICH were working together closely on the planned CHP for the next Tet holiday of 8-12 February 1967. Based on the improvements and increase in PSYOP coupled with the increased military operations into former VC strongholds - there was much hope moving into 1967 that improvements and numbers would continue. This enthusiasm

[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 564.
[64] Ibid.

was also based on the perception of GVN's increased support for the program and improved treatment of ralliers.[65]

Lofty Expectations for the New Year

MACV planners began 1967 with a goal of 45,000 ralliers, but concluded that an additional 50,000 could be enticed if the program were properly administered, so a goal of 95,000 was set for the year. The number of ralliers during the first five months of the year did not meet initial expectations, however, and so in June of 1967, CORDS enlisted the assistance of a US Commercial firm to study *Chieu Hoi* and find ways to improve the effectiveness of the program.[66]

The firm found that mismanagement and lack of focus, particularly on the GVN side, were the most acute problems. The *Chieu Hoi* Directorate along with MACV and MICH conferred to agree upon a roadmap of solutions and developed recommendations that included establishing a 10 million piaster *Chieu Hoi* contingency fund, building adequate *Chieu Hoi* centers, increasing the number of US *Chieu Hoi* advisors, employing more *Chieu Hoi* as Kit Carson Scouts, and developing a greater quick-reaction PSYOP capability.[67] These suggestions were not new. In order for the program to be effective it required adequate funding and follow-through on the part of GVN.

[65] Ibid., 567.
[66] The firm is unnamed in MACV's history. MACV, Command History 1967 Volume II, 599.
[67] Ibid., 600.

By September 1967, the *Chieu Hoi* rate fell far short of expectations, so a revised goal of 34,000 was established.[68] The preoccupation with metrics partially undermined proper analysis. While the numbers did not match the inflated goals proposed by MACV back in January, the VC were altering their operations to counter the CHP. The VC threatened family members of those who defected to discourage would be ralliers. The VC reorganized into three-man cells with each man watching the other two at all times so that if one man defected the other two were accused of being accomplices and severely punished.[69] The CHP was eroding trust within the VC and while this is a difficult metric to quantify, it is certainly inline with the PSYOP goal of eroding the enemy's morale.

Unfortunately, by year's end only 20 of 53 *Chieu Hoi* projects were completed. The GVN had significant difficulties in implementing concrete support to the CHP.[70] A key lesson from 1967 was that the burden shifted from the reception of the *Hoi Chanh* to their care, feeding, training, and rehabilitation.[71] The number of *Hoi Chanh* for 1967 was 27,178; an increase over 1966 numbers but still far short of the goal of 95,000.

Progress Report on Staff Integration

Westmoreland was not satisfied with the amount of progress evident by MACV's psychological operations. On several occasions, he had directed

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid., 601.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., 602.

assessments by the MACV J5, the RAND Corporation and ARPA. In a response to his clear dissatisfaction, on 3 August 1966, the Political Warfare Advisory Directorate was renamed the Psychological Operations Directorate (PSYOP Directorate or MACPD) and remained organized under the MACV J3, but it was granted direct access to the MACV Chief of Staff (CoS or CofS) and COMUSMACV when appropriate. This reorganization was an attempt to fix what was perceived as a problem with PSYOP effectiveness. By late August MACPD reported a curiously upbeat assessment of the immediate effects of the reorganization. The report stated:

> Closer integration of intelligence and PSYWAR activities had been accomplished. J2 MACV had intensified its coordination with the PSYOP staff and JUSPAO, and had begun to conduct propaganda analysis and evaluation of enemy psychological strengths and weaknesses, assessment of PSYOP effects, and dissemination of information concerning PSYOP opportunities gathered by intelligence agencies.[72]

McChristian also noted that the MACV J2 was supportive of PSYOP requirements and that his staff section "devoted considerable emphasis to devising feasible means of obtaining defections among the top-level Viet Cong cadres and North Vietnamese military forces and sought to induce entire units to rally to the government of Vietnam."[73] The MACV J2 supported other efforts, aimed at reducing the efficiency and morale of VC and NVN units. It offered generous rewards for "information leading to the capture of high-ranking Communist officials."[74] Returnee rates increased as rewards increased, and

[72] Ibid., 557
[73] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence, 1965-1967*, 54.
[74] Ibid.

funding mechanisms were put in place for commanders to offer cash for weapons and supply caches. The result of these efforts was an increase in sources. But further analysis on the part of the MACV J2 determined that by 1966 only 10% of *Hoi Chanh* were being exploited for either intelligence or psychological purposes.[75] McChristian did note, however, that the CDEC and the Combined Materiel Exploitation Center (CMEC) analyzed propaganda materials, which were then forwarded to the appropriate psychological warfare agencies.[76]

While McChristian cited incidents of cooperation and support from intelligence to PSYOP, the 7th PSYOP Group report from November 1967 was not so sanguine. PSYOP personnel did not have access to the 3M Reader Printers needed for Combined Document Exploitation Center (CDEC) use. Thus, they were unable to mine that vein of intelligence.[77] Additionally, as late as mid-1967 both the 6th PSYOP BN and 7th PSYOP Group requested that MACV J2 place them on its distribution lists, but no action had been taken because the requests were not relayed to the correct section of the MACV J2.[78] The study also found that PSYOP intelligence unit interrogators were not being granted access to military interrogation facilities.[79] PSYOP specialists were

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 20.
[77] 7th Psychological Operations Group. *Report on Psychological Operations Intelligence in Vietnam*, Headquarters, 7th Psychological Operations Group, Target Analysis Section, 15th PSYOP Det (STRAT), 7th PSYOP Group, (APO S.F., 96248, 17 November 1967), 10.
[78] Ibid., 1.
[79] 6th PSYOP BN had two psychological operations interrogators who were supposed to have access to the interrogation facilities (according to DA PAM 33-1), but did not have official access to MACV J2 interrogation facilities. 7th Psychological Operations Group. *Report on Psychological Operations Intelligence in Vietnam*, Headquarters, 7th Psychological Operations

required because J2 analysts were consumed with the collection of order-of-battle information, and often either missed or ignored intelligence of psychological value. The study also found that at the tactical level, PSYOP intelligence-analysis teams were attached to S2 sections, but that S2s were consumed with determining enemy order-of-battle and "besides telling the PSYOP officer 'an enemy unit location so he can drop some leaflets upon them' there is little else they are useful for."[80] Thus, compartmentalization, bureaucratic jealousies, and misunderstandings prevented proper implementation of the guidance issued by MACV. Additionally, tactical units were carrying PSYOP intelligence personnel on their rosters; but they were using them as printers, motor sergeants, and supply sergeants rather than having them work in intelligence.[81]

JUSPAO also had significant problems. Only one man in its field-development division was authorized to view classified material. The "men responsible for planning JUSPAO activities just don't see much materials themselves, and consequently do not base their planning of psychological operations upon a direct knowledge of the intelligence information base."[82] The research and analysis section of JUSPAO did not have a 3M Reader Printer either and so could not access the CDEC information. It instead used a cumbersome manual system for managing intelligence. The study also found

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Group, Target Analysis Section, 15th PSYOP Det (STRAT), 7th PSYOP Group, (APO S.F., 96248, 17 November 1967), 2 and 10.
[80] Ibid., 9.
[81] Ibid., 13.
[82] Ibid., 1-C.

problems with the collection, dissemination, storage, analysis, and personnel management of PSYOP intelligence.[83]

The MACV J2 represented one source of problems and bureaucratic "red tape." McChristian emphasized cumbersome procedures over personal relationships, and in one reported instance prohibited J2 support to PYSOP personnel outside of official channels for a period of several months.[84] In sum, three years worth of multiple studies, recommendations, and changes had failed to create the necessary staff functions for successful integration of intelligence and PSYOP. The evidence did not support leader's reports that integration was routine and successful.

Lessons Learned

As early as 1962, the Military Advisory Assistance Group (MAAG) and later MACV established a lessons-learned program to share insights gained within the theater with the institutional Army and over the course of their combined history published eighty-three lessons-learned bulletins. This effort represented a robust lessons-learned program. The topics ranged from counter-ambush techniques to Vietnamization. From July 1965 - January 1968, MACV issued seven lessons learned reports.[85] These reports covered platoon, battalion, brigade, combat service support, and large military campaign lessons. A review of these reports reveals several items specific to intelligence and PSYOP.

[83] Ibid., 1.
[84] Harry D. Latimer, *U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam* Monograph on National Security Affairs. (Providence, R.I.: Brown University, 1973), 16.
[85] Their content will be examined in a later section of this chapter.

The Brigade commander's lesson learned report indicates that the staff functions of the S2, S3, and S5 were not integrated. He stated that the role of the S2 was specifically to find the enemy, while the S5 determined civic action and PSYWAR functions.[86] This particular commander further mentioned that his own role as the Brigade commander was to find the enemy. Clearly, he did not see himself in the role of the leader of PSYOP within his unit. This report was only one Brigade commander's observations, but it was the one chosen by MACV to publish and disseminate as a significant lessons learned report.

The difference between the brigade and battalion reports was also striking. The Battalion commander stated, "In guerrilla warfare, it is almost impossible to separate tactical military intelligence from political intelligence," and that "everyone (ARVN, National Police and U.S.) must have access to all available information."[87] It would seem that these two commanders were involved in very different fights. The brigade was fighting a conventional fight and the battalion was fighting a counterinsurgency.

Two other lessons from these documents are key to our exploration of the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. The first is the observation that "the area scheduled for pacification must be assigned far enough in advance to permit development of PSYWAR and civic action programs by the designated

[86] Operations Report - Lessons Learned 6-67 - "Observations of a Brigade Commander", Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 27 December 1967, 32.
[87] Operations Report - Lessons Learned 4-67 - "Observations of a Battalion Commander", Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 7 June 1967, 4.

unit prior to its commitment."[88] The second is like it stating, "pre-planned PSYWAR program specifically tailored to the target area," must be included in the overall operational concept for the operation.[89] PSYOP was viewed as an afterthought, despite the insistence by Westmoreland of its significance. It was not routinely being integrated with either intelligence or other staff functions. Additionally, the reports from one major operation cited the lack of a ground loudspeaker system, problems with maintenance on the heliborne loudspeaker system, and success in the distribution of five thousand leaflets.[90]

MACV Metrics

Metrics reported in USARV quarterly command reports offer valuable insights into what data the command deemed important. The first command-progress report in the archives is from the 2nd quarter (January 1966 to March 1966). It reported that 2,042,200 leaflets were dropped, 64,112 Vietnamese received medical treatment, and 987 construction projects were completed. The last two were considered Psychological Actions (PSYACT). Their intent was clear from the Civic Action section's three objectives: to improve the living condition of the people in order to remove the underlying causes of the insurgency; to gain and maintain the support of the people for the GVN and the FWMAF; and to assure that the arrival or continued stationing of US units in an area

[88] Operations Report - Lessons Learned 7-66, Operations Cocoa Beach and Happy Valley, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 11 August 1966.
[89] Operations Report - Lessons Learned 7-66, Operations Cocoa Beach and Happy Valley, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 11 August 1966, 24.
[90] Operations Report - Lessons Learned 7-66, Operations Cocoa Beach and Happy Valley, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 11 August 1966, 22.

would be welcomed by the Vietnamese. These were all psychological effects. Over time, these programs increased in scope and sought to gain the support, loyalty and respect of the Vietnamese people for their government.[91]

For the 3rd quarter (April 1966 – June 1966), the number of PSYOP leaflets increased dramatically from about two million to about seventeen million. Community Relations Committees and Friendship Councils were formed to identify community problems and provide a mechanism for US/FWMAF-GVN solutions. USARV also reported an increased emphasis on coordination with appropriate GVN officials through USMACV advisory personnel and USAID and JUSPAO. USARV began conducting province-level surveys, with initial results indicating an improvement in public support of the GVN and appreciation of the US military presence. Vietnamese Brigadier General Tran Dinh Tho agreed with this assessment. He stated that Civic Action had earned sympathy from the population because it demonstrated that the US cared about the people by repairing roads, and "building bridges, schools, maternity wards and dispensaries."[92] Additionally, US forces rarely "incurred criticism since they carried out with zeal MACV directives to 'limit to the maximum extent casualties and damages to the civilian population.'"[93] Survey results and perspectives offered by South Vietnamese allies reinforced the twin notions that the population could be convinced to support the GVN

[91] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, "Command Progress Report 2nd Quarter FY 66", Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives, Washington, DC, 160.04.
[92] Dinh Tho Tran, "Pacification", (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1980), www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA324682, accessed 19 May 2015, 65.
[93] Ibid.

and that the struggle for their allegiance was a zero-sum game - GVN gains were seen as VC losses, and vice-versa. These observations contributed to the view that MACV could easily pacify villages and transfer the people's allegiance to GVN. MACV was applying a conventional warfare mentality to a revolutionary warfare construct.[94]

Similar trends continued into the 4th quarter (July 1966 – September 1966), as leaflet drops increased to over one hundred million without detailed analysis on their effectiveness. The last report of 1966 had more emphasis on the Revolutionary Development (RD) Program and the surrounding publicity that "must emphasize the role of the GVN and subordinate that of US/FWMAF."[95]

It is clear from these and subsequent quarterly reports that MACV sought to measure what it knew about itself and the enemy in the functions of intelligence and PSYOP. It had developed a robust lessons-learned program and facilitated the sharing of that information across units in Vietnam and back to the United States. While it did not have a policy titled "Learning Agenda," it met the behaviors one would expect from an organization with a learning agenda. It thus met the first criterion on Garvin's test, though it did so imperfectly.

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[94] Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An; Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 228-9.
[95] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, "Command Progress Report 1st Quarter FY 67", Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives, Washington, DC.

Intelligence Assessments' Effects on PSYOP

According to MACV's official command history, US intervention "in late 1965 and early 1966 inhibited the shift by the VC into their final phases."[96] The cumulative effects of endemic malaria, air strikes, personal hardships and prolonged conflict also seriously eroded enemy morale. Interrogations and enemy document exploitation revealed that from the VC perspective, "psychologically speaking, the use of B-52's by the enemy for bombing, along with an extensive propaganda program considerably lowered the morale of cadre and [the] mass[es]."[97]

This situation was particularly true for the NVA soldier who had endured long, forced marches on meager rations and was geographically separated from his family. VC members could at least return to their villages and families and often operated in areas near their homes. The NVA soldier did not have that luxury. MACV intelligence assessed that all of these factors contributed to a deteriorating morale among the VC and NVN units in South Vietnam.[98] But, despite the reports of low morale, there were no indications of pending large-unit defections or significant weakening of enemy soldiers' will to fight.[99] Westmoreland laments this fact in his autobiography, in which he wrote "mass

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[96] MACV, *Command History 1966*, 21.
[97] Ibid., 396 See also Project CHECO, "Psychological Operations by USAF/VNAF in SVN",14
[98] Throughout much of 1965, the enemy believed that the final phase of their push to Saigon was about to commence. They had a string of several major victories against the ARVN, which including defeating several elite ARVN Ranger units in *Bien Gia*. MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 18.
[99] NVN troops in the north were neither given an accurate picture of the situation in the south, nor of the Americans' fighting prowess. Intelligence reporting indicated that the difference between expectation and experience degraded morale, and provided a fertile opportunity for PSYOP. General Westmoreland had commented on his disappointment at the lack of any mass defections in his autobiography, so this was something that MACV was definitely seeking to cause with their psychological operations effort. MACV, *Command History 1966*, 19.

surrenders never developed despite our intense psychological warfare efforts, which apparently could not overcome the enemy's intensive indoctrination."[100] The expectation of large unit defections as a measure of effectiveness caused the J2 and MACPD to overlook the effect PSYOP was having on the morale of the VC and NVA.

In addition to analysis of enemy psychological vulnerabilities, the MACV J2 sought to understand the VC/NVN propaganda plan intended to undermine the upcoming GVN elections. To this end, the MACV J2 utilized a variety of both high-tech and low-tech methods. One of the low-tech methods was monitoring and analyzing NLF radio transmissions. One broadcast on the VC Liberation Radio from 25 Jul 1966 ostensibly by the NLF President, indicates that the NVN/VC were executing a forward-thinking plan and seeking to counter the GVN/FWMAF efforts well in advance of the planned elections in the fall.[101] The NVN/VC framed the narrative to resonate with the South Vietnamese people's understanding of foreign interference. From this and other methods, the MACV J2 assessed that the NVN/VC would:

1) Conduct intense propaganda efforts using leaflets and radio
2) Conduct organized demonstrations
3) Exploit religious and regional differences
4) Intimidate candidates and voters
5) Attack or block the routes to the polling places
6) Threaten death to voters and candidates[102]

Foreknowledge of enemy intentions afforded the PSYOP community the time necessary to formulate a counter-strategy, and provided the GVN a chance

[100] William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 282.
[101] Ibid., 5.
[102] Ibid., 55.

to demonstrate its effectiveness. JUSPAO could exploit, counter, or mitigate the enemy's plan through targeted PSYOP, however, there does not appear to be any evidence that JUSPAO directly acted on this intelligence assessment.

Mixed Progress on Intelligence of PSYOP Value

Intelligence functions had a broad mandate, and support to psychological operations was just one. The J2's primary mission was to understand enemy order of battle. The J2 produced intelligence of PSYOP value, but the combined lack of dedicated intelligence analysts and properly trained PSYOP personnel made the process of synthesizing the intelligence difficult. Because there were not any sections dedicated to PSYOP requirements, aside from those J2 officers dedicated to supporting CHP, the PSYOP intelligence officer was required to work with all of the intelligence divisions to get his various intelligence needs fulfilled. For example, if there were a leaflet drop scheduled, the meteorology officer had to be consulted about wind speed, wind direction, cloud cover, and chance of precipitation. For the same operation, the intelligence division had to be consulted regarding the location of VC forces. PSYOP required a detailed process to find the right information and synthesize it to make it useful.

Functionally, this worked well for the J2 but added to the complexity of gleaning useable intelligence for the prosecution of PSYOP. One illustration of this phenomenon is illustrated by an enemy document translated by the JGS J2 in 1964. This document, which analyzed troop morale from the enemy's perspective, identified areas for possible PSYOP exploitation; but it required

psychological operations training or guidance to see the pattern. The VC leaders were working to indoctrinate their soldiers against privation. They also sought to dissuade older, demoralized soldiers with families from defecting. Thus, the document detailed their plans to slander the RVNAF by making up stories of massacres, distorting draft policies, and raising hatred of Americans.[103] Other examples were readily available within the J2. But these resources required dedicated analysts to find them, piece together the research and analysis, and then plan to counter the enemy's efforts. The nexus of intelligence and PSYOP required specialists at each level, from the national down to the village. Captured enemy documents such as one cited above indicate that the VC were thinking in an integrated manner about such issues, but that the Americans were not.[104]

Throughout 1966, the MACV Political Warfare Advisory Directorate continued to advise and develop PSYOP/Civic Action for MACV, while also advising RVNAF's GPWD. As US forces' missions expanded in South Vietnam so did the PSYOP structure required to support them. MACPD remained subordinate to the MACV J3 and conducted staff supervision of all of the

[103] *Chieu Hoi* was the amnesty program designed to sap the strength of the *Viet Cong* by offering a means of reconciliation for both *Viet Cong* and NVN soldiers. The *Kit Carson Scout* (KCS) program, the *Armed Propaganda Team* (APT) concept, and the *Bounty* program were three related programs that also sought to undermine VC and NVN efforts, and were related to the nexus of psychological operations and military intelligence. While the start of the KCS, APT, and Bounty programs occurred in this time period, they came to fruition in the next and are therefore explored in Part II.

[104] Report on Troops' morale and regimental activities of 18th Anti Aircraft Battalion, Republic of Vietnam Ministry of Defense J2/High Command, Translated by MACV J2, 1964, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472_6075019665_Box 2.

command's US PSYOP units.[105] MACPD supported broad national initiatives with the majority effort devoted to supporting the *Chieu Hoi* Program. It also served as the nexus for strategic and tactical PSYOP, supporting several quick-reaction operations, military operations, medical civic action programs (MEDCAP), and other civic action programs. The year's major events illustrate the changes made during 1966.[106]

Through the first six months of 1966, several PSYOP efforts were intensified.[107] The first was a CHP campaign, centered on the 9-20 January 1966 Tet holiday.[108] The operation's large scale overwhelmed the air resources originally allocated for support. This required that four additional HC/C-47s and twelve additional U-l0s be borrowed from other squadrons to support the broadcast, loudspeaker, and leaflet missions. During the 12-day Tet period more than 130 million leaflets were dropped and 380 hours of airborne loudspeaker time were performed. Furthermore, 1,346 hours of aerial broadcast were aired during 559 missions. The VC leadership did not like the PSYOP messages as evidenced by the fact that nine PSYOP aircraft were hit by

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[105] MACV, *Command History, 1965*, 554.
[106] MACV history divides PSYOP campaigns into four categories: continuing PSYOP campaigns, Fact Sheet Operations, Trail Campaign, and operations in Cambodia.
[107] These campaigns were *Chieu Hoi* in January targeting familial ties during Tet; ARC LIGHT and the Trail Campaign in February targeting military and civilians who maintained the *Ho Chi Minh* Trail; the NVA Campaign in April targeting its citizens' support to the Communist regime; and TALLY-HO in July targeting infiltrating North Vietnamese troops. These PSYOP efforts complemented ongoing combat operations as well as the Military Civic Action Programs (MILCAP). MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 633.
[108] *Chieu Hoi* was the amnesty program designed to sap the strength of the Viet Cong by offering a means of reconciliation for both Viet Cong and NVN soldiers. The *Kit Carson Scout* program, the *Armed Propaganda Team* concept, and the *Bounty* program were three related programs that also sought to undermine VC and NVN efforts, and were related to the nexus of psychological operations and military intelligence.

ground fire, and one man was wounded. It was, to that date, the largest PSYOP program carried out by US Forces.[109]

The MACPD had correctly assessed that the enemy was vulnerable during Tet and that familial and reconciliation themes would resonate with at least some of the VC. The MACV J2 had also accurately identified enemy locations. PSYOP were built around this accurate intelligence. The initial results were a near doubling of returnee rates from a pre-Tet daily average of forty-five *Hoi Chanh* to a post-Tet daily average of eighty-four.[110] These results would continue throughout the year with a net eighty-two percent increase in returnees in 1966 over 1965.[111] Contributing factors to this increase included "greater stability of the GVN, improvements within the *Chieu Hoi* administrative structures, the increased PSYOP efforts and the military pressure which continued to deprive the VC/NVA of their food, ammunition, and safe haven areas."[112]

Throughout the remainder of 1966, based on existing intelligence about enemy vulnerabilities, the MACPD continued to target infiltrating NVN personnel using the themes of B-52 lethality, the dangers of and treatments for malaria, and separation from families.[113] Intelligence reporting indicated that B-52 bombings brought terror into the hearts of VC and NVN soldiers. This

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[109] Project CHECO, "Psychological Operations by USAF/VNAF in SVN",16.
[110] MACV, *Command History 1966*, 559.
[111] Ibid., 558
[112] Ibid., 558
[113] Also seeking to capitalize on the effect, I CTZ coordinated to have leaflets dropped by a 5th Air Commando squadron C-47 within four hours of B-52 strikes to exploit these assessed post-blast vulnerabilities. This is an improvement in the coordination of PSYOP with other staff sections and CTZs in addition to the intelligence sections. MACV, *Command History 1965*, 567.

intelligence was disseminated through the command, and combined B-52 strikes and targeted leaflet operations were expanded in February 1966 to the Tay Ninh Province.[114]

The MACV J2 organization utilized a wide variety of information and analytical techniques to develop timely, accurate intelligence. One aspect of this variety was evident in an incident that occurred during Operation Junction City, which commenced on 22 February 1967 and included units of the American II Field Force, Vietnam, and ARVN's III Corps. During the operation a large amount of film was captured, consisting of positives, negatives, undeveloped film and blank film. This film was processed and analyzed by the Combined Document Exploitation Center (CDEC) and combined into sixty-five reels of varying lengths of five to thirty minutes. This collection was an enormous boon to the order of battle effort, as it provided visual identification of individuals in the VC hierarchy. It also had psychological operations value, leading the MACV J2, in co-operation with the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office, to compile five of the films into a 35-minute composite with an English commentary.[115] Visually identifying individuals in the VC hierarchy prevented them from continuing to hide among the population. JUSPAO was also able to use some of the intelligence exploitation generated from operations such as Junction City, which could then be used to bolster support for similar operations in the future. The identification of VC leaders was also assessed to have demoralized VC forces.

[114] MACV, *Command History, 1966,* 568.
[115] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, 55.

Summary

Doctrine, directives, and policy all stated the need for a coordinated approach toward PSYOP and as MACV grew as a headquarters, it increasing attempting to make that coordination a reality. The most important example of this coordination was the development and implementation of the *Chieu Hoi* Program. Throughout this phase, MACV's coordination of intelligence and PSYOP developed and expanded, but not without some struggles and misunderstandings. Intelligence was focused on finding the enemy's physical location rather than understanding the vulnerabilities of his psyche. Yet, when asked or directed MACV's intelligence section produced solid analysis that PSYOP personnel were then able to exploit.

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Analysis

Did MACV Have a Defined Learning Agenda for the coordination of Intelligence and PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Yes" for this period. While nothing in the historical record indicates that MACV had a specific plan or policy articulating a defined learning agenda, the command did seek to learn about that coordination. MACV sought metrics with which to assess progress about both itself and the enemy. Those metrics were heralded by some as a model of efficiency and derided by others as the misapplication of business methods to warfare. MACV also moved on from doctrine in its coordination, it clearly recognized the shortfall and made adjustments.

Also, according to Army doctrine MACV should not have been concerned with strategic intelligence. To MACV's credit, the J2 and the J3 recognized the shortfall and began collecting, examining, and in a limited way disseminating that intelligence.[116]

Was MACV Open to Discordant Information Involving the Coordination of Intelligence and PSYOP?

The answer to this question is "Yes" for this time period. The command was much more guarded with its intelligence estimates, than with its PSYOP estimates. However, MACV sought both external and internal critiques of the effectiveness of the CHP. MACV readily accepted many of the findings, often accepting the legitimacy of external studies *carte blanche*.

MACV actively sought outside opinions from academia, professional research institutes, and other governmental experts in relation to PSYOP. At times the discordant information seemed to come only from the commander of MACV. Westmoreland appeared not to trust the opinions of his MACPD staff. He therefore frequently sought new insights and answers to the problems he perceived the command was having in implementing his PSYOP guidance. He was also receptive to a briefing by a small cabal of officers within the CORDS section that proposed several radical changes to the PSYOP structure within MACV. Thus, MACV was open to discordant information about its PSYOP efforts, but was not open to discordant information about its intelligence estimates.

[116] MACV, Command History 1966, 557.

Did MACV Avoid Repeated Mistakes with Intelligence and PSYOP Coordination?

MACV rates a "No" during this time period. The MACV staff continued to repeat the same mistakes in organization, planning, and execution of the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. The analysis shows that MACV was capturing lessons learned in terms of enemy vulnerabilities and was also capturing tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) from the tactical level. MACV was attempting to avoid repeated mistakes. It set into place directives, policy, training, and the infrastructure to establish an institutional memory.

But despite these efforts, there were several instances of blind spots in MACV's logic: relentless pressure to produce quantifiable data; faulty criteria used to measure effectiveness; the expectation of large-scale enemy unit defections; and the lack of a J7. Here, MACV continued to make the same mistakes throughout this period. MACV also continued to have unrealistic expectations about the capabilities of PSYOP, despite solid doctrine and myriad references to the difficulties involved with the war in Vietnam.

Did MACV Avoid the Loss of Critical Knowledge When Key People in Intelligence and PSYOP Left the Command?

MACV rated a "Yes" during this time period. The most evident example of the coordination of the two functions was the CHP. The CHP continued to build upon lessons learned and continued to innovate and improve throughout the period. MACV sought to mitigate the loss of information as key people departed by establishing the senior-officer-debriefing program, the Operational Report Lessons Learned (ORLL) program, and other bureaucratic structures to

help maintain institutional knowledge. This is not to imply that personnel turnover and one-year tours did not negatively affect the staff. They did. But, MACV created a functioning staff mechanism to mitigate those effects.

Did MACV Act on What it Knew about Intelligence and PSYOP Coordination?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this time period. MACV commissioned several internal and external studies to this end, and acted on many of their recommendations. MACV increased the means of production and dissemination. It developed the South Vietnamese television and radio stations, and increased the size of the PSYOP effort to that of a Group. By way of comparison, the 7th PSYOP Group in Okinawa supported the rest of the Pacific Region. The greatest shortcomings of MACV during this time period were the failure to create a J7, unrealistic expectations, improper evaluation criteria, and the failure to analyze assumptions critically.[117]

This is not to say that other forms of intelligence were not processed. On the contrary, one can find many examples of value intelligence for PSYOP. The issue is a systemic one. Since there was not a systemic focus on producing intelligence of PSYOP value, the occurrences are too often by happenstance and not by design.

[117] McNamara, *In Retrospect,* 33.

Net Assessment

MACV met four of the five criteria for the interaction of intelligence and PSYOP criteria. MACV is therefore rated as **Somewhat Effective** for the interaction of intelligence and PSYOP during this time period (Table 7).

Garvin's Learning Questions	July 1965 - January 1968
	Coordination
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**+**
Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**-**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?	**+**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**+**
Total	**4**

TABLE 7 – COORDINATION OF INTELLIGENCE AND PSYOP ASSESSMENT, 1965-1967

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

6

Conclusions Phase I, July 1965 to January 1968

Killing the enemy's courage is as vital as killing his troops.
Clausewitz

The changes at MACV during the thirty months from July 1965 to January 1968 were significant. The contrast between the bleak outlook in early 1965 and the highly optimistic one at the end of 1967 was a testament to the effect that the US commitment had had on the GVN situation. The combinations of US combat power, economic assistance, detailed order-of-battle analysis, and intense psychological operations changed the balance and forced the VC/NVA to forestall movement into Phase III of their operation, the mobile semi-conventional war called for in Maoist doctrine. Westmoreland's address to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on 21 November 1967 stated that the enemy was losing control of and credibility with the populace in the South. "The enemy was dealt a mortal blow by the installation of a freely elected representative government."[1] His optimism implied that while the war was not yet over, the crossover point had been reached and victory was close.[2] This statement indicated that one of Johnson's key objectives had been met. South Vietnam was on its way to independence. Westmoreland's speech

[1] The Tet Offensive and the Media, William C. Westmoreland: Improving Vietnamese Effectiveness Speech, 21 November 1967, http://www.historyandtheheadlines.abc-clio.com/ContentPages/ContentPage.aspx?entryId=1194589&currentSection=1194544, accessed 05 January 2015.
[2] Palmer, *US Intelligence and Vietnam*, 50.

gathered little attention at the time, but would be dissected repeatedly after the unexpected VC attack of Tet 1968.

One can summarize MACV's performance in the areas of Intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination as indicated below.

Intelligence

During this phase of the war, the MACV J2 developed an impressive infrastructure to collect, analyze, and report intelligence. The section also created a debriefing program to institutionalize knowledge in order to mitigate the effects of personnel turnover. The section provided useful intelligence, which supported operations such as Junction City and new plans such as the Bounty program. Despite these successes, however, the MCV J2 remained focused on order-of-battle analysis, relied too heavily on technical means of collection, and concentrated on quantifiable indicators to the exclusion of qualitative assessments.

PSYOP

MACV developed an impressive infrastructure of PSYOP personnel, production equipment, and dissemination platforms. Nevertheless, four factors undermined PSYOP effectiveness during this phase. First, the search for a quantifiable means of measuring PSYOP effectiveness prevented MACV from effectively analyzing the qualitative data required to implement a successful psychological operations program. Thus, MACV personnel focused on measuring performance based on the number of leaflets dropped and hours of

radio and loudspeaker broadcasts, rather than on effectiveness of its messages. Second, an overreliance on technical solutions to message delivery led to the focus on mass-media solutions as a seeming panacea. MACV personnel took a "more is better" approach to message saturation. Third, the unrealistic expectation of rapid results produced PSYOP "gimmickery," which had the adverse effect of inuring the intended audiences to the messages. Finally, Westmoreland's resistance to creating a MACV J7, coupled with his habit of writing his own PSYOP messages, had the unfortunate effect of undermining the program in which he very much believed.

Coordination of Intelligence and PSYOP

MACV's coordination of intelligence and PSYOP during this phase of the war followed a similar pattern to its implementation of the two functions. Both intelligence and PSYOP worked well together to support the *Chieu Hoi* Program, which showed potential to undermine the VC/NVA. However, the instability, corruption, and ineptitude of the South Vietnamese government did not provide the positive examples upon which to entice more VC/NVA to defect. Furthermore, the program was undervalued and underfunded by the GVN. Also, while the J2 produced useful intelligence for PSYOP, it was not given systemically. The overreliance on technical means of intelligence dissemination had the unintended effect of preventing the dissemination of intelligence to the agencies that required the data. The lack of 3M readers prevented PSYOP personnel from having access to the volumes of data produced by the

intelligence section. Finally, the lack of a MACV J7 significantly hindered coordination between the intelligence and PSYOP sections.

Conclusions

The intelligence effort required to support these increased military operations swelled. Entities such as the Combined Intelligence Center Vietnam (CICV) were created to assist with the collection, analysis, and production of "timely, accurate, adequate, and usable information."[3] The intelligence effort was augmented by the latest computer technology for categorizing, sorting and analyzing the volumes of raw data generated. New and improved systems analysis techniques were employed to glean useful metrics. The entire arsenal of US technology and management expertise was put into place to support the South Vietnamese government. Great stakes were in the balance. The intelligence effort grew significantly as the MACV J2 section went from 307 to 467 authorized personnel; and the intelligence structure within South Vietnam grew to include the 525th, 135th, 149th, and 519th MI Groups.

MACV's performance, when analyzed through the lens of Garvin's criteria for a learning organization rates a Somewhat Effective as indicated in Table 3 and 8.

MACV had a *de facto* defined learning agenda. It actively sought to learn about itself and the enemy. Second, MACV clearly lost information when personnel departed. But it recognized this phenomenon and created infrastructure and procedures to mitigate the effects of the losses. While not

[3] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, 6.

fully successful, it is clear that MACV attempted to prevent adverse effects of frequent personnel turnovers. Third, MACV acted on what it knew about PSYOP and intelligence by instituting policy changes and implementing changes in staff and field procedures.

MACV attempted to avoid repeated mistakes by capturing lessons learned and sharing them, but in all three areas the command failed to act upon those lessons learned. MACV also performed poorly by not being open to discordant information related to its intelligence estimates. It was, however, open to other opinions related to PSYOP.

Because MACV met eleven of the fifteen criteria of a learning organization in the interactions of MACV J2, J3-PD, JUSPAO and PSYOP, the overall rating of these interactions during the period July 1965 to January 1968 is **Somewhat Effective** with an overall score of eleven and one-half out of fifteen possible. (See Table 8).

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Level of Effectiveness	Score for Each Level	Total Score for the Period
Very Effective	5 of 5	14-15 of 15
Somewhat Effective	4 of 5	11-13 of 15
Marginally Effective	3 of 5	8-10 of 15
Ineffective	2 of 5	4-7 of 15
Dysfunctional	1 or 0 of 5	0-3 of 15

TABLE 3 – QUANTIFICATION OF GARVIN'S LEARNING CRITERIA

Garvin's Learning Questions	July 1965 - January 1968		
	Intelligence	**PSYOP**	**Coordination**
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	**+**	**+**	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	**-**	**+**	**+**
Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	**-**	**-**	**-**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?	**+**	**+**	**+**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	**+**	**+**	**+**
Total	**3**	**4**	**4**
	Total for Time Period		**11**

TABLE 8 – MACV ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING ORGANIZATION, 1965-1967

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

Thus, by early January 1968 MACV had experienced a time of significant buildup and turbulence. It had stabilized a rapidly deteriorating situation and by the more optimistic assessments may have reached a point where it was gaining the strategic initiative against the NVA and the VC. But within a month those optimistic assessments would be called into question by a large-scale enemy offensive that became simply know as "Tet." The next major portion of the analysis will examine MACV's handling of intelligence, PSYOP, and the coordination between the two in the period before, during, and immediately after the VC's 1968 Tet Offensive.

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PHASE II

Tet Changes Everything, January 1968 to June 1969

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7

Strategic Overview, January 1968 to June 1969

One need not destroy one's enemy.
One need only destroy his willingness to engage.

Sun Tzu

This portion of the study examines the period from the start of the Tet Offensive in January 1968 through the beginning of June 1969, when President Richard Nixon announced the first phase of US forces redeployment from Vietnam. During these eighteen months, US forces reached their peak numbers topping out at over 540,000 in April 1969.[1] Over the course of the previous three years, MACV had undergone significant changes in the scale and scope of its operations. To understand the context against which Tet unfolded, let us review the prelude to Tet, the Tet Offensive, and the major events of the period.

The Prelude to Tet

On 29 October 1967, General Westmoreland issued a directive opining, "the war has passed the point at which losses inflicted on the enemy exceed his

[1] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1969*, *Volume III*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1970, L-11.

current replacement input."[2] His assessment was that the crossover point had been reached and the NVA could no longer continue to replace their losses. This directive was issued in the context of a bitter struggle between MACV and the CIA over the accuracy of enemy order of battle assessments. Here the reader should recall that Secretary of Defense McNamara had taken the unprecedented step of requesting that the CIA analyze order of battle metrics, a function that until then had been strictly within the purview of military intelligence. Westmoreland's assessment would ultimately prove to be accurate, but for a number of reasons it also became irrelevant.[3]

While MACV's relationship with the CIA soured, its relationship with the ARVN was steadily improving. One indication of this improvement was the coordination between the two in producing the Combined Campaign Plan (CCP). The CCP was published in November 1967 and provided guidance for both FWMAF and RVNAF ground operations during 1968.[4] This CCP applied the coordinated military resources of ARVN and FWMAF against those areas deemed critical to the success of GVN. It also provided for unity of effort where unity of command did not exist. The mission of ARVN and the FWMAF was "to

[2] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1968*, *Volume I*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1969, 21.
[3] Associated Press, "Ex-LBJ Aide says Westmoreland right about troop counts", The Sumter Daily Item, 17 October 1984, http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=xUT3DyvLuJwC&dat=19841017&printsec=frontpage&hl=en, Accessed 16 January 2015.
[4] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume I*, 13.

defeat the VC/NVA forces and assist the GVN to extend control throughout RVN."[5]

As New Year's 1968 approached, America entered the fourth year of the ground war in Vietnam; and MACV's command history noted that "the basic issues of the war had remained unchanged: the VC were still supported by the NVN and still sought to overthrow the GVN. The GVN was still weak and in need of external support to govern."[6] Although not anticipated by either MACV or the ARVN, 1968 would prove to be a crucial inflection point in the war, with the Tet Offensive in January 1968 and a series of "mini-Tets" in May and August.

On 17 January 1968, President Johnson stood before a joint session of Congress to deliver his State of the Union address. Three years earlier, Johnson had moved the timing of the speech to the evening, ensuring a large segment of the American public would be tuned in to hear his remarks. While this move to television prime time had amplified the reach of his "bully pulpit," it would also magnify the subsequent shock of the VC Tet Offensive. When Johnson talked to the American people about Vietnam, he did not call for more sacrifice, set an expectation of tough fighting ahead, or mention the likelihood of a looming enemy offensive. Instead, he called for patience and hope.

Johnson's speech broadly outlined progress over the past year in South Vietnam, who government had held three successful elections. According to the President, the enemy had been "defeated in battle after battle" and "the number

[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid., 1

of South Vietnamese living in areas under Government protection tonight has grown by more than a million since January of last year."[7] But despite successful GVN-led elections, heavy enemy losses, and more villages under GVN control, the North Vietnamese continued to inundate South Vietnam with men and materiel. In the face of evidence of seemingly unwavering resolve of the North Vietnamese, Johnson's delivery was upbeat, proclaiming that American resolve was steadfast and would ultimately prevail.[8]

The President continued to speak of peace, the goal of the bombing halt, and his recent visit with Pope Paul VI. Johnson stated that he shared the Pope's hope that "both sides will extend themselves in an effort to bring an end to the war in Vietnam. I have today assured him that we and our allies will do our full part to bring this about."[9] Yet, the events about to unfold over the next several weeks would unleash a seismic shift in the American political landscape. This would prove to be Johnson's last State of the Union speech. In two short months he would withdraw as a candidate from the upcoming presidential election - the first and so far only sitting president in American history to do so.

The Tet Offensive that began two weeks after Johnson's speech would fail in its primary goal of inciting a popular uprising in South Vietnam and would decimate the Viet Cong's ability to conduct combat operations. It would,

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[7] Lyndon B. Johnson, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union", 17 January 1968 http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/680117.asp, accessed 15 January 2015.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

however, succeed on a grand-strategic scale by undermining the American public's support for the war and accelerating plans for America's departure. Ironically, by the time Johnson delivered his speech on that cold January evening in Washington D.C., the initial skirmishes of the Tet Offensive had already begun.[10] Johnson's optimistic tone and his lack of forthrightness with both the Congress and the American people had painted a picture of GVN success, progress, and enemy defeat.[11] But in just over two weeks, images of the VC on the grounds of the US embassy in Saigon would fill television screens in living rooms across America - and Americans would come to believe that they had been deceived.

The Tet Offensive

Tet is short for *Tet Nguyen Dan*, a three-day long celebration of the New Year and the most important holiday of the Vietnamese year. A common ideal of the *Tet* holiday is for all Vietnamese people to share peace and harmony. Because of the importance of *Tet* within Vietnamese culture, it was traditionally a period of a temporary truce to allow families to eat together, visit temples, and briefly forget about their troubles. While there had been minor violations of the truce in the past, the expectation was that major fighting over this solemn holiday would be avoided. Therefore, the VC violation of the *Tet* truce was particularly egregious and perceived as a violation of the sacredness of the holiday. Thus, the VC attack doubly backfired. Not only did it fail in its

[10] Phillip B. Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975.* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988), 554.
[11] McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty,* 334.

objective of precipitating a general uprising against the GVN, it also deeply offended the mores of the South Vietnamese people.

The combined VC/NVA Tet Offensive, which began on 30 January 1968, was the largest military operation by either side up to that point of the war. The VC/NVA struck over a hundred towns and cities across South Vietnam, including thirty-six of the forty-four provincial capitals. Despite the initial shock at the scale of the attack, ARVN and US forces responded quickly and were able to end much of the fighting within two-three days. There were, however, pockets of resistance in cities such as Saigon and Can Tho, which continued to fight for several more days. Hue was the lone exception where the NVA held the city for almost a month.

By the end of February, the enemy had lost over 37,000 KIA.[12] US and GVN losses during Tet for this same period were a fraction of that figure, with the US suffering 1,001 KIA, 313 for Allied FMWF, and 2,082 RVNAF. Additionally, 14,300 South Vietnamese civilians were killed in the fighting.[13] Losses mounted for the VC/NVA, and by the end of March their losses totaled over 55,000 killed, two-thirds as many as in all of 1967.

According to MACV's official history, the siege of Khe Sanh, the battle for Hue City, and the ensuing Tet Offensive were "costly military failures" for the enemy.[14] Because the VC were largely ineffective as a combat force after the Tet Offensive, the North Vietnamese were forced to use PAVN regular forces to

[12] Ibid.
[13] Spencer C. Tucker, *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998), 1753.
[14] MACV, *Command History1968, Volume I,* 1

replace the losses suffered by VC units. The insurgency was at its most vulnerable point at exactly the same time that US forces were at their most potent.

The US and the GVN had an opportunity to gain the initiative by building upon both MACV and ARVN military and psychological successes. The South Vietnamese people's support of the GVN could be harnessed to create a sense of nationalism, which here-to-fore had been largely non-existent. Likewise, the defeat of the VC could be leveraged to increase the efforts of the *Chieu Hoi* program. US economic and military support to GVN would be crucial to this period. To put it in tactical terms, a commander uses his reserve to exploit success and the US could have used a reserve to exploit the opportunities presented by the VC/NVA defeat. This, however, is not what occurred.

The South Vietnamese outlook at the situation post-Tet was much more positive than that of its patron across the Pacific. The ARVN had fought well, the GVN was in a much better position than it had been prior to Tet, and the South Vietnamese people did not rise up to support the VC. In fact, in many instances the South Vietnamese became much more supportive of local defense forces.

This perception of the meaning and effect of the Tet Offensive was not shared by Washington, DC however. Where Saigon saw opportunity, Washington saw misfortune. Where Saigon had hope, Washington had despair. The difference in sentiment between the two allies could not have been starker. MACV's command history acknowledged this contrast by recognizing

that the enemy's Tet Offensive obtained "an unprecedented propaganda success abroad, particularly in the United States."[15]

Other Major Events

The Tet Offensive was only the first in a string of shocks during the tumultuous year of 1968. In March, President Johnson declined to seek reelection. In April, civil rights leader and non-violence advocate Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, setting off a series of riots in over a hundred cities across the United States.[16] In June, Robert Kennedy was assassinated while campaigning for the Democratic Party's nomination. America was undergoing a significant upheaval on the home front. Against that backdrop, Richard Nixon rode to victory on a platform of ending the war.[17]

On 10 June 1968, General Creighton W. Abrams, who had been the MACV deputy commander for the previous twelve months, assumed command from Westmoreland, who became the Chief of Staff, US Army (CSA). Abrams came to the position with an impressive resume. After graduating from USMA in 1936, he served with the 1st Cavalry Division. Later in 1940, he transferred from the Cavalry to the armor branch and commanded a tank company in the 1st Armored Division. He served under General Patton and was highlighted in a story written by Will Lang, Jr.[18] The story appeared in *Life* on 23 April 1945,

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[15] Ibid.,131
[16] "Martin Luther King Jr. Assassination", http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/martin-luther-king-jr-assassination, accessed 23 March 2015.
[17] Tom Curry, "In 1968, Democratic split helped Nixon win", 29 September 2008, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/26840327/ns/politics/t/democratic-split-helped-nixon-win/#.VRBm_1xcSbA, accessed 23 March 2015.
[18] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 576.

and quoted General Patton saying of Abrams: "I'm supposed to be the best tank commander in the Army, but I have one peer — Abe Abrams. He's the world champion."[19] During World War II, Abrams was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross twice - an award second only to the Medal of Honor.

Following the war he served on the Army General Staff and later as head of the tactics department at the Armor School. Following a variety of school, staff, and command assignments, he served as the CofS of I, X, and IX Corps in Korea from 1953-1954. He next served as CofS of the Armor Center, 3rd Armored Division Commander, and V Corps Commander. Abrams was promoted to general in 1964 and appointed as Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. He was assigned as General Westmoreland's deputy in May 1967.

The change of command between Westmoreland and Abrams is another important inflection point of the war. Some debate regarding the performance of MACV centers on the differences between these two commanders. While the contrast between them is not the primary focus of this work, it is helpful to explore briefly the context of the arguments.

Lewis Sorley has argued that General Abrams made a clean break from the policy of attrition and radically changed the mission of American Forces. Sorley argues that following Abrams change of command the "tactical approach underwent immediate and radical revision."[20] While claiming a change in strategy, there does not appear to be a discernible difference after Abrams took

[19] (http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/abrams.htm), accessed 23 March 2015.
[20] Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam.* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co, 1999), xiii.

over – tactical reports were still about sweep operations. Even MACV's official history stated that there was a change in strategy, but to one of even more reliance on firepower.

> A change in U.S. strategy, worked out in Washington and Saigon, roughly coincided with the change in command. Under the new concept, U.S. forces no longer regularly engaged in large, multi-battalion operations. Rather, the decision was made to protect Saigon as the nerve center of the Republic and, by maintaining constant pressure on the enemy, to seize the initiative from him and preempt offensive operations by keeping him continually off balance. Flexibility, mobility and firepower increased in importance as American and Republic of Vietnam (RVN) units sought out the enemy, destroyed him when possible, and uncovered his stockpiled material of war.[21]

Whereas Sorley argues for a clean break, and MACV's history cites an increase in firepower and a change in priorities, recent research conducted at CGSC by Thom Frohnhoefer points to that fact that "General Abrams continued a consistent strategy he inherited from his predecessor, in turn he passed it on to the South Vietnamese."[22] Frohnhoefer acknowledges that "General Abrams promoted a 'one-war' strategy which had the desired end state of population security for the people of South Vietnam," however, "in reality the 'one-war' was a multi-tiered strategy of attrition. While the tactics of large scale search and destroy missions were modified, the operational purpose was not."[23] MACV's mission did not change, however, until July 1969, when President Nixon ushered in the period of "Vietnamization."[24] General Abrams

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[21] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume I*, 2.
[22] Thom Frohnhoefer, "General Creighton Abrams and the Operational Approach of Attrition in the Vietnam War." (Fort Leavenworth, KS US Army Command and General Staff College, 2013).
[23] Ibid.
[24] Richard M. Nixon, "Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam", 3 November 1969, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2303, accessed 18 November 2014.

took steps to capitalize on the vulnerability of the VC by instituting changes such as the Phoenix Program or *Phụng Hoàng* in Vietnamese, which attacked the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI) and sought to remove the physical and psychological vestiges of VC influence in the villages. Additionally, the training of South Vietnamese Armed Forces was accelerated. But it was based on their capability to conduct attrition warfare, rather than a population focused counter-insurgency strategy. While this paper will not find the definitive answer to the debate on the performance of Westmoreland and Abrams, it will find evidence of changes to the implementation of intelligence, PSYOP, and their cooperation. This evidence should provide insights, which either support or refute characterizations of the difference, or lack thereof, between Westmoreland and Abrams.

On 8 June 1969, President Nixon and President Nguyen Van Thieu met at Midway to discuss the possibility of US troop withdrawals from South Vietnam. At a press conference following their discussions, Nixon announced that the first redeployment of 25,000 US troops from South Vietnam would be completed by the end of August and that this reduction in American forces would be replaced by a concomitant increase in ARVN troops. Thieu spoke immediately after Nixon and stated that the "withdrawal was made possible by *'the improvement in South Vietnamese forces.'*[original italics]"[25] The process of Vietnamization had begun, marking the end of the second phase of America's fighting in Vietnam.

[25] http://www.midway-island.com/wp-content/uploads/helvig_nixon_thieu.pdf, accessed 16 January 2015.

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Intelligence, January 1968 to June 1969

The enemy failed to gain strategic surprise at Tet…but did gain tactical surprise.

Philip Davidson

This chapter explores the evolution and performance of the intelligence function at MACV during and immediately after the Tet Offensive. The main topics covered include the unanticipated benefit the DRVN received from the Tet Offensive, changes with the MACV J2 structure, challenges faced by the MACV J2 in meeting intelligence support requirements, Special Collection Programs developed by the MACV J2, MACV's continued reliance on technical solutions, and changes to intelligence doctrine.

Overview

American strategy in South Vietnam relied on the assumption that when the North Vietnamese realized they were losing the war, they would either engage in peace negotiations or begin to scale back their operations. The Americans had failed to account, however, for those instances when, in the words of Davidson, "desperation breeds aggression."[1] The MACV J2 viewed the Tet Offensive as a last-ditch effort by a desperate foe. According to the MACV J2, "by 1967 the war was beginning to run against the Vietnamese

[1] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* 114

Communists both NVN and VC."[2] Bruce Palmer had similarly assessed that the VC/NVA were incurring significant losses in men and materiel and had reached the point of being unable to sustain current operations.[3] The North Vietnamese Politburo, however, did not share these assessments.[4] At precisely the point that MACV began to assume it was winning the war, the North Vietnamese had already begun preparations for a large-scale offensive, one that would prove to be the largest one conducted to that date by either side. This offensive was not the mark of a desperate foe; rather, it was a well-planned military operation.

The overarching concept developed by the North Vietnamese during the summer of 1967 was for a *Tong Cong Kich, Tong Khai Nghia*, "General Offensive-General Uprising," shortened by the communists to TCK-TKN, which became known to the rest of the world as the Tet Offensive.[5] A wide range of intelligence reports would have the Americans aware that some sort of offensive was imminent, but cultural blinders would prevent them from grasping its significance and cause them to underestimate the country-wide scope of the assaults. In the words of General Davidson, "we failed to understand the myths the North Vietnamese lived by - the myth of the popular uprising in August of 1945 which swept the French and Japanese from Vietnam."[6] In purely military terms, the inability of the Americans to grasp this narrative allowed the NVA and VC to gain a tactical but not a strategic surprise with the

[2] Ibid., 97
[3] Palmer, *US Intelligence and Vietnam*, 50.
[4] *Victory in Vietnam: the official history of the people's army of Vietnam, 1954—1975*, the Military History Institute of Vietnam. (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 206.
[5] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 445.
[6] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War*, 110.

Tet Offensive.[7] Understanding the difference is important. From Davidson's perspective, MACV – and Westmoreland in particular – was aware of the build-up of NVA in the vicinity of Khe Sahn. Since November 1967, MACV had been deluged by intelligence reports indicating a coming offensive on the part of the North Vietnamese. The distinction argued by Davidson is that MACV did not anticipate the type of tactics employed by the VC/NVA. Therefore, strategically Westmoreland knew an attack was coming and repositioned forces in accordance with that information. The character of the attacks surprised Westmoreland, but FWMAF and RVNAF, because they were prepared for an attack around the time of Tet, were able to defeat the VC/NVA offensive. It is true that Davidson assessment possesses an inherent conflict of interest. However, his perception is important precisely because of the difference of opinion that developed between those in Saigon and those in Washington. The purpose here is not to answer the question about whether MACV was surprised by Tet, but to illuminate the difference of opinion about Tet and how that difference subsequently affected both intelligence and psychological operations.

The North Vietnamese planning for the Tet Offensive began in April 1967.[8] That planning sought to "secure a decisive victory within a relatively short period of time."[9] General Giap's plan for TCK-TKN consisted of three phases. Phase I began in September 1967 with attacks on the province of Con Thien, near the DMZ, followed by attacks northwest of Saigon near the

[7] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 478.
[8] *Victory in Vietnam: the official history of the people's army of Vietnam, 1954—1975*, 206
[9] Ibid., 207

Cambodian border and later into the Central Highlands. Designed to draw FWMAF forces away from the population centers, Giap's plan envisaged the FWMAF being engaged in remote areas, thereby leaving the cities vulnerable to coordinated VC assaults.[10] The attacks succeeded in drawing US forces away from the cities and toward the borders, but with devastating NVA losses. The US forces' superior mobility enabled them to reposition rapidly back to the interior of the country when the fighting was complete.[11] The Americans were not the only ones underestimating their enemy; Giap too had underestimated the significant advantage strategic mobility provided to American forces.[12]

Phases II and III of Giap's plan supporting TCK-TKN were to commence near simultaneously during the Tet holiday at the end of January 1968. The first clear indication to MACV that the NVA was preparing for a large-scale offensive occurred in November 1967.[13] In the three months preceding Tet, hundreds of reports flooded the MACV J2, providing indications of a pending attack.[14] These warnings included multiple reports that several NVA divisions were preparing to move south from their positions within North Vietnam.[15] Davidson asserts that the attack on Khe Sahn was the set-piece battle of Phase III of Giap's attack on the South and not a distraction.[16] Davidson also states that the defense of Khe Sahn preempted the North's plans and was one of

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[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* 101.
[12] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 446.
[13] Ibid., 554.
[14] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* 105.
[15] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 554.
[16] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* 100, see also James H. Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive: A Concise History*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

Westmoreland's more efficacious tactical decisions.[17] He further argues that the MACV J2 was correctly interpreting the indications for Giap's phase III plan. American strength lay in the cities, and so the indications that the VC would attack those American strongholds were dismissed as invalid. In MACV's estimate, it would have been ludicrous to attack into the strongest positions.[18]

Shortly after New Year's, NVA forces were in place near Khe Sahn and preparing for the coming siege, when the first skirmish of the planned attack occurred.[19] On the night of 2 January, an NVA regimental commander and his staff were conducting a preliminary reconnaissance of Khe Sahn's defensive positions when a US Marine patrol came in contact with them.[20] In the ensuing firefight, the NVA commander was killed.[21] By 20 January both MACV and III MAF intelligence sections knew that Giap had moved two NVA divisions to the vicinity of Khe Sahn.[22] Westmoreland responded to the developing situation by canceling US operations on the periphery of South Vietnam and repositioning forces into inland bases to facilitate their ability to be used as a reserve.[23]

On the evening of 30 January, the first major attacks of the Tet Offensive began. As already mentioned, the shock to the American public was much

[17] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* 570.
[18] While it is possible that Davidson had some bias in his interpretation of events, his insights are still worth examining because he was the J2 advising Westmoreland about the significance of the incoming intelligence reports. Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 479.
[19] Ibid., 554.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] The 304 and the 325C divisions. Ibid., 554.
[23] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* 113.

greater that the effect the NVA/VC offensive had on the GVN.[24] As a military operation, the TCK-TKN was a catastrophe.[25] It failed to achieve any of its goals and according to Davidson, "in truth, the Tet Offensive for all practical purposes destroyed the Viet Cong."[26] The cost in men was staggering, with over 55,000 enemy killed over the course of two months.[27] But on a grand strategic level, the effort was extremely different.

The DRVN Reaps a Mis-anticipated Benefit

Ironically, the offensive succeeded in ways never imagined by the North Vietnamese. According to the PAVN official history, the original intent of the Tet Offensive was three-fold. First, the NVN wanted to cause the disintegration of the "puppet army" and to "overthrow the puppet regime at all administrative levels."[28] Second, the NVN sought to "annihilate a significant portion of the American military's troop strength."[29] Third, the NVN sought to "crush the American will to commit aggression and force the United States to accept defeat in South Vietnam and end all hostile actions against North Vietnam."[30] The North Vietnamese intent was to achieve a decisive battlefield victory and on the basis of that victory defeat American political will.[31] The North did not

[24] A 25 March 1968 Harris opinion poll reported at 60 percent of Americans sampled believed that the Tet Offensive was either a standoff or defeat for US forces. James H. Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive : A Concise History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 157.
[25] Mark W. Woodruff, *Unheralded Victory: The Defeat of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army, 1961-1973*, (Arlington, VA: Vandamere Press, 1999), 142.
[26] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* 102.
[27] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume I*, 131.
[28] *Victory in Vietnam: the official history of the people's army of Vietnam, 1954—1975*, 214.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Ibid.*, 215

anticipate the manner in which the Tet Offensive would deal such a direct blow to American morale and cleave such a divide within the American public.[32] The PAVN intended Tet to be a decisive military victory over RVNAF and FWMAF military units in a similar manner to the North's victory over French forces at Dien Bien Phu. Then, on the basis of that battlefield victory, the North would force the US to abandon South Vietnam and force the GVN to capitulate. Except, the South Vietnamese army did not disintegrate – it fought heroically; the American Army did not suffer significant losses compared to the VC; and the population of South Vietnam failed to rise up against the GVN.

Nevertheless, as epic a failure as the offensive was on the field of battle, so tremendous was its success on the American home front. The shock of the Tet Offensive to the American public was so severe that the North Vietnamese were able to gain a strategic victory on the basis of a tactical defeat. Prior to Tet, despite growing evidence to the contrary, Americans had trusted their military and political leaders. Johnson, McNamara, and Westmoreland in particular had briefed Congress and the American public on progress in Vietnam. According to their official statements, the South Vietnamese government was improving and the VC/NVA were losing. The cognitive dissonance created by the events at Khe Sahn, Hue City, and the American Embassy in Saigon struck a direct blow at the growing credibility gap between large segments of the American public and their government. The American

[32] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 477.

press, which had long derided MACV press briefings as “the five o’clock follies” saw in the Tet Offensive proof of an official cover-up about progress in the war.

The Tet Offensive re-opened the rift between MACV and the CIA over intelligence estimates, which had been so bitterly debated the previous fall. Once Tet happened, the CIA recalled Sam Adams, giving him free rein on numbers estimates.[33] Now instead of a ceiling of 490,000 as the enemy strength estimate, Adams proposed 600,000 as an upper limit. Given the surprise of Tet, the split in the intelligence community only further undermined the military position on Vietnam and eroded public confidence in the veracity of official announcements.[34]

President Johnson and his inner circle perceived imminent failure on the part of the GVN. The American people shared President Johnson’s view. Leaders in Saigon viewed the situation differently, however. Westmoreland and the staff at MACV perceived that Giap's offensive against the cities had been broken. In their minds, the next threat would be in the northern provinces of South Vietnam. VC/NVA losses, if properly exploited, presented an incredible opportunity for the FWMAF and RVNAF to seize the initiate by going on the offensive. Leaders on both sides of the Pacific Ocean thought they were looking at the situation correctly. Those in Washington thought that MACV was too optimistic in its assessment, and unable to separate fact from fiction. Those in Saigon perceived that the leadership in Washington based its analysis more on

[33] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War*, 52.
[34] Ibid.

evening news reports than on reporting and analysis from the MACV headquarters.[35]

On 23 February, General Earl Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), arrived in Saigon to conduct a first-hand assessment of the situation. But even after receiving Davidson's update on the enemy situation, Wheeler still apparently did not see the opportunities for an offensive strategy.[36] Wheeler returned to Washington and delivered a somber assessment of the situation in Saigon, reiterating his recommendation to activate the reserve forces.[37] Daddis argues that Wheeler used Tet as a "unique opportunity to pressure the president into mobilizing the strategic reserves."[38] Regardless of Wheeler's rationale or motivation behind his report to Johnson, it is thus clear that a significant difference of perception existed between MACV and Washington, with the latter notably more pessimistic than the former.

At the end of February, Walter Cronkite visited Vietnam to assess the situation in Hue. He departed with a pessimistic view of the overall situation in South Vietnam, and his televised statement on 27 February 1968 that "it seems now more certain than ever, that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate," summed up the perception of not only the American public, but also the senior leaders in the American government.[39] Although many blame the media for the loss of support to the war in Vietnam, Cronkite's

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[35] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 494.
[36] Ibid., 501.
[37] Ibid., 506.
[38] Daddis, *Westmoreland's War,* 142.
[39] Guy Raz, "Final Words: Cronkite's Vietnam Commentary", 18 July 2009, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106775685, accessed 13 September 2013.

sentiment was not without a solid rationale. The juxtaposition of the positive official statements about the war with the reality laid bare by the Tet Offensive had eroded the trust of the American public. On 22 March 1968, President Johnson announced that Westmoreland would be replaced as the MACV commander in June.[40] Just over a week later, the President announced his withdrawal from the 1968 elections.

The failure of MACV intelligence to perceive accurately the scope, intensity, and nature of the Tet Offensive had cast a long shadow. The irony is that perceptions across the Pacific were so diametrically opposed. In April 1968, General Davidson interrogated two high ranking VC officers, both of whom thought the war was unwinnable.[41] Additionally, several intelligence reports from North Vietnam indicated that the Politburo believed Tet to have been a very costly disaster.[42] That was until the political situation in the United States began to change.

In spite of initial setbacks and the failure of a popular uprising, the North Vietnamese continued to press their offensive in fits and spurts through the end of August 1968. But the Americans and South Vietnamese had accurately assessed their intended targets and were able to repulse the attacks. As 1968 drew to a close Johnson ordered a halt to the bombing of North Vietnam, and Nixon won the US Presidential election. The situation in Vietnam appeared dismal to the American public, but the tactical situation was

[40] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 534.
[41] Ibid., 542.
[42] Ibid., 541.

markedly different. On 24 October 1968, MACV had announced that weekly US casualty figures for the seven days ending on 19 October were one hundred KIA, the lowest figure in fourteen months. The previous low period had been the week ending 12 August 1967, when eighty-two US service members were killed.[43] The MACV relationship with the ARVN became closer because of Tet, and both headquarters jointly issued a Combined Campaign Plan (CCP) for 1969. The CCP had three goals relative to the exploration of intelligence and PSYOP:

1. Increase the efforts to neutralize the enemy infrastructure (VCI).
2. Increase the number of *Hoi Chanh* in CY69 in each CTZ.
3. Maximize coordinated intelligence collection and counter-intelligence activities.[44]

The lingering effects of the Tet Offensive set the conditions for a remarkably successful start to 1969 for MACV and a turning point for US policy in South Vietnam. The most significant development of the post-Tet period was that the insurgency would no longer pose an existential threat to the government of South Vietnam. Within this context of the operational environment shaped by Tet, we will examine the organizational changes within the intelligence function at MACV.

MACV J2 Structure Continues to Evolve

Davidson inherited a robust intelligence infrastructure when he took over the MACV J2 from McChristian. But the changing nature of VC/NVA activity

[43] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume II*, 1061.
[44] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1969*, *Volume I*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 30 April 1970, II-9.

and the change from McChristian's emphasis on pattern analysis to Davidson's emphasis on predictive analysis required concomitant changes to intelligence organization. Like McChristian, Davidson too sought out Army experts on Vietnam, but found that none existed.[45] The Army had no Vietnamese specialists within its Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program, and no American University had a tenured professor in Vietnamese studies.[46]

To mitigate these institutional shortcomings, Davidson instituted a "survey of the intelligence collection resources, principally the 525th Military Intelligence Group (MIGP)."[47] This survey was completed on 17 December 1967 and the findings led to the reorganization of existing intelligence assets. Elements from the 135th and 149th MIGPs were to be reconfigured into five separate battalions under a single unit, the 525th MIGP. This change reoriented intelligence support to the tactical commanders, the lack of which had been a key complaint under McChristian.[48] These changes also provided an MI battalion to support each of the four CTZs and a battalion for the Capitol Military District (CMD) in Saigon. These battalions were to be fully functional, "comprising a counterintelligence element, a small collection element specifically keyed to support the US divisions and separate brigades in each CTZ, an advisory element for the 101 ARVN Unit (formerly ARVN 924th Support Group), and one officer to coordinate the collection effort in each of the

[45] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* 111.
[46] Ibid.
[47] MACV, *Command History 1968, Volume II*, 569.
[48] Palmer, *US Intelligence and Vietnam*, 42.

44 provinces."[49] The addition of the advisory element was an attempt to "exploit an area heretofore inadequately covered."[50] Additionally, Davidson formed a "separate special operations battalion" to facilitate "strategic high level operations targeted against COSVN and other high priority MACV targets." [51] During the reorganization efforts, many "deficiencies were corrected by deleting eight headquarters, by consolidating efforts of the 519th MI Bn, and by consolidating the counterintelligence and collection efforts."[52] These latter changes were to the headquarters units and did not significantly modify the operational intelligence structure put in place by McChristian.

While the reorganizational efforts of the J2 attempted to fix one of the problems with intelligence support at MACV, i.e. the focus on pulling intelligence up rather than pushing it down, the changes did little to relieve the issue of inadequately trained personnel.[53] The paucity of personnel was exacerbated by a lack of focus on Vietnam within the United States. By late 1968 "the US Army Intelligence School (USAINTS) still had not developed an adequate course of instruction to sufficiently prepare the young, inexperienced MI officer and enlisted students for Joint and Combined intelligence duties."[54] Vietnam continued to be of secondary importance to the organizational Army. According to a US Army War College study conducted by a group of military

[49] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume II*, 569.
[50] Ibid.
[51] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume II*, 570.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] William G., Benedict, et al., "A Critical Analysis of US Army Intelligence Organizations and Concepts in Vietnam, 1965-1969", Group Study Project, (US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 8 March 1971), 28.

intelligence officers, “The focus of the MI schools continued to be on CONUS and US Army Europe (USAREUR) counterintelligence and collection requirements.”[55] The Army attempted to alleviate this issue with the introduction of specifically tailored technologies, which will be examined later in this chapter. But, according to the same US Army War College study, “despite the many official visitors to Vietnam, and the myriad trip reports, no changes were made to school-house training to adequately support the needs of the MACV J2 in South East Asia (SEA).”[56]

Challenges in the Execution of Intelligence Support

The intelligence function in Vietnam was faced with restrictions that complicated its collection effort. In accordance with US national policy, certain out-of-country reconnaissance flights, such as those over Laos and Cambodia required the concurrence, coordination, and approval of the CINCPAC, the CINCSAC, or the JCS.[57] These constraints made it difficult for the J2 to gather all of the intelligence required for order of battle analysis and may have driven the tight focus on the elements of order of battle it could control. The J2 continued to concentrate on enemy order of battle and locations at the expense of more detailed understanding of enemy morale, motivation, and psychological vulnerabilities.

The most successful of McChristian's organizational reforms remained largely unchanged during this period. Nevertheless, while several of the entities

[55] Ibid., 29
[56] Ibid., 30
[57] MACV, *Command History 1968, Volume II*, 581.

performed their functions well, they suffered from a myriad of institutional problems. The mission of the CICV was fairly broad, but still lacked a focus on psychological operations. This deficiency would lead PSYOP to develop its own intelligence support element. Another problem arose from the "two-war" concept. Here the reader should recall that soon after McChristian departed, Ambassador Komer had convinced Westmoreland of the requirement to create a separate intelligence staff under the auspices of CORDS.[58] This division of intelligence functions naturally led to a difference in focus between the MACV J2 and the CORDS intelligence office and led to some requirements receiving inadequate attention. The functional division of intelligence between MACV and COORDS also prevented holistic planning at MACV headquarters. This bifurcation also led to competition for scarce collection resources and difficulty in developing a complete picture of enemy activity.

Several branches of the intelligence function continued to operate in this phase in much the same way as they had previously. McChristian, for example, created the CICV, with the intent that it would produce "strategic intelligence through research and analysis of military/political, military/economic, military/sociological, and military/psychological subjects in SEASIA."[59] On 26 December 1968, the Strategic Research and Analysis branch (SRA) became independent from CICV.[60] Because the rest of CICV's mission was tactically

[58] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 459.
[59] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume II*, 571.
[60] Ibid., 570.

focused, this change was probably an attempt to raise the profile of strategic intelligence,[61]

The CDEC, on the other hand, continued to support intelligence by providing exploitation of a significant number of enemy documents. For instance, “during the period 1 January to 31 December 1968, CDEC received 3,988,672 pages of captured documents from field units.”[62] These documents were then screened and placed into one of five categories based on the relative assessment of their importance. Type “A” documents contained highly significant information and received "Immediate" or “Flash" precedence. [63] The majority of documents processed by the CDEC were considered to be type “B” documents, which contained valuable intelligence that was not considered sufficiently urgent to be classified as Type “A.” [64] Documents that contained information of marginal intelligence value were classified as Type “C.” [65] Propaganda materials were classified as Type “D” and only processed by the CDEC if the contained either new or significant information.[66] Type “D” material was sent to a psychological warfare agency for exploitation.[67] Finally, Type “E” documents contained communication system intelligence.[68] The

PSYOP materials were not given the same priority as those related to order-of-battle information. CDEC had a tremendous volume of information

[61] Ibid., 571-2.
[62] Ibid., 574.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.

and data to process. The lack of fusion between the J2, CORDS, and the 4th POG hindered the ability of the MACV staff to develop a comprehensive view of the enemy. PSYOP were seen as a separate function, not integrated with intelligence operations; and they were relegated to something distinctly different from intelligence handled by the CDEC. The data reporting from the CDEC also offers insight into the heavy concentration on metrics that continued within MACV under Abrams.

MACPD was not the only entity plagued by reporting measures of performance. CDEC reported that in 1968 the totals of efforts included the following:

Pages Received:	3,988,672
Pages Exploited:	408, 529
Pages Translated:	95, 167
Bulletins Published:	10,368[69]

These metrics, as previously noted, were measures of performance, not measures of effectiveness.

The MACV J2 intelligence collection effort continued to evolve as well. The collection plan for 1968 was designed to integrate all of MACV's intelligence requirements and assign them priorities. The MACV J2 established Other Intelligence Requirements (OIR), Essential Elements of Information (EEl), Indicators (IND), and Specific Orders and Requirements (SOR) created for the purpose of elaborating on MACV's standing collection requirements.[70] These categories were designed to make "the most effective use of the command's

[69] MACV, *Command History 1968, Volume II*, 577.
[70] Ibid., 582.

assets."[71] Of the three priorities and eleven OIRs listed below, none were specific to enemy vulnerabilities to psychological operations themes, messages, or actions. These priorities assisted PSYOP in determining where to drop the leaflets, but not what to include in the messages. The hard work of determining the enemy's psychological vulnerabilities and intentions fell to PSYOP personnel with no dedicated support from the MACV J2.

PRIORITIES

PRIORITY 1: Capabilities and vulnerabilities of enemy force structure.

PRIORITY 2: Likelihood other Communist powers will intervene militarily in the war? If so, when, where, in what strength, with what mission, and by what routes?

PRIORITY 3: Extent and nature of outside support to the enemy in South Vietnam?

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OTHER INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS (OIR)

OIR/1: When, where, and in what strength will the enemy attack?
OIR/2: Location of enemy's base areas?
OIR/3: Will the enemy receive additional weapons systems? If so, what types, in what quantity, when and where?
OIR/4: What and where are the enemy's main lines of communication in SVN?
OIR/5: Command and control structure of the VC/NVA forces in SVN?
OIR/6: Enemy capability to provide replacements to existing units in SVN?
OIR/7: What VC political activities are being conducted in SVN?
OIR/8: Enemy's plans to counter the RD Program?
OIR/9: Location of POWs?
OIR/10: Enemies' capabilities and intentions to sabotage US facilities?
OIR/11: Nature of the subversion and espionage threat directed against US personnel in SVN?[72]

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[71] Ibid.
[72] MACV, *Command History 1968, Volume II*, 583.

Special Collection Programs

One of the MACV J2's central tasks was to support the newly developed FWMAF/RVNAF campaign plan. In doing so, the J2 displayed the "art" involved with the operational level of war. The J2 implemented many programs working to gather, synthesize, analyze, and provide useful intelligence support to both MACV and the RVNAF. The three most important programs in relation to psychological operations are covered below. The intent here is not to dissect the programs individually, but to show how the programs evolved and were ultimately connected together.[73]

The first collection program of interest was codenamed Corral. It supported operations such as Phoenix, which were directed against the "VC Political Order of Battle."[74] The plan for Corral was published on 27 January 1968. Corral intensified and coordinated intelligence collection activities and directed reporting through "military channels, which insured the largest possible infrastructure data base."[75] Corral directly supported operations against the VC political infrastructure, which were vital components of the NVA/VC operations throughout South Vietnam.[76] VCI extortion practices and illegal taxation funded VC/NVA activities. MACV assessed that the VCI collected intelligence on FWMAF and GVN forces and targeted "GVN officials for

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[73] In depth analysis of these programs is outside the scope of this work. Additionally, some of the results are still classified, and as Davidson also wryly quips, "doctors bury their mistakes, while intelligence officers bury their successes. See Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* ix
[74] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume II*, 586.
[75] Ibid.
[76] MACV, *Command History 1969*, *Volume I*, III-82.

assassination, undermining the GVN and the RVNAF military units, and gaining popular support for the Communist insurgency in the South."[77] The NVA in the south was dependent on the VCI for their effectiveness, as "the VCI served as guides to military units. One NVA PW said that 'Without the Local Force (LF) units in SVN the NVA Is useless.'"[78]

Another J2 collection program began on 9 July 1968 as a replacement for a previous program codenamed Ritz. The new program was dubbed Banish Bay. It collected information on VC guerrilla forces, local force companies and platoons, administrative service units, and recruitment activities. Banish Bay also included a consolidated quarterly reporting requirement.[79]

On 28 November 1968, Abrams approved Big Mack, which replaced Corral and Banish Bay. Big Mack's efforts were two-fold. First, it sought an increase in data collection over what had been provided by Corral and Banish Bay. Second, it sought to collate the MACV J2 and CORDS "requirements for intelligence information relative to the VCI, guerrilla forces, local forces, administrative service units, and in-country recruitment."[80] The separate staff functions previously implemented in July 1968 by Westmoreland and Komer were hindering analysis and development of a comprehensive intelligence picture. BIG MACK was an attempt to correct that deficiency.

The Volunteer Informant Program (VIP) was a similar initiative. It offered rewards for information, but was also open to potential abuse in the settling of

[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume II*, 588.
[80] Ibid.

local grievances having nothing to do with the VC.[81] MACV set out in early 1968 to revise this program, which resulted in MACV Directive 381-2, issued on 19 March 1968. The 1968 CCP set a goal of 1,500 monthly informants; triple that of the 497 of December 1967. This goal was ambitious. But given the changing context in the RVN, MACV was able to exceed the goal in the final five months of 1968. Under the VIP there were over 15,000 informants during 1968. The direct result of the information they provided led to "3,437 enemy killed and 1,197 captured. It also resulted in capture or recovery of over 50,000 rounds of ordnance and more than 2,000 weapons. The cost of the program for the entire year was only $135,724."[82] By way of contrast, each B-52 sortie cost $33,000.[83]

These programs did not develop overnight. Frequently, they evolved over several years. The programs often took time to mature because either they were not immediately accepted by the GVN or the operational context was insufficiently mature to enable their success. MACV also dismissed GVN concern over the efficacy of the program, forging ahead with its implementation. Despite the struggle to bring these programs to fruition, the J2 continued to seek ways to improve what it was doing and more accurately

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[81] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War,* http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/ocvprogram/licep/1/kalyvas/kalyvaspaper.pdf, accessed 04 August 2014.
[82] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume II*, 587.
[83] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1971*, *Supplemental*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1972, TSS-1.

anticipate the enemy's moves. The story of the VIP exemplifies this struggle, which had its roots in the Bounty Program, analyzed in Chapter Three.

Continued Reliance on Technical Solutions

The intelligence effort in South Vietnam relied heavily on technical solutions to find the enemy. While innovative, these solutions did not support the analysis required for PSYOP. Instead, the use of technical solutions perpetuated the concentration on metrics, attrition, and order of battle. The dominant assumption seemed to be that if the enemy could be found, he could be defeated. Many different systems were tested in South Vietnam with some recommended for rapid adoption and others returned to the manufacturer for adjustments or requests for further development.

Several of the technical solutions involved radars. Two of these included the AP/PPS-10 radar system and the Foliage Penetration Radar. The AP/PPS-10 weighed ten pounds and could be operated remotely. It was developed to detect objects moving near the ground with a velocity of between one-half and thirty-five mph. The radar was found to be very useful for conducting tactical perimeter defenses, conducting reconnaissance patrols, and defeating riverine ambushes.[84] The Foliage Penetration Radar was developed to detect enemy forces hidden or concealed by heavy vegetation. It had a detection range of detection of 0 to 1,000 feet in jungle terrain and 0 - 1,500 feet in heavily wooded areas or tall grass.[85] Other innovations involved target acquisition,

[84] MACV, *Command History 1969*, *Volume III*, XII-7.
[85] Ibid., XII-8.

such as forward-looking infrared systems for the passive detection of targets, night observation/detection systems, foliage penetrating radars, and seismic sensors to detect movement of personnel and vehicles.[86] These technical solutions were well received by the units that tested them and probably saved FWMAF and RVNAF lives. But they did little to set the stage for Vietnamese use. The devices were either unlikely to be transferred to the RVNAF or, if they were transferred, were frequently too complicated and expensive for the RVNAF to operate and maintain. Instead of developing the human capital and low-technology solutions required for RVNAF to succeed, these devices further separated the GVN and US Forces from the South Vietnamese population. The continual quest for technological panaceas neglected human information and face-to-face interaction, which are more significantly important aspects of intelligence in counterinsurgencies in general and for PSYOP in particular.

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Intelligence Doctrine

Events in Vietnam had an effect on US Army doctrine for military intelligence, showing that at least some information from the battlefield was finding its way from MACV to Army training institutions. During this period there were two revisions to military intelligence field manuals. The first was the March 1968 revision to Field Manual (FM) 30-9, *Military Intelligence Battalion, Field Army*. It had been 10 years since the previous update to the FM, and change was long overdue. The changes introduced can be directly traced to the

[86] Ibid., XII-13.

lessons learned collected by MACV.[87] The previous edition of FM 30-9, for instance, made no mention of psychological operations. The new edition included the following, which was based on lessons learned from ongoing operations:

> Relationship with U.S. Army civil affairs and psychological operations units are especially close based on the intelligence requirements inherent in the activities of these units and the mutual benefits accruing from close cooperation of each of the agencies towards the others (see FM 30-5, FM 33-1, and FM 41-5).[88]

As previously mentioned, the USAINTS had not begun to train personnel for service in South Vietnam.[89] This change in doctrine was promising, though, because it should have had a ripple effect throughout future Army training. The updated doctrine also singled out the translation section as serving a vital function within the battalion because it disseminated translated documents to other entities with an interest in intelligence, such as civil affairs and psychological operations units.[90] These changes in the doctrine for military intelligence battalions were significant because support to PSYOP was now codified as residing at a tactical level. It also answered one of the recommendations from MACV regarding the interactions of the J2 and MACPD.[91] The second modification was to FM 30-5, *Combat Intelligence*, which was issued on 1 August 1968. Two changes to this document were PSYOP

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[87] Department of the Army. *Department of the Army Field Manual 30-9: Military Intelligence Battalion Field Army*: U.S. Army Doctrine. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 8 March 1968).
[88] Ibid., 7
[89] Benedict, "A Critical Analysis of US Army Intelligence Organizations and Concepts", 28
[90] Department of the Army Field Manual 30-9, 8 March 1968, 34.
[91] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 642.

related. The first was an acknowledgement that other special staff officers had a role to play in providing valuable information to intelligence stating that "other special staff officers who may provide information of value to the intelligence officer include: aviation officer, psychological operations officer, information officer, civil affairs officer, fire support coordinator."[92]

The second change involved the use of loudspeakers. It cautioned the military intelligence practitioner that loudspeakers used to support psychological operations "were affected by any weather element that reduces Audibility."[93] This was a change from the 1965 edition, which did not mention weather effects. While this change might seem relatively minor, it was, in a subtle way, rather significant. It indicated that intelligence had a much more intimate relationship with psychological operations than had been previously woven into doctrine. The previous edition had mentioned loudspeakers being used for surrender appeals, but dealt primarily with the technique of learning and using the enemy's nicknames. This edition did not mention that particular use, but did incorporate weather effects. Interestingly, while one can trace lessons from MACV in the updated doctrine, neither edition mentioned support to leaflet operations, which were the largest dissemination effort for PSYOP in Vietnam.

[92] Department of the Army. *Department of the Army Field Manual 30-5: Combat Intelligence, Change 1*: U.S. Army Doctrine. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1 August 1968), 50.
[93] Ibid., 16.

Summary

After intelligence collection and analysis recovered from the operational and tactical surprise of Tet, it performed well and helped the combat forces deal a tremendous blow to the VC. Because the VC leaders had come into the open to fight TCK-TKN, they exposed themselves to the robust collection apparatus the J2 had developed and facilitated targeting under the Phoenix program. The intelligence function at MACV continued to evolve. Noteworthy improvements in the collection and analysis infrastructure improved order-of-battle analysis and enabled more effective attack of the enemy. The technical and organization improvements sought to juxtapose US strengths against VC vulnerabilities. The continual push for better technology reflected the drive for a better solution to the problem of finding the enemy.

The MACV J2 attempted to prioritize collection requests and then to implement measures judiciously applying its limited assets to collect against those requirements. The infrastructure put in place by McChristian remained largely intact during this period, a testament to the comprehensiveness of his plan and the success with crafting a solution to mitigate the continual strain of personnel turnover.

Analysis

Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this time period. It sought to know itself and its enemy. The intelligence plan in 1968 was designed to integrate all of MACV's intelligence requirements and assign them priorities. The MACV J2 also

established Other Intelligence Requirements (OIR), Essential Elements of Information (EEl), Indicators (IND), and Specific Orders and Requirements (SOR) designed for the purpose of elaborating on MACV's standing collection requirements.[94] These designations were designed to make “the most effective use of the command's assets.”[95]

Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence?

MACV rates a "No" for this time period. The biggest failure was Tet. Despite the defense offered by Davidson, there were simply too many indicators pointing to a major offensive across South Vietnam to have been appreciated so incorrectly. The J2 failed to consider evidence that did not support its pre-conceived notion of enemy intent. MACV only accepted intelligence that either confirmed or denied what it already assessed to be accurate. After Tet, MACV became increasingly defensive and even less open to outside information than it had been in the past.[96] MACV also did not listen to GVN assessments and recommendations. The VIP was a prime example. MACV dismissed GVN concerns over informant and bounty programs, regarding these concerns as less enlightened than the American position.

Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with intelligence?

MACV rates a "No" for this time period. While the reorganizational efforts of the J2 attempted to improve intelligence support at MACV, the changes did

[94] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume II*, 582.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Davidson, *Secrets of the Vietnam War,* 52.

little to relieve the problem of inadequately trained personnel.[97] The personnel problem was exacerbated by the fact that by late 1968 “the US Army Intelligence School (USAINTS) still had not developed an adequate course of instruction to sufficiently prepare the young, inexperienced MI officer and enlisted students for Joint and Combined intelligence duties.”[98] Lessons learned were also replete with examples of the primacy of face-to-face engagement, and yet MACV continued to search for technical solutions. MACV also continued to heavily rely on relatively meaningless metrics such as numbers of enemy documents received, translated, and exploited.[99] Such metrics are measures of performance rather than measures of effectiveness.

Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence left the command?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this time period. The J2 infrastructure built by General McChristian continued to function in support of the MACV commander. Many of the changes instituted by Davidson were administrative, rather than whole-scale structural changes to the CDEC or CMIC.

Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this time period. Davidson recognized there were shortcomings with intelligence support and instituted a “survey of the intelligence collection resources, principally the 525th Military Intelligence

[97] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume II*, 570.
[98] Benedict, "A Critical Analysis of US Army Intelligence Organizations and Concepts”, 28.
[99] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume II*, 577.

Group (MIGP)."[100] He reorganized collection priorities and OIRs based on the CCP, the enemy situation, and input from commanders. Continual technical improvements represented an effort to find the enemy, and special collection programs represented an effort to keep "requirements for intelligence information relevant."[101]

Net Assessment

Because the MAVC J2 rated three out of the five criteria for intelligence during this time period, it rates a **Marginally Effective** rating. This represents a reduction in the overall effectiveness of the intelligence function in MACV from the previous period in which the MACV J2 met four of the five criteria for intelligence and was rated as **Somewhat Effective** as a learning organization.

The change in assessed effectiveness is due to the fact that MACV J2 continued to make the same mistakes without taking necessary corrective action. The MACV J2 continued to focus on order-of-battle metrics, largely to the exclusion of other useable intelligence for counterinsurgency. The J2 continued to seek technical means of finding the enemy, as if the war were a simple equation to be solved.[102] This mentality revealed itself in the conventional warfare mentality of reducing the war to a counting exercise, seeking numbers of enemy killed, numbers of caches exploited, and numbers of *Chieu Hoi* surrendered.

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[100] Ibid., 569.
[101] Ibid., 588.
[102] For an excellent discussion on the "cybernetic" way of war where problems are seen as equations to be solved see Antoine J. Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

The next chapter will explore the relative progress of the psychological operations effort during the aftermath of the Tet Offensive and what PSYOP did in reaction to Tet.

Garvin's Learning Questions	January 1968 – July 1969
	Intelligence
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence?	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence?	**-**
Did MACV avoid repeat mistakes with intelligence?	**-**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence command?	**+**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence?	**+**
Total	**3**

TABLE 9 – INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT, 1968-1969

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

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PSYOP, January 1968 to June 1969

The Psychological Operations program is the least understood, the most difficult to explain, and surely the hardest to measure of any of our efforts in Vietnam.

William C. Westmoreland, 1968

This chapter focuses on the PSYOP function at MACV by examining PSYOP Policy letters, PSYOP's reaction to Tet and Post-Tet developments, MACV's command progress reports, external studies, and senior officer debriefs, which provide insight into the effect Tet had on the planning and execution of psychological operations within MACV. The chapter closes with an analysis of the actions MACV took based on recommendations from the previous period. Through the end of 1967 and into the early weeks of 1968, PSYOP had planned to support the continued bolstering of the GVN's image.[1] It is therefore instructive here to begin with a review of PSYOP policy directives issued immediately before and then during the Tet Offensive.

Overview

On 16 Jan 1968, JUSPAO issued PSYOP Policy letter 52 that directed MACV to develop and support a plan to create a favorable image for the South

[1] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 53, "PSYOP Support of Pacification", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 22 January 1968.

Vietnamese police.[2] The document instructed PSYOP to convince the South Vietnam people that the increased numbers of police check points reflected the GVN's heightened public-safety campaign. Policy letter 52 also sought to convince the population that a few VC supporters were responsible for existing hardships.[3]

Policy letter 53, issued on 22 Jan 1968, clarified the roles, responsibilities, and command relationship for the Assistant Provincial Advisors for Psychological Operations (APA/PSYOP). These military and civilian PSYOP officers on the staff of the CORDS Province Senior Advisor were to "apply their professional skills as communications specialists to the task of helping the GVN win and keep the loyalties of the rural population."[4] This JUSPAO issued policy stipulated that these officers would be under the technical direction of the CORDS PSYOP Division (CORDS/POD) and that the APA/PSYOP had to bring RD to the forefront of operations in the provinces in order that RD would neither be misunderstood nor passively resisted by the people. It also directed the use of "everything including mass media, word of mouth, and *Van Tac Vu* (Cultural Drama Teams)," noting a new television series using an adaptation of "Batman," with the hero coming to the rescue of RD cadre in 26 programs.[5]

[2] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 52, "PSYOP Aspects of the Public Safety Program (National Police)", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 16 January 1968.
[3] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 52.
[4] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 53.
[5] Ibid.

Policy letter 54, the last issued prior to the Tet Offensive, directed the use of PSYOP to support GVN's handling of refugees. Tactical commanders were to use PSYOP to encourage civilians to move away from insecure areas and to coordinate with CORDS provincial personnel to facilitate the prepositioning of relief supplies and facilities. Commanders were also directed to use PSYOP to "provide information and education for refugees to make them productive citizens. And show the world at large the good the GVN is doing."[6]

This continued refinement of command guidance, coupled with the significant PSYOP infrastructure that had recently been put in place with the activation of the 4th PSYOP Group, would quickly be put to the test during the Tet Offensive.

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PSYOP Reaction to Tet

During Tet, the VC attacked PSYOP infrastructure causing "extensive damage to communications media (both property and equipment)."[7] The GVN reacted quickly, and "in some cases, radio stations were again on the air only hours after their transmitters had been silenced."[8] After the fighting subsided, PSYOP forces sought to capitalize on the significant defeat of the VC/NVA forces.

[6] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 54, "PSYOP Aspects of the Refugee Program", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 28 January 1968.
[7] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume I*, 560.
[8] Ibid.

A week after the start of Tet, JUSPAO issued Policy letter 56.[9] It directed PSYOP personnel to provide direct support to the GVN to restore full information services, much of which had been damaged by the fighting.[10] By attacking at Tet, a time when in years past fighting had decreased so both sides could visit their families, the VC gained a tactical and psychological advantage. But this advantage quickly evaporated as the South Vietnamese people rejected the VC call for a general uprising and rallied around the government. Policy letter 56 also sought to ensure that the NVA clearly received that rejection notice. This policy exploited the significant losses the enemy had sustained — just over 14,000 killed in the first five days of fighting. Given the fluid nature of the tactical fight, the policy was updated in three subsequent supplements.

Policy letter 56 Supplement 2 was the first change to letter 56 and was issued the next day, 7 February 1968. It represented an effort to counter enemy propaganda and to "backstop PSYOP personnel with information on new developments in the joint GVN/FWMAF effort."[11] Ambassador Komer had been chosen to direct the US efforts in support of the National Recovery Committee (NRC), which GVN created to facilitate, organize, and prioritize its nation-wide recovery efforts.[12] Supplement 3, issued two days later, announced that South

[9] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 56, "Restoring Civil Confidence; Popular Rejection of Call for General Uprising", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 6 February 1968, 3.
[10] Ibid.
[11] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 56, Supplement No.2, "Restoring Civil Confidence; Popular Rejection of Call for General Uprising", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 7 February 1968.
[12] Ibid.

Vietnamese Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky would lead the NRC and coordinate national recovery operations. The policy also directed MACV to prepare for the one hundred APT personnel that the *Chieu Hoi* Ministry was sending to accompany both ARVN and National Police units to attack enemy holdouts.[13]

The final update to Policy 56 was issued on 13 February 1968. It provided concrete evidence of the steps the GVN took in dealing with Tet. Those steps included distributing rice and other assistance to victims of the offensive, reopening of the National Post Office and the return of normal mail delivery, and resuming regularly scheduled garbage collection. Life, in short, was returning to normal. Policy letter 56 also highlighted the bravery of ARVN and National Police units. Two hundred National Police Officers died fighting against heavily armed infiltrators, and the ARVN had inflicted twenty times their own losses on the enemy.[14] This policy sought to foster the conditions for the people of South Vietnam to be hopeful, and directed PSYOP personnel to be on the lookout for locally exploitable events to support the GVN's efforts to bring hope to the South Vietnamese people, and to give those events the widest dissemination possible.[15]

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[13] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 56, Supplement No.3, "Restoring Civil Confidence; Popular Rejection of Call for General Uprising", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 9 February 1968.
[14] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 56, Supplement No.4, "Restoring Civil Confidence; Popular Rejection of Call for General Uprising", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 13 February 1968.
[15] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 56, Supplement No.4, "Restoring Civil Confidence; Popular Rejection of Call for General Uprising", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 13 February 1968.

Policy letter 57, issued on 8 February 1968, directed the use of *Chieu Hoi* to capitalize on the failure of the communist general offensive. Many of the VC's best men had been killed, and there was no evidence of reinforcements being sent from the north. Assessment by the MACV J2 indicated that the VC had suffered a resounding defeat and were demoralized by the lack of a popular uprising and the lack of reinforcements. Because of this change in condition, MACV sought to seize the initiative. By the end of February, the communists had lost 22,000 men killed and more than 6000 weapons.[16] In this sense the Tet Offensive had been a significant failure. This policy letter, which provided guidance for using "proper Vietnamese terms gleaned from enemy documents and prisoner interrogations," indicates coordination with intelligence agencies.[17] Also that day, JUSPAO issued Policy letter 58 to reaffirm US support to the GVN.[18] This was done because the VC had started rumors that they and the US were cooperating to create a coalition government.[19]

Ten days later, JUSPAO issued a supplement to Policy letter 57, based on new intelligence derived from interrogations and the exploitation of captured documents that showed the VC/NVA had intended to seize the cities by fomenting a popular uprising to overthrow the GVN. Based on this information,

[16] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 57, "Chieu Hoi Campaign to Capitalize on Failure of Communist General Offensive", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 8 February 1968, 2.
[17] Ibid.
[18] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 58, "Re-Affirming US Support for the GVN; Eliminating Viet Cong-Inspired Rumors of Coalition", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 8 February 1968.
[19] Ibid.

new leaflets were developed to focus on the failure of the offensive.[20] Other points for exploitation included the intelligence that many teenagers aged 13-15 had been drafted by the VC and had received only one-two weeks of training prior to the offensive. Many of these youngsters had been killed due to a lack of adequate training.[21] By the end of February 1968, most of the fighting around the country had ceased. Within the confines of South Vietnam, the ARVN and FWMAF had won a clear victory.

Post-Tet Developments

In April 1968, PSYOP forces in South Vietnam expanded again with the assignment of four additional psychological operations detachments.[22] This further expansion of assets increased the potential support PSYOP were able to provide throughout South Vietnam. As spring wore on and the totality of the victory became clear, the MACV staff returned to the task of routine business. Evidence of the change with MACV was demonstrated in a memorandum the 4th PSYOP Group received, requesting their support to the semi-annual PSYOP study to be conducted by a team from the MACV J5.[23] The business of capturing lessons, evaluating past performance, and making adjustments or corrections had returned.

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[20] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 57, Supplement 1, "Chieu Hoi Campaign to Capitalize on Failure of Communist General Offensive ", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 20 February 1968, 2.
[21] Ibid., 4.
[22] Department of the Army, Headquarters US Army Vietnam, General Orders Number 4422, "Award of the Meritorious Unit Commendation", 06 December 1969, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[23] MACV Joint Message, Subject: "Appraisal of MACV Psychological Operations (68B)", May1968, National Archives II, College Park, MD, MACJ3-11 RG472 PSYOP_Civil Affairs Box.

On 25 May 1968, Major General John H. Hay, Deputy Commanding General, II FFV, chaired a seminar that sought to capture tactics and techniques for fighting in built-up areas. Based on the lessons learned during the Tet fighting, the report of the seminar proceedings stated that for fighting in built up areas an "intensive psywar campaign should be targeted on the civil populace explaining the consequences of permitting VC to construct fortified positions, caches, and tunnels; and of allowing VC personnel to billet in and around their homes and villages without making a report to the authorities."[24] This report went into great detail concerning the coordination of PSYOP with tactical schemes of maneuver. For instance, during the establishment of a cordon around a city, "psywar broadcasts will urge noncombatants to move to designated safe areas, and appeal to the VC to Chieu Hoi."[25] In the second phase, the advance to the edge of the built up area, "the area will be saturated with CS and additional psywar broadcasts will be made in the attempt to have the VC surrender."[26] Other techniques noted "Airborne loudspeakers should begin announcements as soon as a cordon has been completed. Prisoner of War announcements on fair treatment by allied forces and futility of defense by the enemy should be stressed."[27] The seminar also recommended rules of engagement to minimize destruction:

A. PSYOP should be used to persuade the enemy to surrender.

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[24] Seminar Report - IIFORCEV – 25 May 1968 "Tactics and Techniques for Fighting in Built-up Areas", Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 3 June 1968, v.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

B. Riot Control agents should be used to force the enemy from buildings.[28]

While these recommendations demonstrated the effect PSYOP could have on the tactical fight, they do no demonstrate significant learning on the part of MACV. PSYOP were still not visualized as being integrated into operations and were still viewed as a weapon system to be employed much in the same way as artillery.

On 4 June 1968, the largest single VC unit defection of the war occurred when 140 personnel from the *Quyet Thang* Regiment surrendered to Vietnamese Marines near Saigon.[29] Ironically, this large-scale defection took place just prior to Westmoreland's departure, as it was the sort of large defection he envisaged PSYOP being able to produce on a regular basis.[30]

In July 1968, *Credebilis*, the official newspaper of the 4th PSYOP Group, published an article by its commander LTC Beck. Beck wrote reprovingly about the concept of the "one man" approach to psychological operations and the "one man" production of leaflets in particular.[31] Westmoreland was often guilty of the "one man" approach. He would personally write messages to be placed on leaflets, which were then to be dropped on either VC units or associated sympathetic villages. Westmoreland's approach stemmed from his

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[28] Ibid., vii.
[29] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume I*, 550.
[30] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence, 1965-1967*, 54.
[31] William J. Beck, LTC, "Are Psyop Systems Really Necessary?", Credibilis, July 1968, http://www.virtual.vietnam.ttu.edu/cgi-bin/starfetch.exe?qUZqgJ20WEPZ7IDm1EDcyk435YKBgYeTQHE6a55FtNcW9XIKq0o8dc2@NEKc5RzJAuI9IoD7mFrJh.Eepsklouir3@ZoUYuG3b.gMyJjPX8/10020103006.pdf, accessed 12 December 2104.

belief that he was the lead PSYOP officer in MACV. However enthusiastic his attitude toward PSYOP, his approach worked counter to its efficacy. Beck wrote his article to stop "one man" PSYOP. He cited studies showing that the improper use of PSYOP actually inured targets to future PSYOP and explained that writing PSYOP messages was not a one-person effort.[32] According to Beck, PSYOP had to utilize the talents of "the social scientist, psychologist, ethnic expert, communications specialist, linguist, illustrator, and so on." [33] Without the use of these specialists, PSYOP warriors were relegated to nothing more than printing press operators for leaflet production and disc jockeys for radio broadcasts. Beck also noted that whether the operation was simple or complex, "all steps in the process must be taken: a plan depicting objectives, phasing, and theses is developed, audiences are analyzed for vulnerabilities, the message carefully and scientifically worded out, then tested, and finally evaluated. Only of this is good propaganda made; anything else is ineffective."[34] The myth that anyone could write a leaflet was apparently still very much alive, but Beck was doing what he could to combat it.[35]

PSYOP received good news on 8 August 1968 when USMACV announced that 1,844 *Chieu Hoi* rallied during the month of July. This was the highest monthly total since August 1967. Although overall figures for the calendar year were still down, the number of officer and NCO returnees was more than double the number that rallied in 1967. It seemed that the program was

[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Kodosky, *Psychological Operations American Style*, 28.

beginning to succeed, but rather than examine a breadth of evidence to determine the cause for such increase, MACV continued to equate numbers of leaflets dropped and hours of speaker and radio broadcasts with numbers of ralliers. In large part, this was because the number of *Chieu Hoi* was still the only reliable and agreed upon means of measuring PSYOP effectiveness and MACV desperately sought the formula for success.[36]

On 1 September 1968, MACV began planning for the next iteration of the semi-annual PSYOP effectiveness study led by the MACV J5.[37] The genesis of this study came from a 1967 PSYOP study, which recommended periodic assessments of PSYOP's effectiveness. MACV had heeded the majority of those recommendations and sought continual improvement in its PSYOP function. This interest in quantifying PSYOP's performance led to repeated requests for external support from entities such as ARPA. On 4 October 1968, COL Reginald J. Hinton, Director of the MACPD, sent a memorandum to Mr. Lawrence Hall, acting director of JUSPAO, requesting that the ARPA study how to overcome the "major obstacles to defection" and include the below-listed areas in its PSYOP project.[38]

> A. Surveillance of VC/NVA troops by the cadre and cell to prohibit reading of leaflets and listening I GVN radio programs.
> B. Counter-PSYOP efforts in which cadres advise NVA/VC troops they will be killed if they rally.
> C. The long period of vacillation or indecision as to whether they should rally or not.[39]

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[36] MACV, *Command History, 1967, Volume II*, 642.
[37] MACV Joint Message Subject: "Appraisal of MACV Psychological Operations (68B)", 01 September 1968 National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 Psyop Civil Affairs Box 14.
[38] MACV Memorandum Subject: "Advanced Research Projects Agency PSYOP Project", 04 October 1968 National Archives II, College Park, MD, MAC J3-11 201-34-19.
[39] Ibid.

Hinton closed by noting that the issue of defection was of personal interest to General Andrew J. Goodpaster, the MACV Deputy Commander.[40]

On 1 November 1968, MACV launched the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC), a ninety-day campaign under the control of William Colby, the chief of CORDS.[41] The APC was designed to clear VCI and expand GVN control in some of the over 1,200 villages estimated to be then under VC influence.[42] By mid-November 1968, GVN radio and TV programs were giving additional airtime to APC themes and their associated activities. The Information Ministry's "Determined to Win" campaign received major attention on the airwaves and was designed to convince the population of an ultimate GVN victory.[43]

Also in November, JUSPAO and CORDS developed a system to measure physical aspects of PSYOP in selected hamlets. The system was built on the aggregate of numbers of the following indicators:

1. NEC radios (which had community address capability) in place.
2. Community TV in place.
3. Information office established.
4. VIS or VIS-trained cadre assigned.
5. Hamlet bulletin board set up.
6. Province or district newsletters circulated.
7. Posters and leaflets distributed.[44]

[40] Ibid.
[41] http://www.vietnamwar.net/AcceleratedPacification.htm, accessed 11 March 2015.
[42] Ibid.
[43] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume I*, 560.
[44] Ibid.

Based on these criteria, the following results were collected on 6 December 1968 and used as a quantifiable measure of progress in their respective PSYOP programs:

47 NEC radios in place
29 TV sets were in place
137 information offices had been established
185 trained VIS cadre in action
188 hamlet bulletin boards
584 hamlets receiving newsletters
698 hamlets receiving posters and leaflets

By end of December 1968, South Vietnamese hamlets had "173 information offices completed, 123 TV sets installed, 306 bulletin boards erected, and 633 VLS cadre assigned. Newsletters, posters, and leaflets continued to be distributed to provinces and districts, with 30 hamlets receiving all input items."[45] This latest effort continued the MACV habit of measuring effort, apparently because "PSYOP activities were hard to measure in meaningful terms."[46]

In January 1969, MACV issued two major directives pertaining to PYSOP. The first was Operational Guidance Number One regarding PSYOP support for the CCP, which stated "All Commanders are to integrate Psychological Operations into all activities…Guidance in Psy Ops will come from this headquarters."[47] The reiteration of this guidance, despite MACV Directive 525-3 having been in effect for several years, shows that PSYOP integration was still not routine. The second directive was the JUSPAO-issued

[45] Ibid., 561
[46] Ibid.
[47] MACV, *Command History 1969*, *Volume I*, II-19.

Psyop Circular Number Nine, which called for the testing of PSYOP materiel prior to distribution.[48] This directive was another example of the same lesson having to be learned repeatedly, in this case one that had supposedly been learned 18 months earlier.[49]

Despite re-learning lessons, the MACV PSYOP effort showed signs of improvement and effectiveness during the four months prior to the start of Vietnamization. On 31 Jan 1969, MACV reported that the goal of 5,000 *Hoi Chanh* in support of the November 1968 APC was exceeded by over 70 percent as 8,651 VC returned to GVN cause. For the week ending 1 March 1969, MACV reported 1,005 *Hoi Chanh* – the highest weekly total since March 7 1967. On 9 Feb 1969, the 4th PSYOP Group moved its Audience Analysis Branch from the Propaganda Development Section (PDS) to the S2 Section. This reorganization consolidated both sections' analysis elements, integrated their research and library facilities, and made more efficient use of the Group's analytical personnel. Although not significant in and of itself, the move indicated that the Group was beginning to think more critically and creatively about the fusion between intelligence and operations in psychological warfare. The change also more efficiently allocated personnel.[50]

Between 1 January and 2 June 1969, 18,758 *Hoi Chanh* had come over to the GVN, a number that already exceeded the 1968 total of 18,171. But, at

[48] PSYOP Circular, JUSPAO PSYOP Circular Number 9, "Testing of PSYOP Material in Viet-Nam", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 14 January 1969, Texas Tech University, The Vietnam Center and Archive, accessed 12 December 2014
[49] MACV, *Command History, 1967, Volume II*, 642.
[50] 4th Psychological Operations Group. Monthly Operational Report 1-28 February 1969, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 22 March 1969, 2.

the precise time that it appeared that PSYOP efforts were bearing real fruit, the United States was poised to begin removing forces from South Vietnam and transitioning the lead for the fight to the ARVN.

Command Progress Reports

The USARV quarterly reports provide a number of insights into MACV's conduct of PSYOP, addressing problems with personnel, equipment, and statistics. While the 3rd Quarter FY68 (April – June) reports an increase of four PSYOP detachments and the arrival of 232 PSYOP personnel trained at Fort Bragg, units were still short key personnel, especially officers.[51] But by the end of the 1st Quarter FY69 (October – December), MACPD reported that the PSYOP structure was at its full officer strength. This report would be temporary, as the MACPD also submitted a new MTOE designed for better organization.[52] As for equipment, ten new printing presses replaced ones "worn beyond economic repairability" and loudspeaker systems were upgraded.[53] While these technological improvements were not as innovative as those being developed for intelligence collection, the Army was improving its PSYOP equipment. MACV also instituted project ENSURE, "Expedited Non-Standard Urgent Requirements for Equipment," to solve problems with PSYOP equipment maintenance and logistical support. Despite these gains in personnel and

[51] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 3rd Quarter FY 68, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.
[52] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 1st Quarter FY 69, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.
[53] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 3rd Quarter FY 68, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.

equipment during this period, MACV continued to struggle with effective PSYOP implementation. The technical tools were in place, but the use of these tools remained not fully effective. In an example of a lesson being re-learned, the report cited above identified a problem in that there was "only a minor contribution to civic action effort by PSYOP units."[54] The report went on explain that "for optimum results, any type of civic action must be exploited by well planned PSYOP to explain to the people what is going to be done, what is being done, and what has been done for them."[55] This lesson had been supposedly learned earlier, but its continued presence as a "finding" indicates a pattern of lessons being "learned" but not effectively implemented.

Nevertheless, the Command Progress Report from the 2nd Quarter FY69 (January – March) noted several genuine improvements. Two equipment requests had been fulfilled with the deployment of the Mobile Audiovisual Unit AN/MSQ-85 replacing the Audiovisual Jeepster and the AN/UIH-6 replacing the Public Address Set AN/UIH-5.[56] Both upgrades provided improved mechanical reliability and performance.

Additionally, CA and PSYWAR funds had more than quadrupled from 6,292,290 Vietnamese piasters in 1967 to 27,180,558 piasters in 1968. This Command Report also marked the first mention of the Kit Carson Scout program. This program, which will be examined in more detail in the next

[54] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 1st Quarter FY 69, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.
[55] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 1st Quarter FY 69, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.
[56] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 2nd Quarter FY 69, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.

chapter, incorporated former *Hoi Chanh* into ongoing operations by employing them as scouts for US units. This quarter would prove to be the high-water mark of the US PSYOP program in South Vietnam. The infrastructure was finally in place to support the technical means of producing and distributing PSYOP on a theater-wide scope and at a scale befitting the demands of the war.

External Studies

The Department of Defense conducted several studies on the efficacy of psychological operations during the Vietnam War, most of which were conducted by ARPA. One such study, published on 15 March 1969, sought to assess the effectiveness of PSYOP leaflets. Here the reader should recall that the question of leaflet effectiveness had been examined for quite some time, even inviting an investigation from Abrams in the summer of 1968.

This ARPA study presented a method of "quickly" evaluating the effectiveness of new leaflets.[57] It presented several verities about pre-testing leaflets. The first was not to ask friendly portions of the population to test hostile or neutral leaflets because their judgments would not be objective.[58] The second was not to ask Vietnamese who lived close to American bases or who were employed by Americans to test leaflets because their acquiescent

[57] The study methodically examined 38,000 ratings of PSYOP leaflets from a population of 1,757 Vietnamese selected from the following categories:
347 personnel living in enemy infiltrated urban fringe areas
304 personnel living in enemy infiltrated or enemy controlled areas
644 SVN *Hoi Chanh*
104 NVN *Hoi Chanh*
160 VC PW
198 NVA PW

[58] H. C. Bush, "Pretesting PSYOPS Leaflets in Vietnam." [Calif.?]: Pacific Technical Analysis, 1969, 12.

attitudes toward Americans could be misleading. Third, if leaflets were to be pretested on prisoners of war, the VC and NVA should be separated because the two groups had different motivations and attitudes. The study also found that the NVA PW seemed to be invulnerable to PSYOP leaflets.[59] Part of the reason for the success of the NVA resistance to PSYOP was the focus on resistance to enemy propaganda planned by General Giap. As noted by Davidson, Giap's "Political Indoctrination and Education Program (I & E Program) was his most important, if invisible, weapon, and in twenty-five years of combat it never failed him or his cause."[60] The imperviousness of the NVA to the largest US PSYOP effort in history was impressive evidence of Giap's understanding of the centrality of psychological warfare to the revolutionary soldier.[61] The study also presented other suggestions for testing. For leaflets aimed at VC leaders, the testing should be conducted at corps *Chieu Hoi* centers — for other VC the testing could be conducted at provincial level *Chieu Hoi* centers. The study recommended that leaflets be tested on men rather than women, for the simple reason that among the South Vietnamese, men had higher literacy rates than women.[62] It also suggested using men under age 40 because they had better eyesight and were typically more literate than men

[59] Ibid.
[60] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 60.
[61] Ngyuen Giap Vo, *People's War, People's Army; The Viet Cong Insurrection Manual for Underdeveloped Countries.* (New York: Praeger, 1962), 119.
[62] Bush, "Pretesting PSYOPS Leaflets in Vietnam",17.

over age 40.[63] Additionally, the study recommended testing leaflets on non-military local leaders and opinion setters, such as local parish priests.[64]

According to ARPA, the key for PSYOP was to determine the role of influencers or opinion leaders in the local community, rather than merely applying stereotypes of "the mandarin and the peasant." PSYOP had been guilty of assuming local villages had a mandarin who was the opinion leader in the community and that everyone else was a peasant who followed the mandarin's lead. This erroneous assumption about how Vietnamese village life worked had undermined MACV's previous approach to PSYOP testing. Some Americans held incorrect views of Vietnamese society, but this began to change with repeated studies of Vietnamese rural life. By 1969 these cultural studies were providing PSYOP personnel at MACV with a more nuanced and accurate understanding of village life in Vietnam.[65]

The ARPA study also noted certain people who should be avoided because their opinions were unrepresentative of village attitudes. The first category were students, who knew only what they had learned in school, lacked wisdom, and tended to think they should have an opinion.[66] The second group was local merchants, many of whom were ethnic Chinese.[67] The third group was those already working closely with Americans such as RD Cadre and ARVN soldiers.[68]

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[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Bush, "Pretesting PSYOPS Leaflets in Vietnam", 65.
[66] Ibid., 17.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.

The study likewise noted that there were significant differences among the four corps tactical zones. Each was involved in a distinct style of war, which required nuanced messaging, rather than the "one-size-fits-all" message then emanating from the MACV and the GVN.[69]

Senior Officer Exit Reports

In an effort to capture institutional knowledge and mitigate the effects of constant turnover in the command, MACV directed that senior officers provide written reports prior to their departure. These reports were known as "Senior Officer Debriefs." These individuals were then often sent on speaking tours by the Army to share their insights with units scheduled to deploy to Vietnam and to various institutes in the Army's educational system. We will examine two debriefs, the first from BG William R. Desobry, the Senior US advisor in the IV CTZ, and the second from the 4th PSYOP Group's first commander, LTC Beck.

Brigadier General William R. Desobry

BG William R. Desobry served in Vietnam from August 1965 to January 1968 with the US Army Advisory Group in the IV CTZ and provided several insights in his report applicable to psychological operations. His extended length of service in Vietnam made his insights particularly useful.

Desobry was generally pleased with the reorganization of CORDS that gave the Chief of the PSYOP Division, instead of a CORDS representative, responsibility for the control and coordination of all psychological operations in

[69] Bush, "Pretesting PSYOPS Leaflets in Vietnam", 60.

IV CTZ. His reasoning was that this arrangement provided effective oversight and direction to PSYOP.[70] It also facilitated the close working relationship between the IV Corps Psywar advisor and the 40th Polwar BN Advisor, with the 10th PSYOP BN in direct support. In January 1968 the propaganda support center became operational in IV CTZ, another change that enabled better PSYOP support, coordination, and execution.[71]

Desobry noted that some personnel gains had been made, but that the IV CTZ was still short nine PSYOP assistants and an administrative officer in the Psyops division of the Advisory Group. Additionally, the 10th PSYOP battalion was still short various personnel.[72] Regarding the execution of PSYOP, Desobry found that face-to-face engagement was the most effective means of communication and that by placing PSYOP teams with military operations one could reach people in remote areas.[73] One way he suggested for such effects to be realized was to form combined ARVN/US Psyops Field Teams. These teams, he felt, were the most effective way to exploit VC vulnerabilities because by using PSYOP appeals made in consonance with the local situation, the message had greater effect than using generic, national appeals.[74]

Desobry noted a particularly successful combination of PSYOP with combat operations based on intelligence exploited during operation Game Warden, which sought to deny the VC the use of the resources along the

[70] William R. Desobry, "Debriefing Report of BG William R. Desobry, August 1965 - January 1968", APO: Headquarters, US Army Advisory Group, IV CTZ, MACV Advisory Team #96, 1968, 94.
[71] Ibid., 95.
[72] Ibid., 94.
[73] Ibid., 95.
[74] Ibid.

Mekong River. Game Warden was based on the latest intelligence about VC revenue streams, which noted the importance of VC tax collection to the funding of their operations. The IV CTZ began conducting riverine patrols, which the US Navy called PBR patrols. PBR was short for Patrol Boat, River - the designation of the small watercraft used by the Navy for riverine operations in South Vietnam. These units forced VC tax collectors to leave those rivers patrolled by the PBRs; denying the VC much needed tax revenue.[75] According to Desobry, "when PBRs first entered IV CTZ, their primary objective in psychological operations was to make sure the people understood what PBRs were doing and why."[76] This psychological warfare effort had caused a noticeable change in the disposition of the people on the river toward the PBRs. After this first objective was accomplished, the emphasis shifted to pro-GVN PSYOP messages.[77] The people in the Delta were no longer afraid of the patrols. The change in their attitude was evident in their behavior, as they increasingly approaching the patrols and either made requests for medical evacuation, provided volunteer information on Viet Cong activities, or rallied to the GVN.[78]

One weakness noted by Desobry, however, was the GVN's failure to meet the population's expectations in routine matters. In his experience, the failure was particularly acute when GVN officials either refused or delayed payment of

[75] Ibid., 105.
[76] Ibid.
[77] PYSOP Policy 53 was issued after successful operations had already been conducted in the IV CTZ. While JUSPAO was acting upon lessons learned, it was also reactive in nature.
[78] Desobry, "Debriefing Report of BG William R. Desobry, August 1965 - January 1968", 105.

rewards for information leading to the seizure of VC weapons.[79] PSYOP was effective in generating leads and tips; but when the promised rewards were slow to materialize, the program faltered. Here, the continuing problem of the GVN being unable to meet the people's expectations of performance undermined what would have otherwise been a successful PSYOP campaign.

Desobry's qualitative analysis afforded better indications of success and failure than were being collected at higher command levels. While his report could not easily be coded or aggregated into a computer database, it nevertheless provided useful insights into how PSYOP were succeeding or failing at the tactical level. Had MACV actually learned the lessons it was capturing rather than merely cataloging them, it might not have received the scathing review it did from the outgoing 4th PSYOP Group commander.

Lieutenant Colonel William J. Beck

LTC William J. Beck was the 4th PSYOP Group's first commander; he served in Vietnam from 15 October 1967 to 7 October 1968.[80] His exit report noted several challenges with the implementation of MACV's PSYOP program and offered several pertinent recommendations for enhancing it. In Beck's estimation, the challenges were specific to problems with the GVN, military intelligence, logistics, training, command emphasis, and evaluations.

[79] Ibid., 78.
[80] William J. Beck, (Lieutenant Colonel, USA). "Senior Officer Debriefing Program: Report of Lieutenant Colonel William J. Beck", Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 31 January 1969.

He noted two concerns with the GVN. The first was the difference between the GVN and US philosophies regarding the proper approach to and the proper audience for PSYOP.[81] Beck stated that RVNAF PSYOP could not be considered equivalent to US PSYOP because of these differences.[82] South Vietnamese "in house" PSYOP were conducted for two main purposes: the prevention of coups, and the countering of VC/NVA propaganda directed against ARVN troops.[83] The second deficiency Beck identified with GVN was the lack of demonstrable progress upon which to build a successful PSYOP campaign. GVN's greatest challenge was the "lack of identity of the government with the people (and vice versa)."[84] Beck then noted "propaganda needs great impact in order to overcome the effects of such a gap."[85] Further complicating this problem was the fact that the GVN had "failed to produce a national symbol (like a father figure) to rally the people around, and appears to be making no attempt to do so."[86] In the North, Ho Chi Minh had made himself the face of the movement, captured the narrative of nationalism, and successfully exploited those sentiments to his advantage. The lack of a comparable GVN counter-narrative, coupled with its inept handling of the very real and visible problems of the estimated 2.5 million refugees, land reform, and economic progress, undermined efforts to connect the population with the government. In short, no amount of PSYOP could fix the problems that GVN had with its inability to

[81] Ibid., 4.
[82] Ibid., 5.
[83] Catton, *Diem's Final Failure: Prelude to America's War in Vietnam*, 95.
[84] Ibid., 1.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.

govern effectively. Day-to-day, the people of South Vietnam witnessed the shortcomings and failures of the GVN and were too intelligent to be fooled by PSYOP messages, which bore little resemblance to reality. By the time Beck departed from Vietnam, none of the aforementioned issues had "made substantial-enough headway to be effectively capitalized on by the propagandist."[87]

Beck did not place sole blame on the GVN for PSYOP's difficulties. There were also problems at MACV headquarters. He noted that in Vietnam the "intelligence is inadequate for PSYOP purposes."[88] According to Beck, military intelligence had not conducted adequate analysis of NVA/VC allegiance, cohesion, and other factors to be exploited.[89] Beck noted pointedly that a lesson learned in other counterinsurgencies was that attacks on enemy infrastructure, such as the VCI, required the well-joined efforts of PSYOP and intelligence.[90] But because of the lack of support from intelligence, the 4th PSYOP Group had to establish a more robust intelligence-processing system than would be normal.[91]

Beck also cited the inadequate logistical support provided to PSYOP. He noted three reasons for this deficiency:

1. Specialized PSYOP equipment.
2. The high consumption of critical supplies.
3. The low priorities assigned to PSYOP requirements.[92]

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[87] Beck, "Senior Officer Debriefing Program", 2.
[88] Ibid., 6.
[89] Ibid., 3.
[90] Ibid., 4.
[91] Ibid., 7.
[92] Ibid., 19.

Logistical support to PSYOP continued to rely on Quick Reacting Procurement (QRP), which functioned well for short-term or immediate needs. This system was insufficient, however, for the long-term sustainment of ongoing operations, especially given the large volume of PSYOP leaflets and other material being produced. Westmoreland's command emphasis had not energized the MACV J4 to support PSYOP properly. Beck's wrote his report four months after General Abrams assumed command of MACV, and Beck's pessimistic assessment of PSYOP integration within the staff suggests that to that point General Abrams had not taken adequate steps to correct these discrepancies.

Regarding personnel requirements, PSYOP staffing levels were adequate but not yet optimal; but the training level of incoming personnel was improving. The percent of Fort Bragg-trained officers who had completed the 10-week PSYOP course had increased from forty percent in October 1967 to eighty-five percent a year later.[93] As Beck left command, the 4th PSYOP Group had 946 US personnel assigned, in addition to 173 Vietnamese. These numbers were adequate to meet the existing mission.[94] Beck's assessment of GVN capabilities probably underpinned his recommendation that GVN PSYOP "should use a system of US management with Vietnamese staffing."[95] The current staffing at the 4th PSYOP Group was 119 Vietnamese civilians, and an active request for fifty-four more.[96]

[93] Ibid., 14.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 19.
[96] Ibid.

Beck noted continuing deficiencies in the implementation of MACV Directive 525-3. He lamented that civic actions were too-often viewed as a separate mission, despite the fact that they represented propaganda "of the deed" and fell within PSYOP interest. According to Beck, too few of the ongoing civic-action missions had any PSYOP planning involved.[97] Also, while command emphasis was a vital aspect of support to PSYOP, it unfortunately led to unskilled people composing PSYOP messages. Beck noted that "command emphasis, however, must not be confused with personal involvement in the formation of propaganda and reliance must be placed on established PSYOP development systems composed of persons with special skills."[98] Well-intentioned but ill-conceived messages led to "audience conditioning" and in a way inured the population to PSYOP, making genuine persuasion more difficult.[99]

Another lingering consequence of Westmoreland's command emphasis was impatience. The combination of the expectation of rapid results, coupled with PSYOP's inability to demonstrate quantifiable progress led to gimmickry such as the use of the "Ace of Spades" playing card as a harbinger of death, sky-lighting effects to "scare" the Vietnamese, and ghostly speaker broadcasts at night designed to create fear and chaos. Such measures represented desperate attempts for a "dramatic breakthrough," as if the right PSYOP message would

[97] Ibid., 7.
[98] Ibid., 12.
[99] Ibid., 11.

spontaneously cause the VC to collapse.[100] The measures also revealed an inadequate understanding of Vietnamese culture because the Vietnamese did not view the Ace of Spades as a harbinger of death. The symbol was a transposition of American views of the card. In Beck's view, such gimmicks did not produce long-term results but actually undermined the work of PSYOP.[101]

Beck also identified another continuing problem for PSYOP as the dearth of effective evaluations. Too often PSYOP only received a cursory evaluation focused on measures of performance rather than effectiveness. Beck noted that the 4th PSYOP Group was working to counter this condition by developing techniques and procedures of audience surveys and interviews to determine the effectiveness of various PSYOP campaigns.[102] Beck believed that the progress would take some time, but would begin to bear fruit as outside agencies such as ARPA became more involved in the effort.[103] Beck did not merely identify problems, however, he also made twenty recommendations regarding PSYOP improvement. They included the need for the following:

1. Increased intelligence support to PSYOP.
2. Better coordinating Civic Action and PSYOP.
3. Formalizing the face-to-face dissemination method.
4. Precluding commanders from writing their own leaflets.
5. Developing solutions to the inadequate logistical support.[104]

Beck's recommendations will be evaluated in the next phase of the war to determine the extent to which MACV acted upon them.

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[100] Ibid., 12.
[101] Ibid., 13.
[102] Ibid., 11.
[103] Bush, "Pretesting PSYOPS Leaflets in Vietnam", 1969.
[104] Beck, "Senior Officer Debriefing Program", 20-23.

Desobry's and Beck's reports indicate that systemic problems with PSYOP continued through 1968 in the areas of evaluations, RVNAF coordination, intelligence support, command emphasis, and integrated planning. PSYOP were still seen as an add-on to combat and civic-action operations and not incorporated from the point of conception. The lack of a J7 to coordinate PSYOP requirements within the MACV staff was having a pervasive, negative effect.[105]

Implementation of Previous Recommendations

At this point, the reader should recall that in June 1966, Westmoreland had directed the MACV J5 to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the MACV PSYWAR organization. A key finding of that report was the requirement for a J7 to coordinate the PSYOP effort. By June 1969, despite several organizational changes, MACV had still not acted on this recommendation. Without a J7, the nexus of integrating PSYOP and intelligence at MACV rested solely with the commander. Westmoreland viewed himself at the *de facto* J7 and gave PSYOP priority within MACV. Such prioritization, however, did not continue under Abrams. Abrams did not share Westmoreland's enthusiasm for PSYOP, at one point quipping that the billions of leaflets dropped had had zero effect on the enemy.[106] Were this just an off-hand quip, one could probably disregard it. But, this was Abrams' only recorded remark about PSYOP on the MACV tapes

[105] Beck, "Senior Officer Debriefing Program", 19.
[106] Lewis Sorley, *Vietnam Chronicles: The Abrams Tapes, 1968-1972*. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2004), 436.

made during Abrams command of MACV.[107] Similarly, there is no mention of Abrams' guidance or comments about PSYOP in MACV's official history reports. The absence of any discussion of PSYOP is a significant indicator of Abrams' lack of command emphasis on psychological operations. There is a striking contrast between Westmoreland's highly personal, intense, and at times dysfunctional involvement in PSYOP and Abrams' noticeable neglect of the same.

One must also remember that in late August 1966, the MACPD reported that "the PSYOP staff and JUSPAO, had begun to conduct propaganda analysis and evaluation of enemy psychological strengths and weaknesses, assessment of PSYOP effects, and dissemination of information concerning PSYOP opportunities gathered by intelligence agencies."[108] MACV had recognized the deficiency and active sought way to correct it. Despite these attempts at change, lack of systemic, meaningful evaluations of PSYOP effectiveness continued to degrade the PSYOP effort at MACV. One example of this ongoing problem occurred on 28 July 1968 when the MACV CofS sent the following handwritten note to the MACV J3:

> I continually hear complaints about our leaflet drops. Amb Komer, Gen Rosson and Gen Abrams have questioned the tonnage of leaflets we drop. Can you suggest some ways for us to take a closer look at the problem?[109]

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[107] Lewis Sorley, *Vietnam Chronicles: The Abrams Tapes, 1968-1972*. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2004).
[108] MACV, *Command History, 1966*, 557.
[109] MACV Psychological Operations Directorate, Subject: "Tonnage Involved in Leaflet Drops", 31 July 1968, National Archives II, College Park, MD, MACJ3-11 RG201_34_23.

The clear implication here is that the command was dropping leaflets indiscriminately and wastefully. The MACPD responded by citing a John's Hopkins University study of leaflet saturation.[110] Based on this study, the MACPD calculated that to cover South Vietnam with an effective distribution of leaflets for just one theme would require over two billion leaflets. [111] Because the MACPD was only using 100 million leaflets per theme, the number of leaflets being distributed was well below the recommended level. The MACPD response also mentioned that the Pleiku radio station was nearing completion with 15,000 pre-set radios ready for distribution.[112] PSYOP continued to emphasize TV broadcasts, face-to-face communications, and the distribution of posters, magazines, and booklets, but in many instances leaflets were the only effective means of reaching Vietnam's remote rural population and other areas under VC control.[113]

In a display of the ongoing effort to conduct effective evaluations, the MACPD stated that it was monitoring the number of *Hoi Chanh*, weapons and ordnance turned in, as well as prisoners of war, to determine leaflet effectiveness. It acknowledged, though, that sufficient data did not yet exist for an empirical evaluation.[114] The fact that this late in the war, PSYOP would have to justify its existence indicates two things. First, that Abrams lacked an appreciation for PSYOP; and second, that PSYOP was unable to articulate the

[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.

capabilities it brought to the war. These two facts ultimately conspired to undermine a significance PSYOP might have had after an effective infrastructure had been created for them in South Vietnam. PSYOP had been laboring for the three years prior to Tet to build an effective distribution infrastructure, adequate production facilities, *Chieu Hoi* messaging, County Fairs, MEDCAPs, etc. The fact that the North Vietnamese overestimated the potential for a popular uprising in the wake of Tet, might have been partially caused by the inundation the South Vietnamese received at the hands of US PSYOP efforts to bolster the GVN and connect the South Vietnamese people with their own government. While an exhaustive study of the effects of US PSYOP at countering Tet propaganda is beyond the scope of this study, it is a subject matter worth exploration.

In order to assess learning that did or did not occur during Phase II, it will be helpful to reach back to the end of Phase I. Many recommendations were presented to MACV during the previous phase of the war. An evaluation of the degree to which those recommendations were acted upon will shed some light on how well MACV performed as a learning organization regard its psychological operations efforts.

The final PSYOP study conducted during Phase I of the war was completed in October 1967. The MACV J5 led the study and had made the following eight recommendations to Westmoreland:

1. ARPA reports on PSYOP be submitted to the J5 for consolidation of recommendations to COMUSMACV relative to PSYOP.

2. That the current ongoing revision of MACV Directive 10-1, Organization and Functions--Psychological Operations, specifically address the study's conclusions.
3. MACPD in conjunction with the J2, determine steps to incorporate PSYOP needs during interrogations, to expedite processing and reporting of PWs and returnees, and to develop appropriate combined procedures with ARVN.
4. ACofS, J4, and MACPD initiate a staff review on or about 1 February 1968 to determine effectiveness at operating level of supply and maintenance support for PSYOP equipment, to include US, ARVN, ROK and Thai forces.
5. Department of the Army (DA) be advised through CINCPAC of the urgent need for expediting expansion of the 6th PSYOP battalion to group size and be further requested to furnish a time schedule for implementation (USARV/J1 action).
6. MACPD determines the validity of the proposed equipment needs and takes follow-up action as appropriate.
7. ACofS J1 continue the development of a comprehensive program to focus command interest at all levels upon the urgent necessity of assuring troop conformance to proper standards of military conduct and discipline, and additionally, that J1 encourage the increased indoctrination of US troops in the background religious, culture, and customs of the Vietnamese.
8. ACofS conduct follow-on appraisals of PSYOP semiannually, as of 1 May and 1 November each year for the previous six-months period and, further, that this function be included in the MACV Organization and Functions Manual.

Westmoreland approved the study's recommendations in November 1967.[115]

The first recommendation was partially implemented. The MACV J5 did not consolidate ARPA reports on PSYOP, but they were disseminated throughout the command.[116]

The second recommendation, that the revised MACV Directive 10-1, Organization and Functions--Psychological Operations address the study's

[115] MACV, *Command History, 1967, Volume II*, 646.
[116] Bush, "Pretesting PSYOPS Leaflets in Vietnam", 1969.

conclusions, was implemented.[117] The directive did not specifically address each of these recommendations; however, it did present both broad and specific guidance for the implementation of the recommendations. Directive 10-1 was revised in December 1967 and again in July 1968, which demonstrates steady improvement. The key change in July concerned the PSYOP coordinating committee and operations centers. The CTZs had been encouraged to establish those entities, but they were now directed to do so.[118] These operations centers became operational in March 1969, nearly 8 months after the MACV directive was updated.[119] The lag time between MACV's instruction and its implementation demonstrates a relatively low priority given to PSYOP by subordinate headquarters.

The third recommendation, that MACPD and the J2 jointly determine steps to improve the integration of PSYOP needs during interrogations, was

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[117] An updated version of MACV Directive 10-1 would be issued in December 1967.
[118] The previous verbiage of both subsections was
e. The creation of US/FWMAF PSYOP Operation Centers in each CTZ is encouraged. These centers should maintain close liaison with the counterpart PSYWAR Operation Center.[118]
f. The PSYOP Coordinating Committee, composed of US and Vietnamese agencies and personnel, has proven to be a useful coordinating mechanism. Such committees will be operational in each province and as appropriate at regional level.

These were changed to read:
e. (Superseded) The PSYOP Coordinating Committee, composed of US and Vietnamese agencies and personnel, has proven to be a useful coordinating mechanism. Such committees will be operational in each province.
f. (Superseded) US/FWMAF PSYOP Operation Centers will be established in each CTZ. The Operation Center should maintain close liaison with the counterpart POLWAR Operation Center and with Provincial Coordinating Committees to insure maximum effective use of PSYOP resources and materials.
See Military Assistance Command Vietnam. Change 1 to MACV Directive Number 10-1: Organization and Functions – Psychological Operations (RCS: MACPD-O3(R-1)). Saigon: MACPD, 10 July 1968.
[119] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report 1-28 February 1969", Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 22 March 1969, 1.

implemented. This included the development of an NVA interrogation tool using yes and no questions based on the latest intelligence regarding NVA morale and motivation.[120]

Little evidence indicating whether the fourth recommendation regarding the study of logistical support to PSYOP was implemented. Project ENSURE and the QRP were stop-gap measures to mitigate the effects of the lack of logistical support PSYOP received from MACV. Additionally, Beck's report and other indicators continued to highlight the lack of appropriate logistical support to PSYOP.[121]

The fifth recommendation was implemented with the expansion of the 6th PSYOP Battalion to the 4th PSYOP Group. Additionally, by October 1968 staffing levels and training were adequate.[122]

The sixth recommendation, regarding PSYOP equipment, required continual attention. The USARV Command report for the 3rd Quarter FY68 (April – June) indicates that ten new printing presses were purchased to replace presses "worn beyond economic repairability."[123] Other improved equipment such as mobile audio-visual vehicles and loudspeakers were also introduced into Vietnam.

According to USARV Command Progress Reports, MACV continued the "Look Sharp" campaign, aimed at getting soldiers to respect Vietnamese

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[120] Memorandum Subject: "Input for LTC Coleman-Significant events in PDS, CY 69", 13 March 1970, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[121] Beck, "Senior Officer Debriefing Program", 19.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 3rd Quarter FY 68, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.

customs and background.[124] This program was in direct response to the seventh recommendation, that the MACV J1 focus on "troop conformance to proper standards of military conduct and discipline, and additionally, that J1 encourage the increased indoctrination of US troops in the background religious, culture, and customs of the Vietnamese."[125]

The eighth recommendation was also implemented. PSYOP semiannual evaluations were conducted on 1 May and 1 November of each year. [126]

In sum, a comparison between the December 1967 PSYOP report and the conditions existing in June 1969 indicates that MACV implemented six of the eight recommendations of the earlier study. This indicates a fairly significant degree of action on what it had learned about itself and about PSYOP.

Summary

During Phase II of the war, PSYOP within MACV continued to evolve. PSYOP made some positive gains during this phase, but also suffered from problems similar to those experienced during the Phase I.

On one hand, PSYOP reacted nimbly to the Tet Offensive by rapidly producing new themes to meet the changing conditions on the ground. PSYOP also implemented many of the recommendations from the previous time period.

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[124] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 4th Quarter FY 67, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC. See also the "Look Sharp" pamphlet, http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/docrepository/LookSharp.pdf, accessed 23 January 2015.
[125] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 646.
[126] MACV Joint Message, Subject: "Appraisal of MACV Psychological Operations (68B)", May1968, National Archives II, College Park, MD, MACJ3-11 RG472 PSYOP_Civil Affairs Box

These changes were positive and showed that PSYOP was learning and growing.

On the other hand, the lack of effective evaluation criteria, the now *lack* of command emphasis, and the failure to understand the long lead-time for PSYOP effectiveness continued to hinder the mission's effectiveness. Additionally, PSYOP planning was often late and reactive to emerging trends and issues.

Overall, the 4th PSYOP Group performed well both during and after Tet, but continued to struggle with logistics support, intelligence support, evaluation criteria, adequately trained personnel, command influence, and unrealistic expectations. Using the modification of Garvin's questions, we will not examine PSYOP's overall performance during this period of the war.

Analysis of Learning About PSYOP

Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Yes" for this time period. The command continually sought to learn about its PSYOP efforts and to develop measures with which to assess its effectiveness.[127] The learning agenda is also evident in the semi-annual studies MACV undertook to evaluate its PSYOP program.[128] Such efforts, however, were often based on a flawed assumption about correctness of their mission. MACV psychological warriors sought to learn how to do things

[127] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume I*, 561.
[128] MACV Joint Message Subject: "Appraisal of MACV Psychological Operations (68B)", 01 September 1968 National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 Psyop_Civil Affairs Box 14.

better, but did not question the underlying assumptions about the effectiveness of what they were doing.

Was MACV open to discordant information regarding PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Yes" here as well. MACV sought the advice of external agencies to rate the effectiveness of PSYOP and to improve its efforts.[129] MACV was not satisfied with the status quo regarding its PSYOP program. Within MACV, PSYOP also continually responded to differing opinions and perspectives on its effectiveness.[130] When questioned about the efficacy of leaflet drops and the reach of messages to Vietnamese audiences, PSYOP responded with a study from John's Hopkins University - not to support its own position, but rather to show how its position had been developed from the best of what academia had to offer.[131]

Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with PSYOP?

MACV rates a "No" in this area. While MACV did learn technically about the production of PSYOP products, it failed to develop meaningful evaluation criteria, partially because of the desire for rapid results. The lessons that had to be re-learned were the more important ones: integration of PSYOP with combat and civic-action operations, appropriate command emphasis, local versus national appeals, and intelligence support.[132] Changes such as these should not have had to be continually re-learned. LTC Beck had noted that

[129] Bush, "Pretesting PSYOPS Leaflets in Vietnam".
[130] MACV Psychological Operations Directorate, Subject: "Tonnage Involved in Leaflet Drops", 31 July 1968, National Archives II, College Park, MD, MACJ3-11 RG201_34_23.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Desobry, "Debriefing Report of BG William R. Desobry, August 1965 - January 1968", 95

face-to-face persuasion had to be formalized, but the primacy of face-to-face persuasion was already a part of PSYOP doctrine.[133] This finding had been previously validated by many people including BG Desobry's debrief from the year prior, in which he noted that appeals made to the local situation are more effective that national appeals.[134]

The senior officer debriefing process was laudable, but it had several shortcomings. First, there was often inadequate overlap with the incoming replacement. Second, merely reading the reports was insufficient to ensure that key lessons did not have to be relearned. The lessons were being learned in Vietnam, but the institutional Army's preoccupation with Western Europe often prevented changes to training.[135]

Did MACV prevent the loss of critical knowledge when key people from PSYOP left the command?

MACV rates a "No" here as well. PSYOP lost significant knowledge as various individuals left the command. The difference between General Abrams' approach to PSYOP and General Westmoreland's is informative. Westmoreland's departure corrected the micromanagement of PSYOP, but created another problem for PSYOP within MACV. General Abrams did not grasp what PSYOP brought to the fight and so did not place appropriate emphasis on them. LTC Beck's and BG Desroby's debriefs also highlight the issues caused by personnel turnover within MACV.

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[133] Department of the Army. Department of the Army Field Manual 33-1: Psychological Operations: U.S. Army Doctrine. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 18 May 1965), 17
[134] Ibid.
[135] Benedict, "A Critical Analysis of US Army Intelligence Organizations and Concepts", 28.

Did MACV act on what it knew regarding PSYOP?

MACV rates a "Yes" in this area, based mostly on the fact that it effectively implemented six of the eight recommendations from the J5's November 1967 PSYOP study.[136] MACV also revised Directive 10-1 in10 July 1968, specifically directing that PSYOP Coordinating Committees be made operational in each province and that US/FWMAF PSYOP operation centers be established in each CTZ.[137] These changes demonstrated steady improvement.[138]

Net Assessment

During this period of the war, PSYOP rated a "Yes" on three of the five criteria, thus receiving a rating of "**Marginally Effective.**" See Table 10.

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[136] MACV, *Command History 1967, Volume II*, 646.
[137] Military Assistance Command Vietnam. Change 1 to MACV Directive Number 10-1: Organization and Functions – Psychological Operations (RCS: MACPD-O3(R-1)). Saigon: MACPD, 10 July 1968.
[138] Ibid.

Garvin's Learning Questions	January 1968 – July 1969
	PSYOP
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for PSYOP?	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding PSYOP?	**+**
Did MACV avoid repeat mistakes with PSYOP?	**-**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from PSYOP left the command?	**-**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding PSYOP?	**+**
Total	**3**

TABLE 10 – PSYOP ASSESSMENT, 1968 - 1969

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

PSYOP gains during this time period were largely technical improvements involving psychological message production and delivery. MACV's ability to produce millions of leaflets and rapidly disseminate them, did not equate to more effective messages. More meaningful improvements to MACV's PSYOP program were thwarted by four factors: expectation, integration, evaluation, and prioritization. First, MACV continued to hold unrealistic expectations about the timelines involved in psychological change, which led to the use of gimmickry in an effort to create dramatic results. Second, MACV acted as if the PSYOP function were separate and apart from combat and civic-action operations. This separation led to ineffective planning and the use of PSYOP as

an afterthought during both combat and RD operations. Third, MACV lacked measures of effectiveness with which to evaluate its PSYOP program. The number of VC and NVA who rallied under the *Chieu Hoi* Program was the only means by which PSYOP could quantify its success. This led to a concentration on counting ralliers rather than using the ralliers to gain insight into the opinions and beliefs of the VC and the South Vietnamese population. Finally, PSYOP were not properly resourced to conduct their mission because of the relatively low priority of support it received from intelligence, personnel, and logistics.

The next chapter will examine what role these factors played in the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP.

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10

The Coordination of Intelligence and PSYOP, January 1968 to June 1969

This phase of the war presents several vantage pointes from which to examine the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. It will first provide a brief overview of major events related to their coordination, followed by an examination of the Kit Carson Scout program, lessons-learned reports, senior-officer exit reports, and PSYOP policy letters.

Overview of Intelligence and PSYOP Coordination

The first major event during this period of the war demonstrating coordination between intelligence and PSYOP occurred on 8 February 1968. Following a meeting with Ambassador Komer, the MACV J2 informed the MACPD that Komer had directed that a PSYOP campaign be conducted against the 9th VC Division.[1] Komer was likely frustrated by the results of the Tet Offensive and sought to have an immediate effect on the situation. The MACV J2 provided current enemy locations to the MACPD, which in turn coordinated the operation with the General Political Warfare Department (GPWD) to prevent possible information fratricide – a term which here means the competing or contradictory PSYOP messages. The MACPD rapidly developed a leaflet, the

[1] MACPD Fact Sheet, Subject: "PSYOP Against 9th VC Division", 9 February 1968, National Archives II, College Park, MD, MACJ3-11 RG490_37_10_06.

GPWD translated it into Vietnamese, and the 4th PSYOP Group printed it. MACPD then delivered the leaflets and taped messages to the II FFV G5 to be disseminated – all within twenty-four hours. The following morning, loudspeaker broadcasts were made and two million additional leaflets were printed.

The incident demonstrates that coordination between intelligence and PSYOP at MACV was well structured to react to immediate requests. The technical and tactical means of production rapidly produced the required material, which indicates that PSYOP and intelligence were able to coordinate effectively. However, the episode also suggests several problems. Ambassador Komer's involvement in a small-scale matter was curious, though probably explained by the impulse to "do something" about the Tet Offensive. Komer was in charge of pacification efforts, and not military operations. The Ambassador directed PSYOP against the 9th Division was issued without consulting either PSYOP or GVN/GPWD expertise. At the tactical level, PSYOP and intelligence were well coordinated in this operation; however, at the strategic level this incident reveals a degree of dysfunction.

Throughout this period, PSYOP personnel were on a continual quest to ensure their messages were reaching the intended audience. The 4th PSYOP Group incorporated the latest intelligence in its psychological attacks against the VC/NVN. In a 13 March 1969 memorandum highlighting successes over the past year, the Group noted that the Propaganda Development Section (PDS)

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utilized such intelligence to produce "leaflets-at-a-glance."[2] These leaflets were an example of tactical coordination between intelligence and PSYOP and worth examining in more detail.

The VC/NVA understood the threat that US PSYOP presented and had instituted various techniques of counter-propaganda. The MACV J2 identified one of these techniques and noted in a report that recent "intelligence information and interrogation reports indicated that enemy personnel were forbidden to pick up and read allied leaflets."[3] PSYOP responded to this intelligence by developing "leaflets-at-a-glance," which contained bright colors and simple text in large, bold print and designed to be read while on the ground.[4] Additionally, PSYOP developed the mini-poster, which was long and thin and could be affixed to many of the trees and poles that abounded in Vietnam.[5] This poster could be read and understood quickly while walking by, without the requirement to stop and read it.

Another example of such coordination was the development of the PSYOP Testing and Evaluation Branch's leaflet-testing panels. These teams were created based on an ARPA study recommending changes to leaflet evaluation.[6] The panels incorporated *Chieu Hoi* ralliers and Vietnamese civilians from S2 sections to get an indigenous perspective on PSYOP products. The intent was

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[2] Memorandum Subject: "Input for LTC Coleman-Significant events in PDS, CY 69", 13 March 1970, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[3] Ibid.
[4] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report 1-28 February 1969", Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 22 March 1969, 4.
[5] Memorandum Subject: "Input for LTC Coleman-Significant events in PDS, CY 69", 13 March 1970, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[6] Bush, "Pretesting PSYOPS Leaflets in Vietnam."

to improve quality and reduce the numbers of PSYOP items "deemed unsuitable for dissemination."[7] The Test and Evaluation Branch also developed an NVA interrogation tool using yes and no questions based on intelligence reports.[8] PSYOP routinely sought to use intelligence to support its operations, but this was a "pull" of intelligence by PSYOP rather than a "push" of useful intelligence from the J2. The lack of routine intelligence coordination with PSYOP required the 4th PSYOP Group to develop its own semi-monthly intelligence summary to fill the gap.[9]

To continue examining coordination between intelligence and PSYOP we will study several programs and instances in which their coordination or lack thereof is evident. The first of these is the Kit Carson Scout program.

Kit Carson Scouts

The Kit Carson Scout (KCS) program used *Hoi Chanh* as scouts for American units. These scouts provided knowledge of VC/NVA tactics and were also able to induce some of their former compatriots to surrender or rally to the government side. The heroic efforts of the KCS saved many American lives. While the program traces its history to the spring of 1966, it did not become incorporated into MACV's overall effort until Westmoreland officially endorsed it in January 1968. This program is an example of the effective coordination of

[7] Memorandum Subject: "Input for LTC Coleman-Significant events in PDS, CY 69", 13 March 1970, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[8] Ibid.
[9] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report 1-31 December 1968", Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General.

intelligence and PSYOP at MACV, but to understand the program's significance requires a brief overview.

The genesis of the program was an incident that occurred in Da Nang Province during the spring of 1966. Several VC guerrillas had rallied as part of the *Chieu Hoi* program, and almost immediately rumors started among the local populace about the fate of the men and the suffering they endured at the hands of the Americans. Local villagers spread the word that the Americans had executed Ngo Van Bay, one of the men who had rallied to a local Marine unit.[10] Rumors among the rural population were not new. But insidious ones such as this could rapidly undermine the credibility of the GVN, the validity of the *Chieu Hoi* Program, and the reputation of the Americans.

Major James Kelly, the US Army *Chieu Hoi* Advisor for I CORPS, learned about the rumors and sought a way to counter them. Some of these rumors were started by the VC as part of their own propaganda and as a way to discourage their members from switching sides. Kelly contacted the III MAF G-5, 1st Lieutenant Steve Luckey, and arranged for Bay and other ralliers to return to their local villages to counter the VC-instigated rumors. Bay and the others returned to their villagers and gave witness that they were not only alive, but also had been well treated by the Americans. The operation was successful.

Luckey saw the success of the operation and, grasping its potential, decided to build upon it. He convinced the III MAF commander of how

[10] MACCORDS Chieu Hoi Division, "The Kit Carson Scout Program 1966-1968", MACCORDS - Saigon, 18 January 1968, Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Archives, 1.

beneficial and trustworthy the former VC could be in working with US forces.[11] The program started with six scouts and any doubt about their commitment quickly evaporated. The scouts found enemy caches, identified former VC compatriots, convinced villagers to cooperate with US forces, and supported tactical PSYOP efforts by broadcasting loudspeaker appeals.[12] Of the first six scouts, five gave their lives supporting American forces. Bay was the only survivor of that group of six and served admirably, eventually being discharged with honorable service. Luckey's program was the result of opportunity, imagination, and determination at the tactical level. It was an example of junior officer initiative coupled with a military unit learning and then acting on what it had learned.

Mr. Ogden Williams, the Chief of *Chieu Hoi* under Ambassador William Porter, noticed these successes and was so impressed that he agreed both to locate funds and obtain GVN approval for a broader program.[13] Williams arranged for USAID to fund the first month's payroll for the scouts, but knew that a more permanent source would have to be found to continue the operation. He also obtained verbal support from the GVN *Chieu Hoi* ministry, but did not initially make a formal request. He refrained from doing so purposefully to avoid the inevitable policy questions that might have undermined the program before it had proved its worth.[14] In September 1966,

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[11] Ibid.
[12] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, 49.
[13] MACCORDS Chieu Hoi Division, "The Kit Carson Scout Program 1966-1968", MACCORDS - Saigon, 18 January 1968, Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Archives, 1.
[14] Ibid., 2.

Williams directed the MACJ J2 liaison officer, Lieutenant Colonel Pat Elliot, to draft implementation guidelines and determine a funding source. Elliot drafted an initial set of guidelines and arranged for the J2 Intelligence Contingency Funds to cover the expenses.

In November 1966, Major General Herman Nicherson, Jr., Commanding General 1st Marine Division (MARDIV), agreed to accept the scouts in his unit and is believed to have given them their name.[15] The Marines in I CTZ led the implementation of the program, expanding it to over thirty former VC employed as scouts. The first thirty scouts assisted in many operations, including the capture of over 45 of their compatriots. In addition to the role of convincing their fellow soldiers the US and GVN would treat them well as *Chieu Hoi*, the Kit Carson Scouts had several other functions in support of US tactical units:

1. Serve as guides or scouts.
2. Locate and identify enemy units, assembly areas, routes of movement.
3. Locate VC equipment and supplies.
4. Population control and concurrent psychological operations.
5. Interrogation of captives, suspects, or other returnees.
6. Identification VC through visual recognition.

[15] It is likely that the name came from the real life Kit Carson (1809-1868) who was a trapper, scout, Indian agent, soldier and authentic legend of the West. As was the case with many white trappers, Carson became somewhat integrated into the Indian world; he travelled and lived extensively among Indians, and his first two wives were Arapahoe and Cheyenne women. Carson was evidently unusual among trappers, however, for his self-restraint and temperate lifestyle. "Clean as a hound's tooth," according to one acquaintance, and a man whose "word was as sure as the sun comin' up," he was noted for an unassuming manner and implacable courage. In 1842, while returning to Missouri to visit his family, Carson happened to meet John C. Fremont, who soon hired him as a guide. Over the next several years, Carson helped guide Fremont to Oregon and California, and through much of the Central Rocky Mountains and the Great Basin. His service with Fremont, celebrated in Fremont's widely-read reports of his expeditions, quickly made Kit Carson a national hero, presented in popular fiction as a rugged mountain man capable of superhuman feats. http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/a_c/carson.htm, accessed 07 October 2014.

7. Identify dead or wounded VC.[16]

By June 1967, the KCS program was scheduled to grow to over fifty scouts. As word of the program's successes spread, however, other corps areas began similar uses of the scouts.[17] As a result of their successful operations, Westmoreland decided to allow the program to become an option for all US units in Vietnam.[18]

On 19 July 1967, the KCS program was transferred from the J2 to the MACCORDS/*Chieu Hoi,* though the J2 was directed to continue funding the program through the end of the year.[19] This transfer occurred largely as a result of Project Takeoff, an operation planned to get CORDS on the offensive. Takeoff was “an ambitious eight-point plan” developed by Ambassador Komer that sought to consolidate what had previously been an under-resourced and disjointed effort at rural development.[20] The transfer of operational control to CORDS took place just after Westmoreland granted Ambassador Komer's request for a parallel intelligence staff. On 29 December 1967, the MACV CofS approved a proposal that Assistance in Kind (AIK) funds be used to replace the J2 funding for the KCS. Westmoreland formally endorsed the program on 08

[16] MACCORDS Chieu Hoi Division, "The Kit Carson Scout Program 1966-1968", MACCORDS - Saigon, 18 January 1968, Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Archives, 2.
[17] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, 54.
[18] Memorandum, Subject: "Chieu Hoi Returnees in Support of Counter-insurgency Operations", MACJ264, 29 April 1967, referenced in MACCORDS Chieu Hoi Division, "The Kit Carson Scout Program 1966-1968", MACCORDS - Saigon, 18 January 1968, Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Archives, 3.
[19] Stanley R. Larsen, (Lieutenant General, USA), “Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG Stanley R. Larsen, CG, I Fielded Forces Command, Period 1 August 1965 through 31 July 1967”, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 31 July 1967, 39.
[20] George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 83-5.

January 1968, when he directed that a minimum of 100 scouts be allocated per US division, thus creating a goal of 1,500 scouts by the end.[21]

The Kit Carson Scout program grew rapidly during 1968, expanding from 244 scouts at the start of the year to 1,517 by the end of the year.[22] The scouts' actions saved many American lives as they located booby traps, negated common enemy techniques, pointed out possible ambush sites, and found significant numbers of arms caches.[23] The scouts' reputation as being loyal, competent, and brave fueled their acceptance as a credible institution. By their example and proved track record in assisting US forces, their reputation spread such that the requests from commanders for more KCS exceeded the authorized figure. According to MACV's history, it was for the specifics cited above that on 6 October 1968 led to "the authorized quota had been raised to 2,500" scouts.[24] Kit Carson Scouts continued to prove their mettle, suffering a total of 310 casualties through the end of 1968, of whom seventy-one were killed in action.[25]

MACV expanded the program in March 1969 by raising the quota of scouts from 2,500 to 2,916.[26] MACV also changed Directive 525-6 to authorize inclusion of Kit Carson Scouts in Navy Forces (NAVFORV) units.[27] This directive also clarified several points of contention. It clarified the fact that

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[21] MACCORDS Chieu Hoi Division, "The Kit Carson Scout Program 1966-1968", MACCORDS - Saigon, 18 January 1968, Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Archives, 3.
[22] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume I*, 551.
[23] Ibid.
[24] MACV, *Command History 1969*, *Volume II*, 551, VII-61.
[25] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume I*, 551.
[26] MACV, *Command History 1969*, *Volume II*, VII-61.
[27] Ibid.

KCS received a draft deferment status from the GVN. It also clarified which GVN awards the scouts were eligible to receive and also authorized them to receive US awards for valor.[28]

In May 1969, the number of scouts rose to 1,993, dropping modestly to 1,970 in June. The small decline was the direct result of the redeployment of elements of the 9th Infantry Division. Because ARVN units did not use the scouts in the same capacity, as did the Americans, this would portend a trend to continue through the period of Vietnamization. The newly unemployed scouts were offered work with other divisions, but since "many of them lived with their families in the area, they elected to leave the program."[29] By the end of June, the KCS had suffered 680 casualties including 168 KIA. Their conduct continued to receive praise, and many scouts were awarded US awards "for valor up to and including the Silver Star."[30]

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Lessons-Learned Reports

As previously noted, MACV made extensive use of lessons-learned reports both to share insights and to mitigate the effects of rapid personnel turnover. Two particular reports from this phase of the war shed light on the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP.

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., VII-62.
[30] Ibid.

The first report is a summary of the most important lessons learned from throughout the MACV.[31] While these lessons identify several incidents of effective coordination, they also show the re-learning of several lessons. For instance, one report about an attack on a tunnel complex highlighted that "the psychological effect on the enemy can be exploited by using a small portable loud-speaker encouraging the enemy to come out or be buried alive."[32] This is a good use of a tactical PSYOP loudspeaker team; however, this "lesson" also indicated that intelligence and PSYOP were not coordinated before the mission. If they had been, the loudspeakers would have been planned into the mission. Because this lesson is highlighted in the report as a new technique, it indicates that the PSYOP had not been included in the initial planning. Had the mission planned worked according to doctrine, intelligence would have indicated the enemy's presence in the tunnels and PSYOP would have planned to take advantage of the tactical environment. The ad-hoc nature of this operation nearly three years into the fighting, shows a deficiency in the tactical planning between intelligence and PSYOP.

A second point identified in the MACV summary noted a lack of personnel trained to conduct interrogations of prisoners and *Chieu Hoi* at subordinate commands. This deficiency prevented the rapid gathering and disseminating of intelligence from VC/NVA prisoners of war and defectors.[33] By this point in the war, the *Chieu Hoi* program was the main priority for PSYOP.

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[31] Operations Report - Lessons Learned 1-68 - "Summary of Lessons Learned", Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 1 February 1968.
[32] Ibid., 10.
[33] Ibid., 104.

Commanders routinely reported the number of *Hoi Chanh* and these ralliers were proving themselves as successful Kit Carson Scouts. Yet the dearth of interrogators and linguists inhibited a fully effective coordination between PSYOP and intelligence. Commanders should have anticipated ralliers as part of mission planning and arranged for their exploitation. By this point in the war, the intelligence resources should have been in place to provide timely intelligence support for PSYOP to exploit the tactical situation rapidly. The lesson learned, while ostensibly couched as being representative of successful learning, also represented deficiencies in MACV's ability to determine meaningful reforms needed in the intelligence-PSYOP integration process at unit level and direct the implementation of such reforms.

Another lesson learned showed how intelligence, civic action and PSYOP were all closely related. An extract from the MACV Summary Lessons Learned Report dated 1 February 1968 reads as follows:

> ITEM: Civic action teams and the development of intelligence.
>
> DISCUSSION: Civic action teams, by demonstrating a sincere effort to help the local population, have on several occasions secured timely reports of enemy activities. Because of the rapport developed, the local villagers voluntarily provided information concerning mining of roads, enemy activities and turned in enemy leaflets.
>
> OBSERVATION: Civic action pacification efforts, when accompanied by a sincere desire to aid the Vietnamese people, will increase the voluntary channeling of enemy information toward US personnel.[34]

[34] Ibid., 105.

The essence of this lesson-learned process lies in the identification of the unexpected success. One does not capture the mundane or the expected. For a lesson learned to be truly useful, it must add to the body of knowledge by providing an important insight. The inclusion of this lesson in the MACV lessons-learned summary shows that this "lesson" had not been previously adopted. Given the deluge of doctrinal recommendations, senior officer debriefs, previous lessons learned reports, and command guidance, by this point in the war the integration of intelligence, civic action, and psychological operations should have been commonplace. MACV was effective at capturing lessons learned, but not in inculcating them.

Intelligence and PSYOP were also coordinated on the Medical Civil Assistance Program or (MEDCAP), which was another aspect of MACV's civic-action program. MACV made extensive use of this direct patient-care program to aid in the counterinsurgency effort and was the first example in American history of such a concerted effort to do so.[35] Military intelligence utilized MEDCAPs to gain a picture of the health of enemy forces and to build trust with the local population. The relationships built with local communities were intended to increase support to programs such as the Voluntary Informant Program (VIP). MEDCAPs were a popular way to display US forces' largesse and desire to care for the Vietnamese people. MEDCAPs were in many ways a fine example of the implementation of MACV Directive 525-3.

[35] Robert Franklin Malsby III, "Into Which End Does the Thermometer Go? Application of Military Medicine in Counterinsurgency: Does Direct Patient Care by American Service Members Work?" (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2008), iv.

One lesson from the MACV summary explained how PSYOP and intelligence could be used along with MEDCAPs to gain information about the enemy. It affirmed that whenever possible, MEDCAP and psychological operations should be integrated.[36] The report stated, "a trained agent can accompany medical teams to ascertain Viet Cong activities and any other information desired."[37] Later monthly PSYOP reports show that this recommendation was implemented on a more widespread basis.[38]

Despite the seeming success of such programs, they were beset by ongoing problems. The lack of effective language training was one such problem as the lesson noted that personnel connected with MEDCAP should learn basic Vietnamese.[39] Three years into the conflict, the lack of language training was still a problem as was the lack of translators available to support operations. But even absent sufficient language training, the report noted that the Vietnamese people appreciated American efforts and that MEDCAPs helped counter VC propaganda.[40]

This lesson learned requires fairly detailed exploration. First, the sentiment that the Vietnamese villagers appreciated MACV's efforts was questionable. Because US Forces' perception was based largely on visual cues and not on any conversation with the Vietnamese, it calls into question the

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[36] Operations Report - Lessons Learned 2-68 - "Medical Lessons Learned", Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 16 April 1968, 41.
[37] Ibid.
[38] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report 1-31 May 1969", Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 30 June 1969, 6.
[39] Operations Report - Lessons Learned 2-68 - "Medical Lessons Learned", Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 16 April 1968, 42.
[40] Ibid.

validity of the findings. Without an ability to communicate with people, it is difficult to ascertain their underlying feelings. Additionally, it does not appear that MACV implemented the use of trained agents into MEDCAP operations because there is no evidence of any worthwhile intelligence having been derived from such missions.[41] Unfortunately, when MEDCAPs were evaluated with measures of effectiveness based on counterinsurgency principles, the programs were shown to be detrimental to such operations.[42] MACV's difficulty with evaluations seems to have been endemic. Even the seemingly positive lessons reveal a downside. However laudable the reasons were for conducting MEDCAPs, they were not effective except in limited success at the tactical level.[43]

Other lessons learned perpetuated flawed ideas. Once such lesson related to the PSYOP gimmick narrative.

> ITEM: Coordinated employment of searchlights and the 40mm or .50 caliber automatic weapons systems.
>
> DISCUSSION: The First Field Force Artillery reports that searchlights and the automatic weapons systems have proved to be a valuable team during night operations in Vietnam. By coordinating weapons fire with scheduled searchlight missions, a psychological fear is introduced into the minds of the enemy that whenever the light shines, it will be accompanied by a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire.

[41] Robert Franklin Malsby III, "Into Which End Does the Thermometer Go?"
[42] Malsby, "Into Which End Does the Thermometer Go?", iv
[43] Dr. Robert Wilensky looks at this topic specifically in his analyses of MEDCAPs during the Vietnam War and concludes that none of these assistance programs affected decision-making at the operational level. See Malsby, "Into Which End Does the Thermometer Go?", 14 See also Robert J. Wilensky, "Military Medicine to Win Hearts and Minds: Aid to Civilians in the Vietnam War", Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University, 2004.

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Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL

> OBSERVATION: The simultaneous employment of searchlight illumination and automatic weapons fire has a psychological effect on the Enemy.[44]

There was no apparent attempt to measure the "psychological effect on the Enemy." These observations seemed to originate in the mind of the commander who designed the operation. Because this lesson was disseminated MACV-wide it perpetuated the myth that PSYOP were simple and could be used to induce fear.

All, however, was not negative. There were also instances of tactical commanders who grasped the significance of PSYOP and continued to seek ways to incorporate them into their operations. Two incidents that occurred in spring 1969 demonstrate some progress.

The first example is from the 4th Infantry Division, whose G2 had requested PSYOP assistance with ascertaining infiltration routes used by the NVA. The PSYOP Coordination Center in Pleiku, created as a result of MACV Directive 10-1, suggested the use of the "leaflet-at-a-glance." The plan was to drop different colored leaflets on different routes and then, by questioning prisoners of war and ralliers about the color of leaflets they had seen, determining the enemy infiltration routes.[45] This operation provides a successful example of the coordination between intelligence and PSYOP at the tactical level.

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[44] Operations Report - Lessons Learned 1-68 - "Summary of Lessons Learned", Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 1 February 1968, 19.
[45] 4th Psychological Operations Group. Monthly Operational Report 1-31 May 1969, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 30 June 1969, 17.

The other incident occurred on 2 May 1969, when a PYSOP Audio-Visual Team (AVT) began supporting a Marine Counterintelligence Team during in a cordon-and-search operation in the Da Nang area. The AVT set up a large general-purpose tent and showed movies to the people. The AVT showed eight movies in the tent and disseminated three hundred reward leaflets. This bit of entertainment mitigated some of the ill will generated by the Marines' operation.[46] Additionally, the Vietnamese National Police used the team's equipment to broadcast announcements and instructions to the villagers. The operation resulted in the capture of nine blacklisted Vietnamese and sixty-four detainees – forty-six of whom were illegal residents in the area.[47] The planned use of PSYOP in support of tactical operations was a proven enhancement. PSYOP's technical abilities supported both American and Vietnamese units, and their distribution of reward leaflets supported ongoing intelligence programs.[48]

MACV took appropriate steps by capturing and disseminating lessons learned and published an updated directive 525-3, directing several specific actions. But despite directives and myriad examples of successful operations, commanders often failed to implement lessons about intelligence-PSYOP coordination into their operations on a regular basis.[49]

[46] Ibid., 1.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Beck, "Senior Officer Debriefing Program", 20-23.

Senior Officer Debriefs

In analyzing the coordination of PSYOP and intelligence at MACV, it is helpful to seek sources outside of PSYOP and intelligence. Three individuals in particular during this phase of the war provide independent observations into the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP.

The first report is from Brigadier General Emil P. Eschenburg, who held two significant positions in Vietnam. His first assignment was as the Assistant Division Commander (ADC), 1st Infantry Division from August 1967 to June 1968; the second was as the Deputy Commanding General (DCG), Capital Military Assistance Command (CMAC) from June 1968 to February 1969.[50] The second is from Major General George Eckhardt, Commanding General of the Delta Military Assistance Command (DMAC) and Senior Advisor, IV CTZ, from 15 January 1968 to 22 May 1969. The third report is from Lieutenant General Fred C. Weyand, Commanding General, II Field Force Vietnam from July 1967 to August 1968.

Brigadier General Emil Eschenburg

On 28 May 1969, about a week after his return from Vietnam, Eschenburg gave a presentation to the Combat Development Command (CDC) at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. He focused on the time he spent as the deputy at the Capital Military Assistance Command in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive. His presentation hit on several key topics in relation to PSYOP and intelligence: the

[50] Emil P. Eschenburg, "Debriefings of Vietnam Returnees: Debrief of BG Emil P. Eschenburg", [Fort Belvoir, Va.]: United States Army Combat Developments Command, 1969.

primacy of psychological warfare in a counterinsurgency; the shortage of trained personnel; the over-reliance on technological solutions; the need for timely and effective intelligence; and the success of coordinated efforts.

Reflecting on the significance of the Tet Offensive, Eschenburg believed the enemy was after a psychological effect and that MACV "should have anticipated the willingness of the enemy to suffer a military defeat to win a psychological objective."[51] He quoted General Harold K. Johnson, the former Army Chief of Staff, from a recently published article in *Time* Magazine. Eschenburg stated, "as you know, he [Johnson] is rather conservative, not prone to exaggerations. This article quoted him as saying, 'The US suffered a smashing, catastrophic psychological defeat' as a result of Tet, but it was 'a defeat we imposed upon ourselves.'"[52]

Eschenburg stated that the VC generated psychological impact by blowing up bridges and exacerbating the refugee crisis. The total refugees from Tet and the May offensives were 415,179.[53] This crisis strained the GVN's resources and, according to Eschenburg, undermined the support of "those we were trying to protect and convince to support the GVN."[54] He also noted that in urban warfare the "greater reliance on psychological warfare is remunerative."[55] But, in Eschenburg's opinion, however, MACV failed to take

[51] Ibid., 21.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 34.
[55] Ibid., 11.

effective steps to protect the population's vulnerability. This was manifest most in the areas of training, technology, and timeliness of intelligence.

According to Eschenburg, many lieutenants assigned to intelligence liaison positions "did not possess an appreciation of intelligence necessary to effectively function in that capacity."[56] He observed that most lieutenants were eager to learn and after some time on the job began to perform at an adequate level, but the continual dip in performance with each turnover created problems. While positions may have been manned at ninety to one hundred percent, what mattered more was the quality of the personnel assigned. Newly arrived lieutenants did not have the training required to function effectively. USAINTS had still not caught up with requirements in Vietnam.[57]

MACV's over-reliance on technology also continued to be a challenge. Radars, people sniffers, and other sensory devises were often lacking in terms of the intelligence produced.[58] Despite all the radars, flash towers, and soldiers on the ground MACV units often failed to ascertain where the rockets were being launched.[59] In this regard, Eschenburg argued, a "properly timed psychological war effort was needed to explain to the people" why MACV implemented the steps it did in counter-battery fire. Explanations, he said, went a long way toward gaining support of the people.[60]

[56] Ibid., 50.
[57] Benedict, "A Critical Analysis of US Army Intelligence Organizations and Concepts", 29.
[58] Eschenburg, "Debriefings of Vietnam Returnees: Debrief of BG Emil P. Eschenburg", 50.
[59] Ibid., 44.
[60] Ibid.

Similarly, timely intelligence was required. During counterinsurgency operations, the enemy's intent is often to avoid contact. Thus good intelligence is of greater importance in a counterinsurgency than in conventional warfare.[61] Some of the most useful tactical intelligence came from interrogations of prisoners and ralliers, which, if exploited rapidly, could be used to find caches, booby-traps, and enemy units.[62] Unfortunately, operational intelligence collection and analysis were not effective below the theater or field-force levels.[63] This problem was particularly acute in attempting to discern enemy intentions. Eschenburg noted, "the failures to obtain intelligence of small enemy movements and on identification of VCI were some of our more serious shortcomings."[64] He went on to observe, "inadequate intelligence resulted in over-reaction" with "too much wasted effort" into areas where the enemy was not located.[65] Intelligence failed to bridge the gap between tactical success and strategy. In short, it failed at the operational level of warfare.

MACV formed the Capital Military Assistance Command (CMAC) after the Tet Offensive to coordinate the defense of Saigon more effectively, thus MACV took steps to rectify the aforementioned shortcomings by working more closely with its South Vietnamese counterparts. Nevertheless, Eschenburg noted, "as far as the police themselves are concerned, the problem [was] that they didn't appreciate intelligence. They didn't know when they had intelligence."[66] As with

[61] Ibid., 49.
[62] Ibid., 50
[63] Ibid.
[64]Ibid., 49.
[65]Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 44.

the problems in identifying intelligence of psychological importance, the efforts to counter the VCI were also difficult. The lack of adequately trained intelligence personnel continued to hinder analytical efforts.

Despite the struggles CMAC had with adequate intelligence regarding what today are referred to as insurgent networks, Eschenburg believed that CMAC played an important role in the political and psychological areas of South Vietnamese public opinion.[67] The first lesson he noted was in extended cordon and search of villages, which utilized psychological warfare, medical support, and repeated searching of the same areas. These operations would continue for ten days to two weeks and generated intelligence as to the identities and locations of VC operatives. He assessed that the persistent presence of GVN and FWMAF forces, coupled with the integration of PSYOP and MEDCAP, was key to the success of the operations.[68] Additionally, since the activation of CMAC, there were "no air strikes, helicopter rocketings, or artillery used in the Saigon/Gia Dinh city areas."[69] This period included the early days of CMAC, when remnants of three enemy regiments were still being hunted down in and chased from the Saigon area. Eschenburg also noted that the integration of PSYOP with other military operations could be very effective. He added, "In fact, a psychological warfare operation proved to be most remunerative in the closing days of this operation."[70]

[67] Ibid., 16.
[68] Ibid., 30.
[69] Ibid., 45.
[70] Ibid.

Major General George Eckhardt

Major General George Eckhardt was the Commanding General of the Delta Military Assistance Command (DMAC) and Senior Advisor, IV CTZ from 15 January 1968 to 22 May 1969 and so his perspectives cover most of this phase of the war.[71] His senior officer debrief was distributed to the Military Intelligence School and to the US Army Special Warfare School. Of special interest to this study was his focus on *Chieu Hoi* results, psychological warfare, and military intelligence support.

Eckhardt observed that when the *Chieu Hoi* program was properly supported by effective PSYOP, it continued to entice men to rally to the GVN.[72] The very high *Chieu Hoi* rates throughout the period reflected the setback the VC suffered in the Tet Offensive.[73] The IV CTZ accounted for 70 percent of the National *Hoi Chanh* rates, and the deluge of returnees presented a tremendous opportunity for the GVN, which it began to exploit by late summer 1968.[74] The GVN created political indoctrination courses for mid-level returnees and implemented skills-development classes in fields such as carpentry, masonry, tailoring, maintenance, and auto repair to assist *Hoi Chanh* in their reintegration into South Vietnamese society. Some returnees were screened and rapidly employed on Armed Propaganda Teams (APT) and as Kit Carson Scouts.

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[71] George S. Eckhardt, (Major General, USA). Senior Officer Debriefing Report: MG G. S. Eckhardt, CG, Delta Military Assistance Command and Senior Advisor, IV CTZ, Period 15 January 1968 to 1 June 1969. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 1 July 1969.
[72] Ibid., 42.
[73] Ibid., 6.
[74] Ibid., 45.

The IV CTZ led the way for the rest of the country in relation to *Hoi Chanh*. The provinces in the IV CTZ adopted standardized interrogation procedures, which focused on locating VCI caches. When several higher quality *Hoi Chanh* came in, these procedures facilitated the discovery of some noteworthy caches.[75] These improvements also led to a decrease in incidents of mistreatment to the point they became rare.[76] The IV CTZ also created the *Truong Cong Dinh* Campaign, which made payments to third parties who induced *Hoi Chanh* to return. This program was so successful that the funding was later supported by AIK and then adopted nationally.[77]

Despite these successes, the GVN and FWMAF still struggled to effectively implement and coordinate PSYOP and intelligence. The influx of *Hoi Chanh* continued to cause the need for interrogators to outstrip the supply. [78] Follow up with *Hoi Chanh* to ensure they had been reintegrated into South Vietnamese society remained a challenge, as did problems funding facility construction and vocational training. Eckhart noted that part of the GVN difficulty arose from problems with "favoritism, corruption, factionalism, the inability to provide security, incompetence, and indifference to the needs of the people," which considerably mitigated any groundswell of popular support for the government.[79] The other part of the problem arose from the failure to plan for success. The *Chieu Hoi* PSYOP campaign was very effective, but was not

[75] Ibid., 42.
[76] Ibid., 43.
[77] Ibid., 42.
[78] Ibid., 43.
[79] Ibid., 14.

resourced to handle the results of the program. In some respects, the *Chieu Hoi* program was too successful, because the large influx of personnel overwhelmed the funding, instructors, and facilities that the GVN had allocated for the training.[80]

By May 1969, the GVN had made significant strides in the building of broadcast infrastructure. There was a television station in *Can Tho* whose signal covered the IV CTZ and offered a good mix of programming.[81] Many TV programs were created locally by ARVN Polwar and *Can Tho* cameramen, and were so popular they were reproduced and forwarded to Saigon for greater distribution.[82] At this point in the war, there were 870 community television sets in the Delta with 655 regularly operating. [83] Of the community televisions that did work, they typically drew an audience of between 50 to 400 people per television set. In addition to the community sets, plenty of Vietnamese had improved their economic outlook enough to purchase over 30,000 private sets. Most of these had been imported from Japan and their influx created a thriving repair business.[84] Given the newness of the technology, and the remoteness of the villages this is impressive spread of the technology. However, the thirty-five percent inoperability rates due to generator issues or other needed repairs identified that a lack of logistical support to PSYOP continued through this

[80] Ibid., 43.
[81] Ibid., 47.
[82] Ibid., 50.
[83] Ibid., 47.
[84] Ibid.

phase of the war.[85] MACV still failed to adequately resource PSYOP – even at the peak of US forces' involvement in South Vietnam.[86] Because it was proven that people believed what they saw on television, MACV should have made a more concerted effort to support the maintenance required once the infrastructure had been implemented.[87]

As for radio broadcasts, the Vietnamese Information Service (VIS) operated 2,100 community radios in hamlets and villages across the IV CTZ.[88] The GVN radio service also estimated that there were nearly 1 million inexpensive transistor radios in the IV CTZ area. In November 1968, Radio *Can Tho* was increased from one to ten kilowatts and broadcasted in both the Vietnamese and Cambodian languages. Radio Saigon and ARVN radio signals also covered the IV CTZ. Of course, NLF radio and radio Hanoi also reached the Delta. In an impressive display of coordination between intelligence and PSYOP, Radio *Can Tho's* programming schedule was based on interrogation reports of VC listening habits, which "resulted in Radio Saigon's concentration of Chieu Hoi Messages in the hours between 0001 and 0300 hours."[89]

Eckhart's reports that according to a survey of credibility in secure areas the ranking from top to bottom went to the BBC, Voice of America, Radio

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[85] Ibid.
[86] MACV, *Command History 1969*, *Volume III*, L-11.
[87] Thalia R. Goldstein, Ph.D. "Do Fictional Characters Affect Our Real Life? At some level, do we believe everything we see on TV?", The Mind On Stage, 29 November 2012, https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-mind-stage/201211/do-fictional-characters-affect-our-real-life, accessed 03 February 2015.
[88] Eckhardt, "Senior Officer Debriefing Report: MG G. S. Eckhardt", 47.
[89] Ibid., 50.

Saigon-ARVN Radio, Radio Can Tho, NLF radio, Radio Peking, Radio Hanoi.[90] It took a while, but by May 1969 the GVN and FWMAF were winning the battle for believability. The post-Tet gains were solidifying in favor of the GVN because the South Vietnamese people trusted what the GVN told them more than what the VC/NVA told them. Information such as this was a better measure of effectiveness than the wither the number of broadcast hours or leaflets dropped.

In addition to the near ubiquity of television and radio, there were many other venues PSYOP used to disseminate information. Most province towns had commercial theaters, with upwards of 450,000 total people reached per month. These theaters showed a combination of VIS/JUSPAO documentaries, news clips, and ARVN Polwar films. The IV CTZ was plastered with nearly 150,000 posters, banners, and handbills per month in various locations: on walls, nailed to trees, on bulletin boards, and suspended over streets.[91]

Cultural Drama Teams or *Van Tac Vu* were highly effective as well. These teams were also decimated in the aftermath of Tet, but by May 1969 had been rebuilt. There were now thirty-six teams in IV Corps with fifteen teams controlled and supported by the VIS. These teams gave 370 performances monthly to an average of 800 people in the audience. The programs consisted of traditional Vietnamese entertainment laced with propaganda messages.[92]

[90] Ibid., 47.
[91] Ibid., 48.
[92] Ibid., 49.

PSYOP also inundated the southern provinces with 353,000 copies each of thirteen different province papers either monthly or semi-monthly.[93] The "Free South" single sheet JUSPAO paper targeting the VC with 1.85 million per month copies per month was usually distributed via airdrop.[94] Plus, PSYOP produced and distributed several magazines such as the *Free World* and *Rural Spirit* for hamlet dwellers, and the most popular periodical in Vietnam, *Mother's Heart*, which promoted *Chieu Hoi* had a total distribution of over 330,000 copies per month.

PSYOP distributed in support of military operations consisted of ground and waterborne loudspeaker broadcasts of over 16,500 hours per month, and tapes and speeches by public officials broadcast over fixed loudspeakers in some towns.[95] Handbills were found to be effective at checkpoints on highway and ferry landings.[96] The ARVN and GVN as well as US Army and Navy personnel distributed these at a rate of over 5 million per month.

Aerial support to PSYOP had been at a rate of 50-70 million leaflets per month dropped on VC controlled hamlets. But, the "Speedy Express" campaign was revised on 1 December 1968, adding a second C-47 in support. Consequently, the number of targets for leaflets "increased three-fold and now average 2100 monthly with 165 million leaflets. Loudspeaker targets increased four-fold and now averaged 3000 targets monthly with 550 hours broadcast."[97]

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[93] Ibid., 48.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 49.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

PSYOP personnel assessed that these increases in leaflet distribution and broadcast hours led directly to the rise in *Chieu Hoi* rates during the spring of 1969.[98] MACV was still attempting to correlate the number of *Chieu Hoi* with the total number of leaflets dropped and hours of broadcast. Another habit that MACV found hard to break was its commanders' fascination with the phantasmagoric.

Even techniques that might otherwise have been effective were relegated to the realm of the supernatural. Once such technique was developed in the IV CTZ to get VC to reveal their positions. A C-47 aerial loudspeaker or "Gabby" would fly over an area broadcasting PSYOP messages. When the aircraft drew fire, a blacked out "Spooky" gunship would engage the enemy target. This technique was an effective use of tactical PSYOP to get the VC to reveal their positions. Except, the lesson noted that the tapes played by "Gabby" specifically "included ghostly sounds to inspire fear."[99] Many commanders who saw value with the integration of PSYOP and military operations were still "missing the boat" when it came to understanding how and why PSYOP were effective.

One major problem was a weak VIS, which still relied on JUSPAO for almost all of its funding and support. This relationship was similar at the province level, with provincial VIS chiefs relying heavily on their APA/PSYOP advisors. Because the VIS lacked a distribution system, it relied on

[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 50.

JUSPAO/CORDS for transportation of PSYOP material.[100] When Vietnamization began, the VIS would have a large gap in capacity to overcome to meet the support, which it previously relied on from JUSPAO. Another major problem, was the indoctrination of "US troops, whose behavior too often reinforces the VC stereotype of us as conquering colonists."[101] The "Look Sharp" campaign was not having the desired effect on service members. This was especially problematic since word-of-mouth worked so quickly in Vietnam. The "bamboo telegraph" of the delta may have been the "most effective bush-telegraph system in the world."[102] Eckhardt also noted that face-to-face PSYOP was proving very effective.[103] This lesson in particular was continually relearned at MACV both between the previous phase and this one, and within this phase. It appeared that MACV was continually surprised at the effectiveness of face-to-face communications, which indicates that MACV was biased toward the use of mass media as well as the search for other technical solutions to its communications problems.

Eckhardt lamented the state of intelligence support to the IV CTZ. The thrust of intelligence and analysis dealt "mainly with variables in enemy order of battle, capabilities, and probable courses of action as influence by the relative constants of geography and a two season monsoonal climate."[104]

[100] Ibid., 51.
[101] Ibid., 51.
[102] Ibid., 48.
[103] Ibid., 48.
[104] Ibid., 62.

Lieutenant General Fred C. Weyand

Lieutenant Weyand was the Commanding General, II Field Force Vietnam from 29 March 1966 to 1 August 1968. According to him, the situation in South Vietnam did not have traditionally meaningful military objectives. Instead, the objectives were frequently "nebulous and more often than not they tend to be psychological or political in nature."[105] This ambiguous nature created a significant problem for intelligence personnel because the nature of intelligence gathered and analyzed is paramount in a counterinsurgency.[106] Weyand believed the focus of intelligence had too often been on "what will the enemy do," rather than "what can the enemy do."[107] Interestingly, his complaint was rooted in the new philosophy of the MACV J2. McChristian had focused on enemy capabilities rather than intent. When Davidson assumed the role of J2, he was counseled by Abrams about the need to predict enemy intentions, rather than merely assessing capabilities. Weyand's belief in the efficacy of intelligence was seemingly counter to what Abrams believed, and opposite of what Davidson was delivering. What is important here is not whether the J2 was properly focused on the enemy, but in the fact that the MACV J2 had incorporated and acted upon Davidson's direction.[108]

[105] Fred C Weyand, (Lieutenant General, USA). "Senior Officer Debriefing Program: Report of Lieutenant General Fred C. Weyand, Commanding General, II Field Force Vietnam", Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 15 July 1968, 9.
[106] Ibid., 10.
[107] Ibid., 10-11.
[108] Ibid., 7.

Weyand placed twenty-six personnel in his order of battle section, while his TOE only authorized six.[109] He justified this decision by noting how important intelligence and order of battle were to his success as a commander.[110] While Weyand also noted that US Forces' failure "was in not integrating the civil and military functions at the outset in Vietnam," he did not take any meaningful action to enable such integration in his command.[111] Perhaps the most important observation from Weyand was what was not present in his report. His focus was overly tactical and did not mention psychological operations. Weyand served under Westmoreland and, given his emphasis on psychological operations, one would have expected that Weyand would have included at least a paragraph as to how his command had used PSYOP in support of combat operations. The absence of discussion on PSYOP in Weyand's debrief indicates the lack of emphasis he placed on the function. Thus, although he clearly grasped the importance of intelligence he did not see the requirement to coordinate it with PSYOP to the mutual benefit of both functions.

PSYOP Policy Letters

JUSPAO issued thirty policy letters during this phase of the war. The topics ranged from support to GVN policies to a warning against using sex appeal in propaganda. The later warning, issued on 29 October 1968 in Policy letter number 70, indicate a problem of lost institutional knowledge. The

[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid., 15.

differences in sexual norms between US and Vietnamese society had been well known and were previously addressed in guidance. The reissuing of such guidance from JUSPAO, suggests a loss of that knowledge.[112]

Few of these policy letters were issued in anticipation of major events. Instead, they were reactive, denoting a lack of coordination between civilian and military authorities. The PSYOP policies in support of the CCP and planned GVN campaigns were issued well enough in advance to facilitate the shaping of public opinion. But, those policies issued in support of US government policy shifts were issued well after the announcements. For example, Policy letter 62 "Support of President's offer to negotiate with NVN," was issued on 19 April 1968 – three weeks after Johnson's announcement on 31 March 1968.[113]

The final policy directive during this time period was Policy letter 80, issued on 8 April 1969. It provided guidance on pacification support to the GVN and noted "PSYOP programs in the past lacked RVN population participation and self-reliance of GVN officials."[114] JUSPAO directed American PSYOP agencies and units in Vietnam to accomplish the following:

> A. Establish a schedule of replacing US efforts with Vietnamese ones - encourage MOI and VIS officials to assume greater distribution and production under 1969 Pacification and Development Program.
>
> B. Stop Supplying new communications equipment - repair old ones.

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[112] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 70 "Use of Sex Appeal in Propaganda Programs and Material", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 29 October 1968.
[113] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 62, "PSYOP Program in Support of the President's Offer of Negotiations with North Viet Nam", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 19 April 1968.
[114] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 80, "PSYOP Support for 1969 Pacification and Development Plan", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 8 April 1969.

C. Move away from PSYOP materiel and focus on face-to-face.

D. Through the VIS encourage the GVN to support PSYOP.

E. Focus projects on those requiring active population participation.

F. Publicize cases where GVN officials quickly respond to the public's expressed needs.

G. Structure reporting systems to oblige JUSPAO to evaluate its work at regular intervals based on the above principles.[115]

This directive makes it clear that by April 1969, JUSPAO policy guidance had caught up with ongoing lessons learned. The final policy issued during phase addressed problems with logistical support, face-to-face communications, and evaluations.

Summary

The coordination of PSYOP and intelligence throughout the phase of the war was a patchwork quilt of success and failure. The KCS program was an example of achievement in how both intelligence and PSYOP were able to be coordinated in a very successful effort. Exhaustive studies by third-party researchers polled the Vietnamese population, culled through thousands of interrogation reports, and used the latest computer technology to analyze large amounts of data in order to fuse intelligence, which informed the PSYOP effort. Clearly, PSYOP benefited from the ongoing intelligence collection, exploitation, and analysis. But this was a "pull" system on the part of PSYOP, not one in which a routine coordination mechanism had been established.

[115] Ibid., 2-3.

Thus, throughout this phase of the war, MACV continued to struggle with the effective, routine coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. The two functions should have worked together to coordinate operations; but interactions remained forced and episodic, rather than routine. The coordination efforts tended to be predicated either on external circumstances or personalities. Both PSYOP and intelligence made significant strides in their growth of personnel, equipment and technology. However, these efforts were largely confined within the respective disciplines and not as well coordinated, as they should have been. We shall now examine MACV as a learning organization through the lens of the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP.

Analysis

Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Yes" during this phase of the war. The lessons-learned program sought to capture and learn about the coordination, as did the senior officer debrief program. There were also examples of the implementation of a learning agenda for their coordination. The first example is from the 4th Infantry Division, whose G2 requested PSYOP assistance with ascertaining infiltration routes being used by the NVA. The PSYOP Coordination Center in Pleiku, created as a result of MACV Directive 10-1, suggested the use of the leaflet-at-a-glance – another innovation based on coordination with

intelligence.[116] This constituted solid evidence of effective coordination between intelligence and PSYOP at the tactical level.

Was MACV open to discordant information regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Partial" during this time period. MACV made several changes to enhance the coordination based on discordant information. MACV Directive 10-1 was the prime example. JUSPAO policies also demonstrated that discordant information was collected, vetted, and included in new guidance. But, MACV never questioned the efficacy of the support provided to PSYOP by intelligence. MACV continued to look for ways to exploit tactical level coordination, but failed to comprehend the inherent friction at the operational/strategic level. The PSYOP program, for its part, did make adjustments as to how it interacted with intelligence. However, MACV PSYOP did not progress to a deeper level in that coordination. Intelligence and PSYOP coordinated well in the tactical delivery of messages, and at times on specific enemy vulnerabilities specific to the *Chieu Hoi* program. But many of these successes were based on lower-level initiative rather than MACV designed directives.

Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?

MACV rates a "No" for this phase of the war. MACV continued to regard intelligence and PSYOP as separate functions, despite overwhelming evidence

[116] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report 1-31 May 1969", Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 30 June 1969, 17.

to the contrary. The MACV J2 continued to focus on order of battle to the exclusion of the population-centric information necessary for effective PSYOP targeting. The MACV J2 did not recognize the problem. PSYOP repeatedly stressed the inadequate nature of intelligence support and went so far as to create its own intelligence sub-structure to meet its needs. But this did not solve the underlying problem.

Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people involved with the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP left the command?

MACV rates a “No” for this period. The continual re-learning of lessons shows that the same lessons were recycled from the previous phase of the war, as well as at times within the second. The technical aspects of coordination were maintained, but the key knowledge of how best to employ those technical solutions was repeatedly forgotten. Sound coordination was episodic and was determined more by local command influence and personalities rather, than by the transmission of institutional knowledge.

Did MACV act on what it knew regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?

MACV rates a "Partial" during this period. MACV fully implemented the KCS during this phase of the war, a program that effectively coordinated intelligence and PSYOP at the tactical level. MACV recognized the potential of the program and implemented it countrywide. MACV also recognized that the program required more coordination between PSYOP and intelligence, and took action to rectify this situation at the tactical level. A prime example is the

development of the "leaflets-at-a-glance."[117] However, MACV struggled with the shortcomings in its own headquarters. Ambassador Komer's direction of PSYOP against the 9th VC Division was a good example of the flawed staff processes in place at MACV.[118] MACV did act on recommendations for change in its structure for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP, but was selective in the recommendations it chose to accept.

Net Assessment

For this phase of the war, MACV met one of the evaluation criteria, partially met two of the evaluation criteria, and failed to meet two of the evaluation criteria. Therefore, MACV rates a two of five and is rated as **Ineffective** in its coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. See Table 11.

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[117] Memorandum Subject: "Input for LTC Coleman-Significant events in PDS, CY 69", 13 March 1970, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[118] MACPD Fact Sheet, Subject: "PSYOP Against 9th VC Division", 9 February 1968, National Archives II, College Park, MD, MACJ3-11 RG490_37_10_06.

During this phase of the war, MACV struggled to coordinate intelligence and PSYOP, despite improvements in their respective functions. MACV's implementation of the KCS program at the tactical level and the issuing of JUSPAO policies to rectify shortcomings at the strategic level were positive steps to improve intelligence and PSYOP coordination. Overall, there were incidents of coordination, but they were frequently episodic.

Garvin's Learning Questions	January 1968 - July 1969
	Coordination
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**/**
Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**-**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?	**-**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**/**
Total	**2**

TABLE 11 – COORDINATION OF INTELLIGENCE AND PSYOP ASSESSMENT, 1968 1969

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

There were several reasons for MACV's struggle. The first was command emphasis. Abrams did not share Westmoreland's interest in PSYOP. Therefore, Abrams did not grasp the need for coordination between intelligence and PSYOP. This lack of command emphasis ensured that intelligence remained

focused on order-of-battle information and that PYSOP had to struggle to gain the information required for the creation of successful messaging. Also, as evidenced by Weyand's debrief, subordinate commanders who did not focus on PSYOP continued to treat the function as separate, thereby impairing its effectiveness. Commanders who treated intelligence as an order of battle exercise also failed to support the requirements for a successful PSYOP program. Second, MACV continued to focus on the technical means of PSYOP delivery. This focus led the coordination between PSYOP and intelligence to fixate on enemy locations rather than enemy intent or vulnerabilities. While this was not the case with *Chieu Hoi* program, that effort in particular was treated as separate from military functions. The next chapter will provide an overall assessment of MACV as a learning organization from the perspective of intelligence, PSYOP and the coordination between the two.

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11

Conclusions Phase II, January 1968 to June 1969

A great part of the information obtained in war is contradictory, a still greater part is false and by far the greatest part is of doubtful character.

Clausewitz

In June 1969 the situation in South Vietnam was positive and encouraging. The VC had been defeated during Tet, and they no longer constituted an existential threat to the Saigon government. The ARVN had performed well and was continuing to improve. Pacification efforts, which prior to the Tet Offensive had only achieved modest results, were improving, as the GVN was able to control more of the countryside.[1] US combat losses had been steadily dropping, and the tactical situation throughout South Vietnam was improving daily. The GVN narrative was gaining strength, evident in increased popular support and skyrocketing *Chieu Hoi* numbers. The GVN was finally beginning to make the kinds of substantial gains upon which a more successful PSYOP campaign could be built.

This chapter summarizes the analysis of intelligence, PSYOP and the coordination between the two during the second phase of the war. First, it surveys the positive and negative aspects of how effectively MACV performed the functions of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination. It then provides an

[1] George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 85.

overall assessment of MACV's performance as a learning organization during this pivotal phase of the war.

Intelligence

During this phase, MACV's intelligence function performed well in some areas and struggled in others. On a positive note, the J2 section continued to improve its collection and analysis infrastructure to meet emerging needs for information more effectively. MACV continued to innovate by testing and implementing several intelligence-related technologies in an effort to gain an advantage over the enemy. But with cutting-edge technology, the MACV J2 faced resource constraints. There were simply too many demands for information, which overwhelmed the J2's collection capacity. To mitigate this shortfall, the J2 created prioritization criteria to enhance the efficiency of its limited collection assets. While changes to organizational structure and improvements to technology went well with the MACV J2, there were also several disappointments. The biggest was the failure of the MACV J2 to identify the scope and scale of the Tet Offensive. As a direct result of this failure, MACV became even more defensive of its intelligence estimates, eschewing outside advice, including that from the GVN. The intelligence function also continued to pursue order-of-battle statistics to the neglect of qualitative assessments required of counterinsurgency operations. Thus, the MAVC J2 met three out of the five criteria for learning in the realm of intelligence during this phase and earned a **Marginally Effective** rating.

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PSYOP

During Phase II of the war, MACV made several noteworthy improvements in its psychological operations programs. However, MACV PSYOP also suffered from similar problems to those it experienced during the previous phase. On the positive side, PSYOP agencies and organizations reacted well to the Tet Offensive and also attempted to develop measures with which to assess the effectiveness of its program. PSYOP personnel realized that counting numbers of leaflets was not an effective way to ascertain the effectiveness of MACV's PSYOP programs. However, they were unable in any meaningful way to change the proclivity of the rest of the MACV headquarters to accept more qualitative statistics. MACV frequently sought advice from external agencies and various academics to improve its conduct of PSYOP. It is particularly commendable that MACV followed through with the J5's November 1967 PSYOP study by implementing six of its eight recommendations. MACV also revised Directive 10-1 and directed subordinate commands to create PSYOP Coordinating Committees at the provincial level and US/FWMAF PSYOP operation centers in each CTZ. MACV also sought to capture valuable information about PSYOP from its senior-officer debrief and lessons learned programs. PSYOP continued to struggle, however, with a lack of effective evaluation criteria, partially because of the desire for rapid results. The "measurement mentality" put in place by McNamara continued to dominate the analytical framework of MACV headquarters personnel. Additionally, inappropriate command emphasis, inadequate integration with operational

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planning, a lack of logistical support, and an overly reactive posture hindered PSYOP effectiveness.

In sum, for this phase of the war, MACV met four of the evaluation criteria for a learning organization as it related to PSYOP earning a **Somewhat Effective** rating.

Coordination of Intelligence and PSYOP

The coordination of intelligence and PSYOP succeeded in some areas and struggled in others. The KCS program was an example of positive coordination between intelligence and PSYOP at all levels, while ideas such as the "leaflet-at-a-glance" demonstrated the effective coordination of intelligence and PSYOP at the tactical level. MACV exploited computer technology to produce intelligence, which both informed and benefited the PSYOP effort. Unfortunately, these examples of coordination were more episodic than routine.

The coordination with intelligence represented a "pull" system on the part of PSYOP. In other words, no routine coordination process had been established. Because intelligence officers did not "push" the data, PSYOP operators created their own intelligence sub-structure to meet their intelligence requirements. Coordination efforts between the two sections tended to be predicated either by external circumstances or personalities. Overall, both PSYOP and intelligence made significant strides in their growth of personnel, equipment and technology. However, these efforts were largely confined within the respective disciplines and not as well coordinated as they might have been.

Here one should recall that for this phase of the war, MACV met one of the evaluation criteria, partially met two of the evaluation criterion, and failed to meet two of the evaluation criteria. MACV therefore rated a two of five and received an **Ineffective** rating in its coordination of intelligence and PSYOP.

Overall Assessment of Coordination Between Intelligence and PSYOP

MACV continued to have a *de facto* defined learning agenda during this phase of the war and actively sought to learn about itself and the enemy. While MACV certainly lost information when personnel departed, its infrastructure and lessons-learned programs mitigated the worst effect of those losses. MACV retained knowledge of the mechanics of intelligence and psychological operations, but failed to retain an understanding of why those tools and technology were to be used. MACV acted on what it knew about PSYOP and intelligence by issuing various directives and policy documents, as well as informing the institutional Army of the need for doctrinal changes. MACV attempted to avoid repeated mistakes by capturing lessons learned and sharing them. The area where MACV performed the worst was in needing to re-learn the lessons it had supposedly learned earlier. It continued to discover, for example, that face-to-face communications were important, and that intelligence, logistics, and personnel support to PSYOP were ineffective. MACV's history points out that “US forces utilized the latest PSYOP techniques and, perhaps most important, worked in various ways to build a strong, viable

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government, capable of properly protecting, pacifying, and leading the people of SVN."[2] Many of the programs such as *Chieu Hoi* showed significant progress.

MACV intelligence continued to struggle with an over-reliance on technical solutions to its problem of finding the enemy and a concentration on order-of-battle statistics to demonstrate that the war effort was making progress. MACV PSYOP struggled with faulty evaluation criteria, lackluster logistic support, unmet personnel requirements, expectation management, and command influence in its execution of psychological operations.

Because MACV met eight of the fifteen criteria of a learning organization in the interactions of MACV J2, J3-PD, JUSPAO and PSYOP, the overall rating of these interactions during the period January 1968 to June 1969 was **Marginally Effective.** (See Table 9). This is a drop of three points from the previous period and represents a decrease from the rating of **Somewhat Effective** during Phase I.

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Level of Effectiveness	Score for Each Level	Total Score for the Period
Very Effective	5 of 5	14-15 of 15
Somewhat Effective	4 of 5	11-13 of 15
Marginally Effective	3 of 5	8-10 of 15
Ineffective	2 of 5	4-7 of 15
Dysfunctional	1 or 0 of 5	0-3 of 15

TABLE 3 – QUANTIFICATION OF GARVIN'S LEARNING CRITERIA

[2] MACV, *Command History 1968*, *Volume I*, 1.

Garvin's Learning Questions	January 1968 - July 1969		
	Intelligence	PSYOP	Coordination
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	+	+
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	-	+	/
Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	-	-	-
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?	+	-	-
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	+	/
Total	**3**	**3**	**2**
	Total for Time Period		**8**

TABLE 12 – MACV ASSESSMENT AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION, 1968 - 1969

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion(.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

Several underlying factors inhibited MACVs ability to improve its performance as a learning organization. These factors included inappropriate command emphasis, the US Army culture, the pursuit of measuring progress, and the effect of one-year tours.

Westmoreland's determination to be the command's PSYOP officer and Abrams' neglect of the function both worked to prevent the formation of a

MACV J7, who perhaps could have given sufficient voice to PSYOP to obtain meaningful coordination with the J2 for intelligence, the J3 for combat operations, and the J4 for logistical support.

MACV's endless pursuit of the scientific solution to the question of progress in Vietnam drove the need for the collection of all manner of measurement. For PSYOP, the easiest quantifiable measures were in numbers of product distributed and in the numbers of *Chieu Hoi*. Neither of these factors, however, was directly correlative with one another. The collection of these metrics encouraged a "more is better" mentality, which in turn led to a concentration of process over product. The effectiveness of any given product was measured by the amount of that product distributed. This approach disadvantaged face-to-face communications, which were more labor intensive, but often more effective.

Although MACV strove diligently to overcome the one-year individual replacement policy, the structural obstacle was just too big. The Army had chosen the one-year tour because of the limitations imposed by the draft, President Johnson's refusal to call-up the reserves, and, because of the harsh conditions in Vietnam, as a way to maintain the morale of its forces.

The combination of the above factors significantly contributed to MACV's lackluster performance as a learning organization with regard to intelligence, psychological operations, and their coordination.

In June 1969, President Nixon and President Thieu flew to Guam for a conference on the progress of the war and their joint announcement on the 8th

would prove to be another inflection point in the Vietnam War. As President Nixon announced the first installment of the troop withdrawal - 25,000 to be returned stateside by August 1969 - the rush to transition commenced, and took on a life of its own. The following phase examines MACV during this period of Vietnamization and explores how intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination fared as the two functions began redeploying units out of Vietnam and began transitioning functions to the RVNAF.

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Phase III

Vietnamization, June 1969 - December 1971

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12

Strategic Overview, June 1969 to December 1971

Tonight I do not tell you that the war in Vietnam is the war to end wars. But I do say this: I have initiated a plan which will end this war in a way that will bring us closer to that great goal to which Woodrow Wilson and every American President in our history has been dedicated the goal of a just and lasting peace.

- Richard M. Nixon

On 12 June 1969, Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., the Commander-in-Chief Pacific (CINCPAC), convened a planning conference at his headquarters in Hawaii. He invited representatives from the Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, US Army Pacific Command, MACV, and the Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps with the intent of developing a plan that would fulfill Nixon's unanticipated troop-withdrawal announcement.[1] The conference established a precedent for how subsequent troop withdrawal requests by the president would be planned.[2]

Keystone Eagle, the operation that flowed from this CINCPAC conference, was completed by 31 August 1969 and was more symbolic than substantive. The redeployment, announced by Nixon on 8 June 1969 at the Midway conference, comprised less than five percent of the 540,000 troops then in

[1] Dwight Beck, (USA, CPT), "Operation Keystone – The Redeployment of United States Army Forces from the Republic of Vietnam: (1 July 1969 – 30 November 1972)", US Army Command and General Staff College Monograph, April 1976, 2.
[2] Ibid., 3.

South Vietnam.[3] In July, Nixon visited South Vietnam and made MACV's main mission to prepare the RVNAF to provide for South Vietnamese security. He also linked future troop withdrawals to three conditions: progress in the training of the South Vietnamese armed forces, progress toward an acceptable peace in the Paris negotiations, and a concomitant drop in the level of enemy activity in South Vietnam.[4]

The CINCPAC planning committee was able to fulfill the president's directive by eliminating positions within MACV headquarters, reshuffling MACV's internal structure, allowing the natural attrition of forces, and changing troop-accounting practices.[5] Thus MACV was initially able both to accomplish the president's will, and to maintain the status quo.

For the next eight months, MACV was able to continue meeting the President's orders using similar procedures. The pace of the redeployments was relatively slow, enemy activity within South Vietnam had dropped considerably, and American forces were still able to muster sufficient manpower to continue combat operations. But after the change of mission given MACV by Nixon in July 1969, there were only four US division-level combat operations conducted during the remainder of the war.[6] The largest of these missions was the incursion into Cambodia in April 1970, the conclusion

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[3] Ibid., 1.
[4] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1970*, *Volume I*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1971, IV-11.
[5] Beck, "Operation Keystone – The Redeployment of United States Army Forces from the Republic of Vietnam: (1 July 1969 – 30 November 1972)", 3.
[6] Shelby L. Stanton, *U.S. Army and Allied Ground Forces in Vietnam: Order of Battle*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. News Books, 1981), 14.

of which marked the point after which the US mission became focused on withdrawal.

Fourteen subsequent iterations of Operation Keystone occurred over the next three years.[7] While these withdrawals were initially tied to demonstrable progress in South Vietnam, they eventually became the primary mission of US forces and gained momentum independent of those conditions.[8] The primary mission of US forces permanently changed on 12 November 1971 when Nixon announced that US forces were now in a strictly defensive role and that the South Vietnamese would conduct all offensive operations.[9] The last remaining PSYOP battalion was inactivated on 21 December 1971.

Major Events

The contrast between this phase and the initial one is striking. During the initial phase, MACV oversaw a massive logistical buildup; enabling the steady increase of US forces, which increasing took the lead in combat operations. During the final phase, MACV oversaw a similar logistical process, but in reverse. Base camps were either demolished or turned over to the ARVN; combat units were inactivated or redeployed; and materiel was either transferred to the ARVN or shipped out of the country.

The first troop reductions were relatively small and confined largely to combat units, but subsequent cuts included personnel from both intelligence

[7] The withdrawals would continue even during the Easter offensive in 1971. Willbanks, *Abandoning Vietnam*, 314.
[8] James H. Willbanks, *A Raid Too Far: Operation Lam Son 719 and Vietnamization in Laos*. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 18.
[9] Stanton, *U.S. Army and Allied Ground Forces in Vietnam: Order of Battle*, 8.

and psychological operations units. As the reductions increased in size and frequency, they became increasingly removed from realities within South Vietnam. Later personnel cuts reflected political necessities in the United States rather than ARVN progress in conducting successful unilateral operations. The drawdown of US forces through 1970 was relatively slow, dropping about one-third from 474,000 at the start of the year to 335,00 by the end. The next year's withdrawals were more precipitous as 1971 ended with US troop strength below 160,000.[10] The rest of this chapter will cover key events in order to provide a context for the changes within intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination.

The examination of this phase will explore the changes in intelligence, psychological operations, and their coordination as the mission of MACV evolved over the course of thirty months from that of leading combat operations, to advising ARVN, and finally to ensuring the withdrawal of American forces. This chapter provides a strategic overview of this phase and presents the context within which it occurred. Chapter 13 explores the changes within the intelligence function at MACV as infrastructure, technology, and responsibility were transferred to the South Vietnamese. Key to this phase is a detailed examination of Operation Keystone and the redeployment of US forces. Chapter 14 examines the role PSYOP played in the process of Vietnamization and how well MACV was able to overcome the obstacles of inappropriate command emphasis, inadequate logistical support, and ineffective evaluation

[10] Willbanks, Abandoning Vietnam, 123.

criteria. Here too Operation Keystone undergoes the most scrutiny because it becomes the primary mission of MACV headquarters. Chapter 15 studies the coordination between intelligence and PSYOP as their respective resources were diminished. The chapter focuses on the evolution of the *Chieu Hoi*, Kit Carson Scout, and civic action programs as they transferred to South Vietnamese control. These three programs had been the most tangible display of the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. Again, these three programs are examined against the implementation of Operation Keystone. Additionally, a detailed examination of several senior officer debriefs provide insight into the successes and failures of MACV as a learning organization with respect to the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. Of course, Vietnamization and the redeployment of US forces under Operation Keystone did not occur in a vacuum and so we begin with the strategic context within which those events occurred.

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Major Events of 1969

On 30 July 1969, President Nixon flew to South Vietnam to meet with President Thieu, Ambassador Bunker, General Abrams, and other US embassy and military officials.[11] When Nixon later addressed the nation on 3 November 1969 to present his plan for Vietnamization to the American people, he referred to this visit saying, "I changed General Abrams' orders so that they were consistent with the objectives of our new policies. Under the new orders, the

[11] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1969*, *Volume III*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1970, L-22.

primary mission of our troops is to enable the South Vietnamese forces to assume the full responsibility for the security of South Vietnam."[12]

About two weeks after Nixon's visit to South Vietnam, on 15 August, MACV issued its official change of mission from "defeat the enemy and force his withdrawal," to "provide maximum assistance to strengthen the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam, to increase support to the pacification effort, and to reduce the flow of supplies to the enemy down the Ho Chi Minh Trail."[13] By the end of the month, MACV reported that it had completed the withdrawal of the 25,000 troops requested by the president.

MACV's change in mission was not easily accomplished. General Abrams, like Westmoreland, had three wars to fight as he led MACV during Vietnamization. First, he had to hold back NVA and VC advances and prevent them from making gains within South Vietnam. Second, Abrams had to provide time for Vietnamization to work, which included pacification of villages and the effective training of the ARVN. Finally, he had to withdraw US troops.[14]

Ho Chi Minh died on 2 September 1969, but his passing had little effect on the North's prosecution of the war. In a memorial service held in North Vietnam on 9 September, Le Duan, the First Secretary of the Party Central Committee "swore a solemn oath to 'follow His [sic] path and to pursue His [sic]great cause.'"[15] General Abrams would not enjoy the enemy's cooperation.

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[12] Nixon, Richard M., "Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam", 3 November 1969, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2303, accessed 18 November 2014.
[13] James H. Willbanks, "Vietnam 1968-1975", Dole Institute of Politics, August 16, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByO0vN5iwPA, accessed 09 January 2015.
[14] Ibid.
[15] *Victory in Vietnam: the official history of the people's army of Vietnam, 1954—1975*, 252.

On 17 September, Nixon announced Phase II of his redeployment plan, which included 35,000 additional troops by the end of the year. To support the drawdown of US forces, USARV developed a redeployment guide for units and instituted a facilities review board to assist with the installation closure and transfer activities.[16] These processes would soon be put to use.

On 2 October, MACV announced that US casualties for the week prior (21-27 September) dropped to their lowest point in more than two years.[17] The following week, casualties dropped again to sixty-four KIA — the lowest figure in nearly three years.[18] The improvements in the US situation in Vietnam did not, however, generate concomitant support in the United States. The change for US forces is South Vietnam was now palpable, but was not reflected by a popular increase in American support for the war. On 15 October 1969, the massive antiwar demonstration dubbed "Moratorium" took place in the United States, along with similar events in Geneva, Paris, and Rome. Americans had lost patience with the slow pace of ending the war.

Nixon addressed the nation on 3 November 1969 and laid out his vision for Vietnamization.[19] He told the American people that because the North Vietnamese refused to negotiate, the best way to end the war was to strengthen the South Vietnamese. He stated that he had changed Abrams' orders in July

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[16] Headquarters US Army Vietnam (USARV), *Redeployment Guide for Units*, Saigon, 19 September 1969.
[17] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam 1969*, *Volume III*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1970, L-30.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Richard M. Nixon, "Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam", 3 November 1969, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2303, accessed 18 November 2014.

to meet this goal. Nixon also revealed that he had been in secret contact with Ho Chi Minh.[20] Nixon received Ho Chi Minh's reply to the secret overture on 30 August, three days before the North Vietnamese leader's death, which "simply reiterated the public position North Vietnam had taken at Paris and flatly rejected my initiative."[21] Nixon then explained his doctrine of "self help," which would prevent any future US involvement from "taking over" as it had in Korea and Vietnam.

Negotiations with the North Vietnamese stalled; and on 21 November 1969, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, the US representative to Paris Peace Talks, announced that he would resign, effective 8 December 1969. The North Vietnamese viewed the Vietnamization process as an opportunity for them to "shift over to counterattack and offenses when the opportunity arose, preparing the way for a new strategic posture for our forces."[22]

On 15 December 1969, Nixon announced the withdrawal of 50,000 American troops by 15 April 1970. The reduction of US forces would then total 110,000 or about twenty percent of the number less than eight months prior. Thailand soon followed suit and announced that it would withdraw its 12,000-man contingent from South Vietnam. As the year closed, US troop strength in South Vietnam was just over 483,000 and the perception of Vietnamization depended on one's vantage point. The North Vietnamese appeared to be biding

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] *Victory in Vietnam: the official history of the people's army of Vietnam, 1954—1975*, 252.

time to gain a positional advantage.[23] The South Vietnamese were leery about too rapid a departure of US forces.[24] President Nixon seemed pleased with the pace of withdrawal. MACV's official history stated that “no unforeseen crisis occurred in 1969 and the year indeed was marked by successes both military and in national development.”[25] This history acknowledged that setbacks occurred and that “some programs failed to meet their goals for 1969,” but cited many positive changes in the situation in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).[26] Ironically, the decision to begin withdrawing forces led to a decrease in US troop morale, which according to Davidson was now dropping “not from defeat, but from a confluence of policy (Vietnamization) and peace not war, false expectation of a short war, and a feeling of why be the last to die for a no-win situation.”[27]

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Major Events of 1970

January and February 1970 were relatively uneventful compared to the previous four years of combat in South Vietnam. On 25 January 1970 CORDS' name was changed from Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development, to Civil Operations and Rural Development in an attempt to reflect its ongoing mission more accurately. MACV also reorganized the headquarters in I CTZ, with XXIV Corps designated to become the senior command to III MAF, which

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[23] Ibid.
[24] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 83 Joint PSYOP Policy GVN Ministry of Information and U.S. Mission, "Troop Replacement", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 1 July 1969.
[25] MACV, *Command History 1969*, *Volume I*, 1.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*. 615-6.

was opposite of the present situation, no later than 9 March 1970.[28] This change was designed to align command and control with the changing structure of American troop deployments.

MACV completed the third withdrawal increment on 15 April 1970 and less that a week later Nixon announced a fourth phase, which would redeploy 150,000 additional US forces by April 1971.[29] Completion of this withdrawal would bring the MACV strength to 284,000, approximately half of the number authorized at the 1969 peak period.[30]

On 18 March 1970, Prince Norodom Sihanouk was deposed as the ruler of Cambodia, complicating US plans for a smooth Vietnamization plan. This change presented an opportunity however, and on 1 May 1970, President Nixon announced that US forces had attacked into Cambodia. The purpose of this incursion was to destroy VC/NVA troops who were using the area within Cambodia as a sanctuary for the ongoing fighting in South Vietnam. The US and GVN also hoped to capture or destroy the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), assessed to be in the same area. Nixon's announcement of the Cambodian invasion led to unrest in the US. On 2-3 May l970, hundreds of students demonstrated at Kent State University to protest the US invasion of Cambodia. They also set fire to the campus ROTC building, which burned to

[28] Melvin Zais, (Lieutenant General, USA), Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG Melvin Zais, Commanding General, XXIV Corps, 26 June 1969 to 18 June 1970 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 20 August 1970), 18.
[29] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1971*, *Supplemental*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1972, TSS-7.
[30] The peak number of US forces in South Vietnam was approximately 549,500, which was reached just prior to the Midway conference in 1969.

the ground. On 4 May, the demonstration continued. The crowd was ordered to disperse, fired upon with tear gas, and in the ensuing moments four Kent State University students were killed and nine were wounded by soldiers of the Ohio National Guard. The incident touched off a nation-wide student strike, which forced a number of college campuses to close. A similar incident occurred on 15 May 1970, when police fired on student protestors at Jackson State College in Mississippi, killing two and injuring twelve. Order was eventually restored, but the growing anti-war sentiment brought increasing political pressure on the Nixon Administration to end the war in Vietnam. On 5 May President Nixon announced that US troops would penetrate no more than 21.7 miles into Cambodia and that all American troops would be withdrawn by 10 June. On 12 May during public testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, stated that the US would have no ground fighting forces in Vietnam after 30 June 1971.

On 3 June Nixon spoke to the nation and announced that operations in Cambodia had been more successful than anticipated, that all US personnel would be out of Cambodia by the end of the month, and that he would reserve the prerogative of using interdictory air strikes in Cambodian territory.

On 11 June the US Senate voted 52-47 to deny President Nixon the authority to commit US troops to Cambodia after 1 July without prior congressional approval. And on 24 June 1970, the Senate voted to repeal the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution by a vote of 81-10. The congressional *carte blanche* enjoyed by President Johnson was clearly being undermined by the American

people's anti-war sentiment. On 12 October 1970, Nixon announced the accelerated withdrawal of US Forces by another 40,000 troops and on 30 Dec 1970 the US Navy ended its four-year role in inland waterway combat, turning over the mission to South Vietnamese Navy. On 31 Dec 1970, the House of Representatives repealed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, thus beginning the process of limiting the President's power to use the military in South Vietnam. Over the course of 1970, US forces decreased in South Vietnam from a January 1970 total of 474,819 to a 31 December 1970 total of 335,794.[31] The modest cuts to US forces through 1969 had accelerated through 1970, and the US Congress had placed limits on the President's authority to use the troops remaining in Vietnam.

Major Events of 1971

The process of Vietnamization accelerated through 1971. By the 2nd Quarter of the 1971 Fiscal Year (January to March of 1971), the US Army Vietnam Command Progress Report no longer mentioned either the ACofS G5 or the CORDS section. There was also no reporting on either civic action or PSYOP. The Assistance in Kind (AIK) funds for 1971 were to be only seventy-five percent of the funding for the previous year. These reports tracked a variety of data, and are an indication of the sort of information of concern to the command. Throughout this period, MACV maintained its concentration on measuring improvements by tallying easily quantifiable statistics. Furthermore, the focus shifted from enemy-centric statistics, such as caches found and KIA,

[31] MACV, *Command History 1970, Volume I*, IV-7.

to tons of US equipment shipped out of Vietnam, numbers of tires retread, OMA, and overtime paid to civilian personnel. All these changes reflected MACV's new mission of Vietnamization and redeployment.[32] The US Army had largely ceased focusing on the enemy and instead emphasized controlling costs while redeploying as much materiel as practicable. US domestic political pressure continued to mount, and the South Vietnamese took matters into their own hands in Laos.

On 8 February 1971, the GVN launched an independent operation into Laos dubbed Lam Son 719. It lasted until 25 March 1971, when the ARVN were forced to withdraw under heavy pressure by NVA forces. The initial goal of the plan was according to Willbanks, "strike at the enemy's lines of communication in Laos, disrupt his plans, and forestall a new offensive."[33] The GVN would have sole responsibility for the ground war because the Cooper-Church Amendment, which had passed in December 1970, prevented US ground forces from operating outside of the borders of South Vietnam.[34] Despite the forced withdrawal and heavy casualties suffered by the ARVN, the operation was heralded a success by MACV headquarters for the fact that the GVN launched it on their own with the confidence they had gained over the previous eighteen months.[35]

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[32] Assistance in Kind (AIK) funds were those congressionally authorized funds spent to assist the South Vietnamese government execute internal stabilization strategy. The funds were used for infrastructure improvements, as well as educational and health care needs.
[33] Willbanks, *A Raid Too Far,* 38
[34] Mark W. Woodruff, *Unheralded Victory: The Defeat of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army, 1961-1973*. (Arlington, VA: Vandamere Press, 1999), 168. See also Willbanks, *A Raid Too Far,* 37
[35] Woodruff, *Unheralded Victory*, 168.

On 7 April 1971, Nixon announced that another 100,000 US troops would leave depart South Vietnam by the end of the year. This latest withdrawal would bring the total authorization of US forces to 184,000 by year's end. The president's announcement re-articulated American intentions by stating, "the American involvement in Vietnam is coming to an end. The day the South Vietnamese can take over their own defense is in sight. Our goal is total American withdrawal from Vietnam. We can and we will reach that goal through our program of Vietnamization."[36] This latest announcement did little to stem the tide of the anti-war movement as 500,000 protesters gathered in Washington, DC on 24 April, with another 150,000 participating in a similar demonstration in San Francisco.

On 26 June 1971, the last Marine combat unit departed from South Vietnam, and two weeks later MACV turned over the last remaining US positions along the DMZ to the ARVN. On 12 November 1971, Nixon announced that an additional 45,000 US troops would depart South Vietnam by January 1972. This rapid withdrawal was now possible because according to the MACV J2, by the end of 1971, the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) showed that ninety-seven percent of the villages and hamlets of South Vietnam were either totally secure or relatively secure.[37] According to MACV statistics, Vietnamization was succeeding. The South Vietnamese were assuming responsibility for their own security, and enemy activity was at an all time low. Despite these positive signs, challenges would remain. According to James

[36] MACV, *Command History 1971*, *Supplemental*, TSS-10.
[37] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 661.

Willbanks, as 1971 drew to a close American troop morale was down, the RVNAF were still trying to recover from Lam Son 719, and the North Vietnamese were preparing for a new offensive.[38]

Regardless of the true state of affairs within South Vietnam, by the end of 1971 US troop strength in RVN was 158,000, which was the lowest number since 1965.[39] The next chapter provides details about intelligence operations during Vietnamization and the transfer of that effort to the South Vietnamese.

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[38] Willbanks, *Abandoning Vietnam*, 121.
[39] Ibid., 123.

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Intelligence, June 1969 to December 1971

The invasion of Cambodia by US forces in late April 1970 presented a challenge for MACV's intelligence analysts. Despite their best efforts, the MACV J2 struggled to predict the actions of a thinking enemy. According to LTG Michael Davison, the II FFV Commanding General who was responsible for planning the invasion, "intelligence, surprise, and task organization" were the three most important considerations for the operation.[1] He observed "our intelligence effort got us into the general areas but could not pinpoint caches or base camps. Actually, our intelligence had absolutely no idea of the manner in which the NVA had established their storage areas."[2] The NVA had gone to extraordinary lengths to conceal their supply depots, with most of the caches dispersed, far away from high-speed roads, and secured underground in reinforced bunkers.[3] The communists had not assumed the sanctuary of Cambodia afforded them any rest from taking security measures, which entailed "extraordinary lengths and an enormous cost in man-hours."[4] Davison also noted, "never amongst the tons of documents we captured did we find a key to the overall NVA logistics layout."[5] The overmatch the US enjoyed in

[1] Davison, Michael S. LTG, *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: II Field Force Vietnam and Third Regional Assistance Command*. DTIC Document, 1971, 6.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

detection technology and computer analysis could not overcome the NVA's dogged adherence to three of the principles of war: security, surprise, and simplicity.

Overview of Intelligence

During Vietnamization MACV intelligence personnel had three missions. First, the MACV J2 was required to continue producing analytical products that met the requirements of both the headquarters and subordinate units. Second, the MACV J2 had to transfer technology and responsibility to the South Vietnamese. Third, the MACV J2 had to redeploy personnel.

To place these events in context, we will first examine the broad scope of the MACV intelligence function during this phase of the war by exploring several broad themes: the interrogation of Hoi Chanh, the drawdown of MI assets, the Vietnamization of the RVNAF sensor program, MACV tactical intelligence capacity, and the Combined Interdiction Program.

The Interrogation of Hoi Chanh

The MACV J2 continued to struggle with the timely exploitation of Hoi Chanh for intelligence purposes. The command had largely solved the issue of tactical interrogation regarding cache locations and enemy unit locations. However, the J2 often failed to coordinate adequately with ARVN intelligence. This failure, coupled with a lack of holistic thinking about interrogation questioning, continued to result in lost opportunities. One anecdote is emblematic of this struggle.

On 6 April 1970, enemy forces captured Sean Flynn while he was on assignment in Cambodia for *Time*. Soon after, *Time* sent an investigator, Zalin B. Grant, to find information on Flynn and other individuals who were captured around the same time.[6] Grant was a veteran intelligence officer who was fluent in Vietnamese and French, served in Vietnam prior to his discharge, and worked closely with representatives of the Vietnamese government.[7] Grant's sole mission in Vietnam was as an investigator, he was not there as a writer. While searching for information on Flynn, Grant uncovered an interesting piece of intelligence and immediately reported it to the Chief of the MACV office of Information.[8]

Grant relayed that on 8 May 1970, a man rallied to the 25 Infantry Division as part of the *Chieu Hoi* program. As was standard practice, the man was questioned about cache locations and then sent to the *Chieu Hoi* Center in Tay Ninh City. His interrogation at the center happened two weeks later on 23 May, conducted by a member the RVN Central Intelligence Organization (CIO).[9] During this interrogation, the man stated that on 4 May 1970 he had seen eleven US POWs at a camp in Cambodia and that the rallier knew of plans to move them to a new compound that the rallier had helped build.[10]

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[6] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1970*, *Volume II*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1971, X-16.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

MACV immediately acted on Grant's report and passed the information to the Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC). According to MACV's official history, "within 24 hours of its receipt by JPRC, on 24 May, a team was inserted into the area described by the rallier and the camp he reported was located. The prisoners, 11 US and approximately 80 ARVN, had been moved. A similar insertion was made at the new site but none were found there either."[11] LTG Davison noted that the failure to include questions about PWs during interrogations "probably resulted in losing an opportunity to liberate 11 US and about 80 ARVN PWs."[12]

The Drawdown of MI Assets

On 16 March 1970, the infrastructure McChristian had created began to crumble. The redeployment of 142 intelligence personnel was set to be completed by 14 April.[13] By October 1970, military intelligence (MI) teams, detachments, and companies began to lose assets gradually, with a total of ten units losing ninety-nine personnel by the middle of the month.[14] By the end of the year, an additional eight MI units were stripped of an additional 165 personnel.[15]

The drawdown of MI personnel continued into 1971 with Increment VI, Keystone Robin Charlie, decreasing the 548th MI Det and the 544th MI Platoon

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1970*, *Volume I*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1971, IV-14.
[14] Ibid., IV-17.
[15] Ibid., IV-20.

by thirty-two and forty personnel respectively and the 191st MI Company drawn down to forty-eight personnel. The 525th MI Group lost seventy personnel.[16] The cuts to intelligence continued as follows.

Date	Unit	Personnel Redeployed
16 February 1971	5th Special Forces Group II FFV's 219th MI Det	33 27[17]
30 June 1971	525th MI group 519th MI Battalion 525th Group HQ 575 MI Det	25 63 12 23[18]
31 August 1971	517th MI Det 172nd MI Det	38 (inactivated) 38 (inactivated)[19]
30 November 1971	635th MI Det 55th MI Det	47 33 (inactivate) [20]

TABLE 13 – REDUCTION OF MI ASSETS DURING VIETNAMIZATION

Vietnamization

This process included two things for the MACV J2. The first was the training of Vietnamese personnel in the analytical skills required to produce quality intelligence. The second was the transfer of sensor equipment and the training on the technological know-how to operate that equipment. The MACV J2 took several steps to accomplish these tasks: reinvigorating the Vietnamese Military Intelligence School; developing a separate program for military advisors at the Province and District Intelligence and Operations Coordinating Centers (PIOCC and DIOCC); and transferring its myriad sensor arrays to the RVNAF.[21]

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[16] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1971*, *Volume II*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1972, F-1-2.
[17] Ibid., F-1-3.
[18] Ibid., F-1-8.
[19] Ibid., F-1-12.
[20] Ibid., F-1-16.
[21] MACV, *Command History 1970*, *Volume II*, VII-56.

During the calendar year 1970 there were 2,199 students enrolled in intelligence courses, which included basic classes on intelligence collection and intermediate classes on intelligence and security.[22] This enrollment was above the 1,523 that had originally been programmed to matriculate, an overage of 144 percent. Additionally, a new TOE was planned to increase the number of students who could attend the intelligence schools by an additional six hundred.[23] For more advanced students, a mid-career course for intelligence officers began on 30 March.[24]

The new plan for military advisors at the PIOCC and DIOCC included 399 positions. On 19 August 1970 the Department of the Army (DA) approved the program.[25] MACV and the DA believed this program to be very valuable and so set stringent desired qualifications, which included the following:

> Outstanding record; prior service in Vietnam desirable, but not mandatory; grade of major for PIOCC and captain for DIOCC, desirable for majors to be graduates of Command and Staff College, and for captains, desirable they be graduates of the advanced course; must be from the Military Intelligence branch (although officers of other career branches would be considered on a case-by-case basis if the MI branch could not satisfy requirements); speak or have the aptitude to learn Vietnamese; have suitable qualities of temperament and personality.[26]

The desire for the success of the advisory program was illustrated by the list of incentives attached to it in an effort to entice officers to apply. These incentives included the following:

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., VII-81.
[26] Ibid.

1. A letter from the DA, Deputy CofS for Personnel in the officer's file
2. The selectee's preference for a specific location in RVN (if possible)
3. Two rest and recuperation (R&R) leave periods
4. Special instructions to selection/promotion boards about the advisory job
5. Offered excess family quarters at designated CONUS posts.[27]

RVNAF Sensor Program

The reader should recall here that in the previous phase of the war, the US developed, experimented with, and implemented several technological improvements to its intelligence collection capabilities. While most of that equipment was considered too sensitive or complicated for the South Vietnamese, a significant amount of less sophisticated sensors and read-out devices were transferred to the RVNAF.[28]

Operation Tight Jaw was the codename for the border surveillance program. According to MACV's official history, "it was expanded significantly in scope and size in 1970."[29] By the end of the year, The RVNAF managed approximately eighteen percent of the total sensors in use in Vietnam, but its use of them was growing for "intelligence gathering, area surveillance, target acquisition, ambushes, and perimeter defense."[30]

One of the problems experienced by MACV when attempting to transfer sensor technology and equipment was the lack of command emphasis within some ARVN units. To address this deficiency, MACV worked with the JGS to develop a three-day course for RVNAF staff officers to train them in the

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., VII-115.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

importance of Tight Jaw operations.[31] As more RVNAF officers became acquainted with the benefits of the sensors, their units began to accept their use.[32] The process of Vietnamization took some time, but by September 1971 the RVNAF responsibility for sensors had nearly doubled to more than thirty-two percent of the total active sensor population.[33]

MACV Tactical Intelligence Capacity

Tactically, MACV continued to perform well with intelligence throughout this phase of the war. Combat units continued to generate intelligence on the disposition of enemy forces. One anecdote from the Cambodian invasion in 1970 illustrates this point.

A significant intelligence find occurred during the Cambodian incursion in May 1970. Elements of the 11th ACR, the 25th Infantry Division, the 4th Infantry Division, and the 1st Cavalry Division invaded Cambodia in an area known as the "Fish Hook." The NVA forces fell back until they reached a point outside of *Snuol* - where they began to put up stiff resistance.[34] US forces met the resistance with building-to-building clearing operations, which forced the NVA to withdraw.[35] The tactical questioning of local villagers revealed details of a large NVA storage compound nearby. A scout pilot with the 1st Cavalry soon discovered a well-camouflaged building and US forces again went to work to eliminate the well-guarded positions around the building. Further exploration

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Woodruff, *Unheralded Victory: The Defeat of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army, 1961-1973*, 166.
[35] Ibid.

revealed about 400 other buildings, "complete with bunkers, dining facilities, a rifle range, even a swimming pool."[36] A roster of capture materiel from 30 June 1970 included 124 trucks, 23,000 rifles (enough to equip 74 battalions), 2,500 machine-guns, mortars, and anti-tank weapons (enough to equip 25 battalions).[37] Additionally, American soldiers found sixteen-million rounds of small caliber ammunition (as much as the communists typically used in a year); 200,000 rounds of antiaircraft ammunition; 143,000 mortar rocket and recoilless rifle rounds; and 7,000 tons of rice.[38]

Combined Interdiction Program

This program developed as part of the Combined Campaign Plan (CCP) for 1971, which represented a response to the changing enemy situation.[39] The Tet Offensive of 1968 had changed the nature of the conflict, which had expanded to include the broader area of South East Asia.[40] The Combined Interdiction Coordinating Committee (CICC) took the lead on prosecuting this campaign. The CICC was a newly formed organization composed of representatives from MACV and the Joint General Staff (JGS) who met monthly starting in August 1971 to review interdiction efforts.[41]

The CICC analyzed the results of two types of interdiction efforts: ground combat operations and unattended sensors.[42] The combat operations included

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 166-7.
[38] Ibid., 168.
[39] MACV, *Command History 1971, Volume I*, IV-3.
[40] Ibid., IV-3.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

Lam Son 719 and other operations such as the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division operations in the "rocket belt" area near Saigon.[43]

Sensors played a major role in several areas considered to be high threat, including those along the DMZ and along the Laotian border. For instance, along the Laotian border area in May 1971, Tight Jaw sensors identified over two thousand targets, of which over 250 were engaged by a mix of artillery, mortar, naval gunfire, troop insertions, small arms fire, and air attacks.[44]

During this phase of the war, the MACV intelligence function continued to operate within a complex environment with competing demands, albeit now with diminishing resources. This chapter will now examine evidence related to MACV's intelligence function from operation Keystone, US Army doctrinal changes, senior officer debriefs, lessons learned documents, and the BDM strategic lessons-learned study.

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Operation Keystone

Operation Keystone was the code name given to the planned redeployment of US forces from South Vietnam. Keystone Eagle was the first installment, which included the inactivation of the 9th Infantry Division. While this first installment was relatively small, there were several lessons learned from that inactivation and redeployment, which affected the subsequent fourteen redeployment missions. USARV, which was responsible for overseeing the logistical planning of the mission, published a redeployment guide in

[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

September 1969. In this guide USARV planners noted that the task of redeployment "required detailed planning, coordination, and representation at all levels."[45]

All of the redeployment missions were executed under Operation Keystone with each receiving a unique name. A brief review of the names and timelines follows:

1. Keystone Eagle (1 July 1969 - 31 August 1969) - 25,000 troops announced by Nixon at Midway, the 9th Infantry Division was the major unit involved.

2. Keystone Cardinal (18 September 1969 - 15 December 1969) - 40,500 troops, the 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne was the major unit involved.

3. Keystone Bluejay (1 February 1970 - 15 April 1970) - 50,000 troops. Major units were the 1st Infantry Division and the 3rd BDE of the 4th Inf Div.

4. Keystone Robin (Alpha) - (1 July 1970 - 15 October 1970) - This (and the other Robins) were part of the 150,000 reduction announced by the President in April 1970.

5. Keystone Robin (Bravo) - (16 October 1970 - 31 December 1970) - Remainder of the 4th INf Div and the 25th Infantry Div

6. Keystone Robin (Charlie) - (1 January 1971 - 30 April 1971) - 60,000 total reduction, with the major units the 1st Cav Division, 2nd Brigade of the 25th and the 11th ACR. At the conclusion of this round, authorized Army strength in South Vietnam was 213,000.

7. Keystone Oriole (Alpha) - (1 May 1971 - 30 June 1971) - 29,300 out of the 100,000 president Nixon announced on 7 April 1971.

8. Keystone Oriole (Bravo) - (1 July 1971 - 31 August 1971) - 28,700 redeployed with major units being the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div and 173 Airborne Bde

9. Keystone Oriole (Charlie) - (1 September 1971 - 30 November 1971) - 42,000 remaining forces.

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[45] Headquarters US Army Vietnam (USARV), *Redeployment Guide for Units*, Saigon, 19 September 1969, I-1.

10. Operation Mallard (1 December 1971 - 31 January 1971) - period during which the last US PSYOP unit departed South Vietnam. The 7th PSYOP Battalion inactivated on 21 December 1971.

The remaining redeployments (Owl, Pheasant, Wren, and Pelican) fall outside the scope of this study because there were no US PYSOP units left in country after Operation Mallard.[46]

This chapter will now examine the first nine redeployment increments and how the lessons learned by MACV intelligence were implemented in subsequent missions. The tracking of lessons learned will provide insight into MACV's performance as a learning organization in relation to the intelligence function during this phase of the war (see figure 1).

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[46] Beck, "Operation Keystone – The Redeployment of United States Army Forces from the Republic of Vietnam", ii.

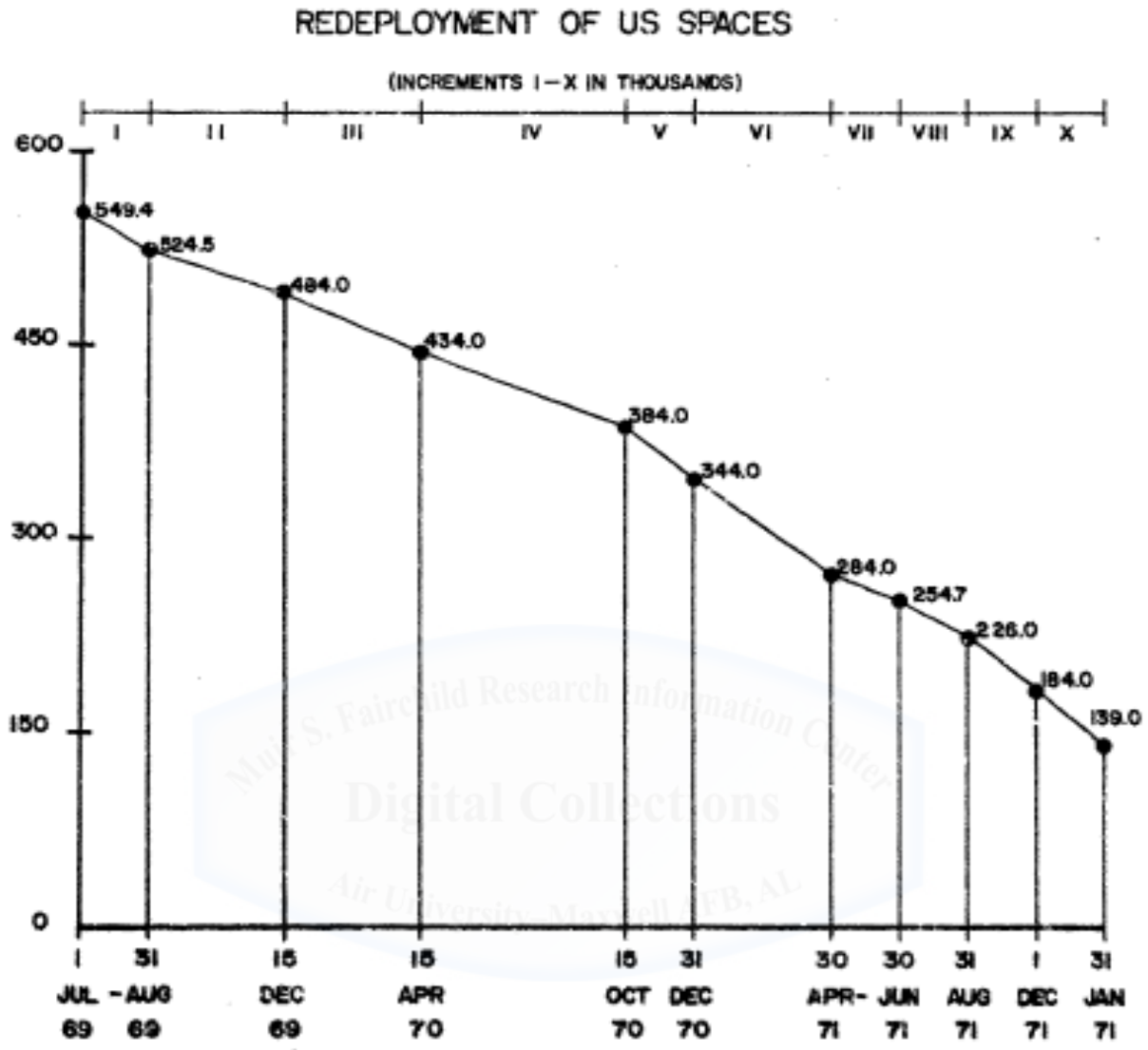


Figure 1 - Operation Keystone Redeployment Chart[47]

Eagle

Operation Eagle was not easy to complete, despite its relatively small size. USARV formed a redeployment planning group, but their focus was on the logistical process and not on the second-or-third-order effects the removal of the 9th Infantry Division would have on the rest of MACV, local Vietnamese

[47] MACV, Command History 1971, Volume II, F-4.

civilians, or partnered ARVN forces. The planning group included G-2 representation, but not PSYOP representation. Thus, the majority of the lessons learned were focused on the mechanics of clearing customs and out-processing personnel.[48] However, a close examination of the 9th Infantry Division's after-action report reveals several key points, which proved useful for subsequent units.

The first key point was the need to realign radar coverage of the unit's tactical area of operation (TAOR). The USARV planning group had not considered the sequencing of shutting down radar units or redeploying the personnel trained to operate that equipment. In fact, as the division presence decreased, there was an increased need for radar support to cover their departure.[49] The second major point was about the 9th Infantry G2's intelligence agent operation. Because of the short notice for redeployment, these agents were not properly terminated, causing risk not only to the agents but also potentially to the redeployment mission.[50] The end of the agents' employment had not been considered when the initial contracts were let because initial requirements had not considered a potential end to the mission.[51] The third key point involved the intelligence liaison function. As the unit reduced its presence, it removed its liaison officers from district and sector intelligence agencies. Thus, the unit's collection capability ceased at precisely

[48] Headquarters US Army Vietnam (USARV), *Redeployment Guide for Units*, Saigon, 19 September 1969.
[49] 9th Infantry Division, "Redeployment After Action Report," Department of the Army, San Francisco CA, 27 August 1969, B-11.
[50] Ibid., B-15.
[51] Ibid.

the time the unit's vulnerabilities increased. The 9th Infantry suggested that plans be made either to extend the time that liaison officers remained in place, i.e. placing them later in the redeployment timeline, or working with higher headquarters to ensure this gap in intelligence collection was mitigated.[52] This particular lesson learned was not included in MACV's unit redeployment guide, suggesting a lack of consideration on the part of USARV planners to functions beyond the physical movement of personnel and equipment.[53]

Cardinal

The 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division, which redeployed as part of the second installment, also learned some valuable lessons pertaining to intelligence.[54] The Brigade's MI detachment left as part of the first package to redeploy, which could have caused significant difficulties. But such difficulties were mitigated by liaison work with other intelligence agencies in the brigade area of interest. The brigade planners used the information provided by the 9th Infantry Division to avoid repeating the same mistakes the 9th Infantry had made.[55]

The 3rd Brigade noted three problems in their report, which were different than the ones noted by the 9th Infantry.[56] Their areas of concern were document security, personnel security, and war trophies. The first dealt with

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[52] Ibid.
[53] Headquarters US Army Vietnam (USARV), *Redeployment Guide for Units*, Saigon, 19 September 1969.
[54] 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, "Redeployment After Action Report," Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 11 December 1969.
[55] 9th Infantry Division, "Redeployment After Action Report," B-15.
[56] 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, "Redeployment After Action Report," B-2.

proper inspection techniques of the brigade area to ensure that no classified material was left behind. The 3rd found than many of its battalions and companies had not properly cleared their respective buildings, leaving behind classified material that could have fallen into enemy hands. The second was with the proper debriefing of security personnel and the requirement to have the correct forms on hand for documentation.[57] The intelligence section had not properly planned for the out-processing requirements of personnel with security clearances. The third dealt with ensuring individuals were not trying to export improper or improperly registered war trophies.[58] To mitigate these challenges, 82nd recommended that the MI detachment "stand down only after the majority of the combat units ceased operations."[59] The 82nd also thanked the 9th for the lessons learned report, because it was able to avoid many of the problems.[60]

Bluejay

Major General A.E. Milloy, Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division noted that because the operation was the "first unit of its size to completely redeploy, several new problem areas were encountered and many precedents were set."[61] For the intelligence function, these problems included the transfer of an entire agent net rather than individual agents, problems with intelligence

[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., B-3.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] 1st Infantry Division, "Keystone Bluejay After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 7 April 1970, 2.

property book accountability, management of ARVN interpreters, and difficulty in scheduling counter-intelligence (CI) inspections.

The problems noted by the 1st Infantry were in similar areas to those noted by the 9th Infantry, but were based more on the larger scale of the operation rather than in making the same mistakes. The 1st Infantry did not encountered the same problems with agents as the 9th Infantry did, but instead encounter problems based on attempting to transfer entire agent nets. The 1st Infantry had read the previous reports and did not repeat those mistakes, but it did fail to account for the differences within its own organization. For instance, the 1st Infantry kept its intelligence function operating longer, but encountered property accountability problems with intelligence equipment because that equipment was distributed thorough the unit's area of responsibility, rather than at a central location. The ARVN interpreters had not been an issue for the 9th or the 3rd, but were for the 1st Infantry. The final problem was CI inspections, which were also different in scale. The 1st Infantry clearly learned that it needed CI inspections to prevent the release of classified material, but failed to examine the scale of its own operations and the disruption that changes to one unit's inspection date would have on the remaining units. The 1st Infantry captured these and other lessons and shared them with USARV and the rest of the US forces in South Vietnam to help prevent other units from making the same.

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Robin (Alpha)

By 1 July 1970, the MACV staff had learned some valuable lessons from the redeployment process and units were putting these lessons into practice. When it came time for the 3rd Brigade of the 9th Infantry Division (3/9) to redeploy, the S-2 section prepared advanced studies based on the enemy's reactions to previous unit redeployments.[62] The S-2 section sought to maintain intelligence reporting until the last possible moment, so the unit started planning early for its redeployment and included measures to mitigate the problems experienced by other units. For instance, 3/9 began the destruction or transfer of classified documents early, publicized the requirements for registration of war trophies early, and prepositioned CI teams with battalion S2 sections to assist with redeployment activities.[63] Units within MACV were improving in redeployment operations. While 3/9 successfully mitigated each of those previous problems, it still had not conducted the analysis required for how its departure affected the local population's attitudes or the enemy's propaganda.[64]

The 199th Separate Brigade was also part of Keystone Robin. Their AAR noted early planning as key to their success. They began what is now called "parallel planning" almost three months before receipt of their redeployment

[62] 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, "After Action Report, Keystone Robin", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 8 October 1970.
[63] Ibid., B-2
[64] Ibid.

order.[65] The commander anticipated that his unit would soon receive orders and directed planning based on this assumption. His early preparation proved prescient. The 199th learned from previous experiences and made some changes to its approach to intelligence transition. While it released interpreters with units as they departed, it maintained three interpreters until 10 October 1970. The 199th noted in its AAR that is did so "to aid in the control of Vietnamese civilian employees and in the conduct of required liason [sic] with Army of Republic of Vietnam units."[66] The 199th also maintain counter-intelligence teams to conduct inspections to prevent the adverse incidents noted in earlier reports.[67] The unit also turned over its sensors on a schedule that included joint monitoring with the unit they were transferred to for an additional ten days.[68] Each of these steps, based on early planning and analysis of previous lessons, enabled to the 199th Brigade to execute a smooth redeployment and avoid the mistakes made by previous units.

Robin (Bravo)

The two major units involved in this installment were the 4th Infantry Division and the 25th Infantry Division. The 4th Infantry received orders to stand down on 1 October 1970, with a closure date of no later than (NLT) 31

[65] 199th Infantry Brigade (Separate), "Operation Keystone Robin: The Redeployment of the 199th Infantry Brigade (Separate) (Light) from the Republic of Vietnam", Department of the Army, 12 October 1970, 3.
[66] Ibid., 119
[67] Ibid., 120
[68] Ibid.

December 1970.[69] Its planners recognized the requirement for a two-fold intelligence mission, which included the collection and processing of intelligence and the requirement to redeploy its intelligence assets. The need to collect intelligence became more difficult as the unit's span of contact with the enemy diminished.[70] At the same time, the G2 was still responsible for providing timely intelligence, given the vulnerability of units while they were redeploying.

The 4th Infantry did not have the benefit of early planning, but took advantage of the lessons learned from previous units. The unit delayed the departure of CI units until the very end of December to ensure proper inspections were completed.[71] It coordinated to increase intelligence surveillance in the areas vacated by tactical units.[72] The 4th Infantry also established an orderly screening process for intelligence documents and personnel debriefs so as to accomplish both tasks without any significant problems.

The 25th Infantry Division operations order 183-70, Operation Keystone Robin-Bravo, identified the three areas of intelligence noted by previous units: handling of classified documents/material, physical security, and war trophy

[69] 4th Infantry Division, "4th Infantry Division Keystone Robin-B After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 13 December 1970.
[70] Ibid., 15.
[71] Ibid., C-1.
[72] Ibid.

registration.[73] The 25th Infantry G2 had assessed that the enemy was so weakened by the previous fighting that any large-scale activity was unlikely, which is possibly why the 25th OPORD did not have as significant a focus on enemy activity as did the 4th Infantry.[74] The 25th Infantry benefited from early planning and established a redeployment-planning group soon after USARV issued OPLAN 183-70 on 30 April 1970.[75] According to the division AAR, the G2 for the 25th Infantry had three missions, "maintenance of the current enemy situation during disengagement of divisional units; staff supervision of stand-down activities to insure safeguarding of classified defense information; and, the orderly transfer of intelligence assets and Records."[76] The unit continued its intelligence collection activities and maintained close coordination with both its higher headquarters and with local ARVN units.[77] It also successfully transferred the mission of sensor monitoring to the ARVN units replacing it.[78] MACV reported no major incidents during the 25th Infantry's redeployment.

Robin (Charlie)

As with previous redeployments, the intelligence section of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) had three specific missions in regards to redeployment: continued tracking of the enemy situation, safeguarding of

[73] 25th Infantry Division, Operations Order 183-70 Keystone Robin Bravo, 16 October 1970, D-3.
[74] Ibid.
[75] 25th Infantry Division, "After Action Report – Keystone Robin Bravo", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 December 1970, 4.
[76] Ibid., C-1.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

classified materiel, and the transfer of intelligence assets and records.[79] These functions were performed adequately, although the 11th ACR noted a shortage of CI personnel to conduct inspections. It was unclear if this had been a recent shortage, or if it was due to the lack of trained CI personnel that had plagued MACV for some time.[80]

The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) G2 section had the same three missions as the 11th ACR's S-2 section.[81] There were no discrepancies noted in any of these missions. Overall the early planning by an advanced planning group was key.[82] Unfortunately, on the issue of processing war trophies, the unit failed to execute the plan it had developed. Thus, there were delays in processing paperwork.[83] The lesson had been learned and included in the plan, but was not effectively supervised by subordinate unit leaders.

Because the 1st Cavalry successfully executed the major tasks of redeployment, it began to examine a few second-and-third-order consequences of the order. One problem noted by the division was the continued over-classification of the identities of individual units involved in the redeployment. The secrecy imposed on the information did not allow PSYOP units adequate time to exploit the opportunities involved with the redeployment.[84]

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[79] 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, "11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (-) Redeployment After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 5 March 1971, 3.
[80] Ibid., B-2.
[81] This iteration did not include the division's 3rd Brigade,. 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), "After Action Report – Keystone Robin Charlie", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 April 1971, C.
[82] Ibid,, F-1.
[83] Ibid., F-10.
[84] Ibid., F-13.

The last major Army unit part of Keystone Robin Charlie was the 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (2/25). The S2 also performed the same three functions as the previous two units and based on lessons learned from other AARs, did not encounter any significant issues with its redeployment.[85]

Oriole (Bravo)

By 1 July 1971 the situation within South Vietnam had dramatically changed from what it had been twenty-four months earlier. The South Vietnamese had completed Operation Lam Son 719 and the American mission had entered the final phases of Vietnamization. US units were no longer leading major combat operations and were now rapidly attempting to ensure their partnered ARVN units were prepared. In fact, the last major operation that an American infantry unit had participated in was Jefferson Glenn, completed on 8 October 1971.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade redeployed from Vietnam as part of the Oriole Bravo phase of the Keystone operation.[86] Similar to previous redeployments the S2 section now intensified collection gathering in the vicinity of the brigade AO and worked to increase cooperation with ARVN in the region.[87] The brigade still did not get its final destination unclassified until late, causing problems with

[85] 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, "After Action Report – Operation Keystone Robin (Charlie)", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 28 April 1971, 50.
[86] 173rd Airborne Brigade, "Redeployment After Action Report 1 July 1971 – 25 August 1971", Department of the Army, Fort Campbell, KY, 14 September 1971.
[87] Ibid., C-1.

its own personnel because the brigade did not know where in the CONUS it would be placed.[88]

Oriole (Charlie)

The final phase we will examine is Keystone Oriole (Charlie), during which the major unit redeployed was the 23rd Infantry, the Americal Division.[89] Interestingly for the Americal Division, the G2 prepared the section of the operations order dealing with the KCS.[90] The unit had experienced more problems with its transition of KCS than had previous units.[91] The Americal's report speculated that is was due either to termination, or lack of effective prospects that the KCS went AWOL.[92] Although is is equally as likely that the increased problems were due to the relentlessness of the US drawdown at this point of Vietnamization. The remainder of the 23rd Infantry's redeployment was without major incident, and their AAR noted that the unit had successfully turned over sensor strings to the 2nd ARVN Division.[93]

MACV and its subordinate units learned and retained lessons from one iteration of Operation Keystone to the next. The intelligence function at MACV was able to identify and mitigate problems encountered in the first few redeployment increments, and prevent later recurrence of the same problems.

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[88] Ibid., C-3.
[89] 23rd Infantry Division, "23rd Infantry Division Keystone Oriole Charlie After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 December 1971.
[90] Lessons learned from the KCS program will be explored in greater detail in chapter 15, although the ones experience by the Americal Division will be covered here. Footnote here is from 23rd Infantry Division, "23rd Infantry Division Keystone Oriole Charlie After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 December 1971, B-1.
[91] 23rd Infantry Division, "23rd Infantry Division Keystone Oriole Charlie After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 December 1971, B-3.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., B-2

These lessons, at first glance, appear overly tactical in nature. The involvement of the MACV J2 is more implicit than explicit during this phase and requires a brief explanation. The lessons learned were shared between commands in different CTZs. Given the nature of a hierarchical organization such as MACV, this sort of lateral idea sharing would have been the exception rather than the norm. Thus, the MACV J2's direct involvement is implied because the lessons learned were effectively distributed between disparate units. Had the MACV J2 not been involved in the redeployment process, it is unlikely that the units involved would have been able to execute such a complicated plan with such ease and control. In the next section we will examine the update to Army intelligence doctrine to determine how well MACV shared those and other lessons-learned with the institutional Army.

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Intelligence Doctrinal Update

In February 1971, the Army issued another update to its Combat Intelligence manual, FM 30-5. This revision added a chapter on stability operations.[94] The lessons MACV had learned from operations in South Vietnam were reflected in this update, but they came too late to affect operations because civic action and psychological operations were soon to be completely turned over to the GVN.

The first significant addition to the manual was the concept of "stability intelligence," which the manual stated "must, in addition to the three

[94] Department of the Army. Department of the Army Field Manual 30-5: Combat Intelligence: U.S. Army Doctrine. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 12 February 1971, 11-1.

traditional considerations of the enemy (insurgent), weather, and terrain, concern itself with a fourth major consideration: the population."[95] The manual further defined the requirements for information about the population to entail "elaborately detailed intelligence concerning sociological, political, geographic, and economic information which may have significant impact on tactical operations."[96] This was exactly the sort of information that PSYOP had been requesting from the intelligence function for the previous six years.

The second significant addition to the manual was the recognition of the importance of defectors to the collection of intelligence. The manual stated, "Psychological operations should include themes which encourage surrender or defection."[97] This was especially true because insurgents and their interrogation play a major role in determining enemy disposition and that "reasonable treatment normally will generate additional defections."[98] Also, noted was the fact that prisoners were valuable sources for the effects of psychological operations.[99]

The third significant addition was the description of the relationships between civil-military operations, psychological operations, and the intelligence function. The manual noted that it was crucial that the G2 and G5 work together in stability operations because PSYOP provide valuable information.[100] This is further articulated in that "when authorized by the appropriate

[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid., 11-3.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 4-12.
[100] Ibid., 4-18.

command, PSYOP intelligence personnel participate in detailed prisoner of war interrogations."[101]

The fourth significant addition was in the area of evaluations. The updated manual noted that enemy propaganda; well thought-out prisoner of war interrogations, interviews with civilian internees, and other similar groups can be "used to determine the attitudes of these groups, especially in stability operations. The results of these analyses may be used as an index of the effectiveness of friendly operations."[102] Psychological operations units could provide valuable information that could assist the G2 in his role of determining the effectiveness of friendly operations on the enemy.[103] The manual also noted the importance of the interaction between the G2 officer and the PSYOP officer because of the valuable information PSYOP could provide to intelligence.[104] Given the primacy of stability operations in certain areas and the need for stability intelligence, the G2 could find that expertise with PSYOP and civil affairs units that "have intelligence personnel specifically trained to perform detailed analysis of psychological, sociological, and economic factors and to evaluate the effects of their operations on the corps mission."[105]

The final significant aspect of the new manual was in what the intelligence community was required to supply to the PSYOP community. The manual stated that the "psychological vulnerabilities of the enemy force must

[101] Ibid., 3-2.
[102] Ibid., 4-18.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., 4-20.
[105] Ibid., 2-19.

be known in order to plan cover and deception and other propaganda and non-propaganda psychological operations."[106] In order to accomplish this mission, intelligence officers are required to provide information "concerning the enemy and hostile and friendly civilians to identify susceptible groups and their potential vulnerabilities toward which psychological operations can be directed in order to cause surrender or disaffection."[107] The manual also stated that intelligence about the loyalty of groups was required "to help identify key individuals or groups and those social, ethnic, religious, political, or economic attitudes towards which we can direct our psychological operations in order to win their support."[108] These requirements represented a major departure from the concentration on order-of-battle analysis and a much needed update to the prosecution of counterinsurgency operations.

The manual could have been improved in two ways. The first was in the notation that "loudspeakers are affected by weather."[109] While this statement seems to be obvious, it reveals a more important difficulty. This phrase was in previous editions of the manual and appears to have escaped serious thought in this update. Weather has a much more significant effect on leaflet distribution that it does on loudspeakers, and leaflets were the primary means of message distribution within South Vietnam. Weather also affects AM radio broadcasts and television broadcasts, which again have larger audiences than loudspeakers. The second problematic area was in Appendix C, which

[106] Ibid., 4-9.
[107] Ibid., 10-5.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 2-12.

indicated that the intelligence officer should seek intelligence support from the Theater Army Psychological operations Group.[110] In the case of Vietnam, that was the 7th PSYOP Group in Okinawa. The failure here was to recognize that a counterinsurgency on the scale of Vietnam would likely again require a PSYOP Group stationed within the country to manage the large scale of psychological operations required to fight the counterinsurgency. This particular aspect of PSYOP support had not yet been adequately analyzed. Nevertheless, the 1971 edition of FM 30-5 represented an important, if too long-delayed, improvement to the US Army's concept of intelligence.

Senior Officer Debriefs

One particular senior officer debrief from this phase of the war includes a distinct observation on intelligence in Vietnam. BG Henry J. Huller Jr., served as the Deputy Senior Advisor, I Corps Tactical Zone, from 12 September 1969 to 15 June 1970.[111] Huller observed that the initial transfer of sensors to the ARVN went well, with training beginning in July 1969 and the first ARVN-controlled sensors emplaced in September.[112] He noted that the number of ARVN controlled sensors doubled by November, doubled again in December 1969, and again in January 1970.[113] By then, the ARVN controlled a total of "307 magnetic, seismic and infra-red sensors in 85 strings throughout the

[110] Ibid., C-1.
[111] Henry J. Huller, Jr. (Brigadier General, USA). Senior Officer Debriefing Report: BG Henry J. Huller Jr., Deputy Senior Advisor, I Corps Tactical Zone, 12 September 1969 to 15 June 1970. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 8 September 1970).
[112] Ibid., 3.
[113] Ibid.

Corps."[114] Hiller also noted that other technology was being transferred including the "Balanced Pressure Anti-Intrusion System" and the "Air Delivered Seismic Intrusion Detectors (ADSID)."[115] The ARVN were successfully training on, receiving, and implementing new intelligence collection technology.

As part of the Vietnamization process, the ARVN also began taking over "the request system for aerial reconnaissance" in October 1969. [116] By June 1970, all of the "monthly reconnaissance plan is now prepared entirely by Vietnamese personnel and only augmented by requests from US units."[117] Additionally, training in the conduct of Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols was initiated in February 1970 to aid the ARVN in becoming self-sufficient in this "essential means of intelligence collection."[118]

Lessons Learned in Intelligence

During this phase of the war, the 525th MI Group prepared three particularly poignant lesson learned reports. These give us perspective over a period of three years. The 30 April 1970 report notes a change in mission for the group, as well as an examination of intelligence effectiveness, technology, and training. The report does not mention any details about PSYOP.[119]

The 525th MI Group's mission expanded on 1 March 1970 to include responsibility for a clandestine-collection operation along the Cambodian

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[114] Ibid., 4.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., 5.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 525th Military Intelligence Group Period Ending 30 April 1970, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 28 August 1970).

border. Given the increased scope of this mission and its importance to MACV's operations, the USARV staff prepared a recommendation to DA that the Group's authorized strength be increased by forty personnel.[120]

During the ninety days covered by this report, the 525th MI Group produced over 7,000 Intelligence Information Reports (IIR's), which led to supported units responding with over 1,000 artillery strikes, over 300 air strikes, and over 600 ground operations.[121] The results of these actions were compiled and used by the group to measure its effectiveness in providing timely and accurate intelligence. The group assessed that its intelligence led directly to over 1,500 VC/NVA killed and 139 VC/NVA captured.[122] Intelligence personnel's training was still inadequate, especially with the proper writing of Asian names. The report noted that even personnel on their third tours were having problems transliterating names properly, which caused misrouting or misfiling of reports.[123] The 525th Group recommended that both USSAINTS and the Defense Language Institute (DLI) work together to solve this training deficiency. The final important observation regarded the continued testing of beacons. Even during Vietnamization, the J2 continued to test improvements to its intelligence collection equipment. This particular upgrade increased the

[120] Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 525th Military Intelligence Group Period Ending 30 April 1970, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 28 August 1970), 5.
[121] Ibid., 1.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., 7.

transmission range of the beacons up to 20 miles for reception depending on type of aircraft used to detect and monitor.[124]

The April 1971 report covered a total of 181 days.[125] Key items from this report relate to the continued use of metrics to justify effectiveness, additional notes on the productivity of the various combined intelligence centers (CDEC, CMEC, CMIC, CICV), some challenges with "Vietnamization," and the effects of redeployment operations on all of the commands within the 525th Group. This report did not make any mention of support to psychological operations.

The 525th MI Group continued to focus on measure of activity in an attempt to measure progress. This measurement methodology was used throughout the intelligence establishment in MACV. While the totals for performance were certainly impressive, they lacked the analytical rigor required to assess the impact on the enemy state of morale or ability to continue the war. During this period, the 525th Group stated that over the course of 181 days it produced 11,630 Intelligence Information Reports (IIR's). Supported units used these IIRs as justification to launch "795 artillery strikes, 215 air strikes, and 735 ground operations."[126] The units reported that the results of these strikes were that "1,195 VC/NVA were killed and 115 were captured."[127] Also during this period, the 525th ran a robust network of sources managing "a

[124] Ibid., 9.
[125] Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 525th Military Intelligence Group Period Ending 30 April 1971, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 15 May 1971), 1
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.

total of 1,325 sources," which were involved "in intelligence collection activities throughout Vietnam."[128]

Metrics were also used by the combined intelligence centers. In the case of the CDEC, it received over one-million pages of captured documents requiring translation and possible exploitation.[129] Just over ten percent of those documents were found to be of use for intelligence, which was published as summaries and distributed to supported units. The intelligence derived from these documents also generated over 1,200 IIR's. The CDEC also provided over two hundred pages to the JPRC, but did not note if any of these pages resulted in the rescue of imprisoned US personnel.[130] The CMEC measured its performance similarly, noting that it examined over 10,000 pounds of ammunition, "750 pounds of captured medical equipment and 420 individual weapons. The Center processed 2,365 mine and booby trap reports and shipped 265,000 pounds of equipment back to the United States for further examination and exploitation."[131] Again, there was no mention of what results or insights the analysis produced. Likewise, the CMIC interrogated sixty personnel at the center, 610 at the National *Chieu Hoi* Center, and150 by its mobile interrogation teams. The CMIC noted that "these interrogations resulted in the publication and distribution of 870 reports to major intelligence users."[132] The Strategic Research and Analysis Division (SRA) personnel

[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid., 7.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.

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published eleven major studies during the period.[133] The CICV completed a trafficability study of the Mekong River in southeastern Cambodia, one of the same river in Laos, as well as studies on key interdiction points based on terrain analysis of Cambodia and Laos and a study on where defoliants could be used if the extent ban on them were lifted.[134] These reports appear to have been generated within the respective sections and not by external requests for the information.

The 525th noted a few problems areas with the transition of the intelligence function to ARVN units. The ARVN had difficulties completing paperwork, conducting effective training, and often displayed a "mañana" attitude toward operations.[135] The 525th was concerned that the ARVN had "not realized the effect of the American standdown" and that there was "almost no liaison within the Vietnamese intelligence community. S2s of ARVU units often do not receive collection reports. In addition, ARVN S2s often refuse to brief collection agencies on their respective priorities although US counterparts have tried to facilitate liaison, the results are still frighteningly primitive."[136] With so little accomplished at this late stage of "Vietnamization," the 525th worried that "if five years of intense liaison has achieved so little, the pessimist might well wonder what fewer men with less 'clout' will be able to accomplish."[137] Finally, there were changes in all the command positions

[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid., 8.
[135] Ibid., 17.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.

within the 525th MI Group during this period, including the 525th Group Commander, but those changes did not appear to cause an appreciable change in output or productivity.[138]

The report of 30 April 1972 covers 182 days.[139] The group's personnel were decreasing during this period, and its MI battalions were redesigned as detachments.[140] Additionally, more of its functions were being assumed by the ARVN. Thus, it is rather remarkable that the group's productivity rose when compared to the same period the previous year. During this period, the group produced l2,020 Intelligence Information Reports (IIRs) up from the 11,600 last year.[141] The numbers of actions by supported units decreased significantly, however, which should have been expected given the significant decrease in US combat forces and the announcement by President Nixon in November 1971 that all US forces were now in a defensive posture.[142]

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Summary of Intelligence, June 1969 to December 1971

During this phase of the war, the intelligence function at MACV performed well overall. When MACV's mission became Vietnamization, intelligence personnel and processes adapted well to accomplish the mission through the period examined in this study. MACV successfully redeployed intelligence assets and transferred technology and responsibility to the ARVN

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[138] Ibid., 9.
[139] Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 525th Military Intelligence Group Period Ending 30 April 1972, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 18 May 1972).
[140] Ibid., 6.
[141] Ibid., 1.
[142] http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3217, accessed 31 March 2015.

without a significant loss, compromise, or degradation of the volume of productivity. This process continued despite the decrease in the number of US personnel involved in the intelligence function. This included a 181-day period during which a nearly one hundred percent turnover of MI unit commanders occurred, causing no noticeable decline in quality or quantity of intelligence output. MACV was also able to liaison successfully with the JGS to address shortcomings in the process of transitioning intelligence to the ARVN. Finally, MACV intelligence personnel successfully passed lessons learned to the institutional army, which were included in the most recent intelligence doctrinal update.

The intelligence function struggled, however, in several areas. The continued concentration on measures of activity and performance rather than measure of progress or effectiveness against the enemy represented a lack of significant learning. Furthermore, despite the successful turnover of equipment incident to Vietnamization, the ARVN experienced internal coordination problems, which the intelligence personnel in MACV did little to assist.

All in all, however, the MACV intelligence function performed well during this phase in spite of a complete change of mission, significant turnover of key personnel, and a reduction in the forces available to conduct operations. We will now examine the evidence using Garvin's test questions to determine the degree to which the MACV performed as a learning organization within the intelligence function during this phase of the war.

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Analysis of Learning about Intelligence

Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this phase. In particular for Operation Keystone, MACV sought to learn as much as it could about the redeployment process in order to make it efficient, safe, and prevent the redeployments from distracting from the mission of Vietnamization. MACV established a robust after action report/lessons learned program for the operation and its subordinate units were largely able to avoid repeated mistakes. As the redeployments increments became larger, MACV was able to transition TAORs effectively to ARVN units, to continue conducting intelligence operations and training for the ARVN, and to transfer equipment or ship that equipment out of South Vietnam. MACV sought to learn how to conduct intelligence in the midst of Vietnamization and was able to accomplish that mission successfully.

Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence?

MACV rates a “No” for this phase based largely on two particular facts. The first was that it appears that MACV stopped seeking outside intelligence advice. There simply were no other reports or controversy about the numbers of VC/NVA. The sole reliance of progress came from the HES. Second, the lessons of the Cambodian invasion in April 1970 indicate that the intelligence function at the strategic level did not understand the degree to which the NVA were “dug in” to the area of the “Fish hook.”

Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with inteligence?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this phase largely due to the relative smoothness of the redeployment. The intelligence function continued to focus on order-of-battle information, but with the change in mission to Vietnamization was able to avoid repeated mistakes during Operation Keystone. In this respect, Operation Keystone was remarkable because US forces had never before attempted this sort of operation. Additionally, the lessons learned within South Vietnam were captured by the intelligence doctrine update, which attempted to prevent future forces from making similar mistakes.

Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence left the command?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this period as well. As momentum built for redeployment and key people involved in the process rotated out of Vietnam, the knowledge they had gained though the redeployment experience was properly archived within MACV and USARV and provided to the next units to redeploy. This was particularly key for the area of intelligence, where the lessons learned were clearly passed on to subsequent units. For the intelligence function, this is particularly true with the 525th MI Group, which experienced a nearly complete rotation of commanders within a 181-day period and no concomitant degradation in analytical output.

Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this criterion as well. MACV acted on what it knew on intelligence during three particular instances: the redeployment of US forces, Vietnamization, and the tactical exploitation of intelligence. During redeployment, the intelligence function shared lessons learned, actively participated in early planning sessions, and developed methods to address anticipated shortfalls in capability. During Vietnamization, MACV intelligence personnel successfully trained ARVN soldiers on the technical requirements needed to operate, maintain, and employ intelligence collection sensors. Tactical intelligence units also continued to provide timely, accurate, and useful information to combat commanders. As the ORLLs noted, IIRs were repeatedly turned into actionable intelligence in which supported units engaged and destroyed enemy personnel.

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Net Assessment

Because MACV met four of the five criteria of a learning organization in the intelligence function its overall rating during the period June 1969 to December 1971 was "**Somewhat Effective.**" (See Table 14). This is an increase of one rating from the previous phase.

Garvin's Learning Questions	June 1969 – December 1971
	Intelligence
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence?	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence?	**-**
Did MACV avoid repeat mistakes with intelligence?	**+**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence command?	**+**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence?	**+**
Total	**4**

TABLE 14 – INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT, 1969-1971

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

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Despite the turbulence during this phase involving the reduction of US forces, the MACV J2 exhibited the characteristics of a learning organization. Additionally, the performance of the J2 improved from the previous phase of the war. This improvement was largely due to three factors. The first was that the war had changed. As US forces were alerted for redeployment, they ceased combat operations and the focus of intelligence personnel became largely administrative in nature. Second, the intelligence collection and analysis infrastructure continued to operate bureaucratically: it functioned in the manner in which it had been designed despite the personnel turnover. Third,

the RVNAF did a relatively good job, in the short-term, of taking over the intelligence responsibilities transferred to them.

Having completed the analysis of the intelligence function during this phase of the war, we now turn our attention to MACV's execution of psychological operations.

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14

PSYOP, June 1969 to December 1971

One major problem regarding PSYOP is the lack of understanding and appreciation for PSYOP by some senior military commanders.

- Colonel Harold F. Bentz, May 1972

On 16 September 1969, General Ralph E. Haines, Jr., the Commander-in-Chief of the US Army Pacific, had just completed a fact-finding tour to Vietnam and sent a memorandum regarding the recent visit to the 4th PYSOP Group commander, Colonel Taro Katagiri. Haines was impressed that Katagiri had included equal time during his brief for the Air Force 9th SOS representative to speak about his successes and challenges of the leaflet and airborne loudspeaker missions.[1] General Haines also acknowledged the difficulty in measuring progress with PSYOP and added he "would only say in passing that while concrete results of your activities are difficult to identify or quantify, the importance of the PSYOP effort is well recognized for the contribution it is making at all echelons."[2] Haines continued, "I personally regard it as a vital adjunct to the operations of our tactical forces and the

[1] Memorandum to 4th PSYOP Group, From USARPAC Commander, General Ralph E. Haines, Jr., 16 September 1969, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472_4th PSYOP Group.
[2] Ibid.

pacification effort."[3] His sentiments notwithstanding, the implementation of PSYOP during this phase of the war would continue to be challenged by the need for better training of PSYOP personnel, the lack of adequate logistical support to PYSOP forces, the paucity of PYSOP-specific intelligence, adequate command emphasis, and the want of meaningful PSYOP evaluation criteria. PSYOP operators would face one additional challenge during this phase as the mission of MACV changed and Vietnamization became the central aspect of MACV's mission. This chapter will briefly review the major events related to psychological operations and then examine evidence from Operation Keystone, PSYOP doctrine, senior officer debriefs, JUSPAO Policy Letters, and USARV command progress reports to determine the effectiveness of MACV's PSYOP program during this phase of the war.

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Major Events of 1969

The tenor of US PSYOP changed noticeably in conjunction with MACV's change in mission. This process was not instantaneous. Previous recommendations for changes to PSYOP at MACV continued to be acted upon with a sort of institutional Newtonian inertia being evident through December 1969, but then nearly completely shifted to Vietnamization and redeployment activities.

In August 1969, the 4th PSYOP Group made changes to the composition of its test and evaluation panel, which were precipitated by recommendations proposed during the previous phase. The panel added a civilian sociologist

[3] Ibid.

from the S3, *Chieu Hoi* ralliers, and a civilian propaganda specialist from the Development Branch to a group that previously only included Vietnamese civilians already assigned to the Test and Evaluation Branch. These personnel were added to improve the grammatical structure of and culturally appropriate nuances in PSYOP messages. Quality improved immediately, as indicated by the fact that through the remainer of 1969 only twelve percent of over 1100 items reviewed were found to be unsuitable for distribution to the South Vietnamese population.[4]

Ho Chi Minh died on 2 September 1969, but his passing had little effect on the North's prosecution of the war. In a memorial service held in North Vietnam on 9 September, Le Duan, the First Secretary of the Party Central Committee "swore a solemn oath to 'follow His [sic] path and to pursue His [sic] great cause."[5] JUSPAO was slow to react. It the organization three days to issue Policy Letter 86, "The Death of Ho Chi Minh."[6] Ho Chi Minh's death had not been unexpected. Rumors of his ill health had been circulating for some time. The guidance regarding Ho's death should have been ready well before it happened, ready to be released immediately when news of his death was confirmed.

On a more positive note, in September 1969 representatives from the RVNAF General Political Warfare Department (GPWD), the MACJ3-l1, and the

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[4] Memorandum Subject: "PDS Input for Meritorious Unit Commendation 1 December 1968 thru 30 December 1969", 4 January 1970, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[5] *Victory in Vietnam: the official history of the people's army of Vietnam, 1954—1975*, 252.
[6] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 86, "The Death of Ho Chi Minh", Vietnam, 5 September 1969.

4th PSYOP Group agreed to form a national-level PSYWAR coordination system.[7] The GPWD also assigned a full-time liaison officer to the 4th PSYOP Group, which greatly enhanced coordination between RVNAF PSYWAR actives and US psychological operations.[8] Furthermore, a policy committee consisting of senior members of these agencies would have responsibility for "assessing situations of PSYOP exploitation, establishing policies, and evaluating PSYOP programs" to ensure a coordinated effort between US and Vietnamese efforts.[9]

Two other notable improvements occurred prior to the end of the year. PSYOP developed a nation-wide thirty-two page monthly magazine titled *Thong Cam*, or "mutual understanding."[10] This publication was designed to enhance understanding between Vietnamese employees and their American employers.[11] The change was also a reflection of MACV's change in mission because the audience for this magazine was Vietnamese people who were already ostensibly supportive of the GVN.

Other noteworthy changes took place within the 4th PSYOP Group's propaganda development section (PDS). It started producing slide shows, which were easier and less expensive to produce than film and were more readily

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[7] 4th Psychological Operations Group. "Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group, Period Ending 31 October 1969", (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 30 March 1970), 3.
[8] Memorandum Subject: "PDS Input for Meritorious Unit Commendation 1 December 1968 thru 30 December 1969", 4 January 1970, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[9] 4th Psychological Operations Group. "Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group, Period Ending 31 October 1969", 3.
[10]Memorandum Subject: "Input for LTC Coleman-Significant events in PDS, CY 69", 13 March 1970, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[11] Ibid.

tailorable to local areas.[12] Additionally, the PDS developed a PSYOP effectiveness study utilizing a computer-compatible database. In an effort to assess the effectiveness of its messages more accurately, the section designed a series of questionnaires designed to study the impact of a PSYOP message on a target audience.[13]

On 01 December 1969, the 4th PSYOP Group reorganized under MTOE 33-500G (see Table 15), which consolidated twenty-one augmentation detachments, thus reducing overhead. The organizational change also authorized a supply warrant officer and maintenance warrant officers.[14] These changes were much because of the group's need for supply and maintenance support.

Unit	Officer	Warrant Officer	Enlisted	Aggregate
4th PSYOP Group	32	5	165	202
6th PSYOP Battalion	33	2	151	186
7th PSYOP Battalion	33	2	151	186
8th PSYOP Battalion	33	2	151	186
10th PSYOP Battalion	33	2	151	186
Total	164	13	769	946

TABLE 15 – PSYOP MTOE 33-500G[15]

The nearly one thousand personnel authorized by MTOE 33-500G would prove to be the high-water mark for PSYOP organization in South Vietnam. On

[12] Ibid.
[13] ____, Memorandum Subject: "PDS Input for Meritorious Unit Commendation 1 December 1968 thru 30 December 1969", 4 January 1970, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group
[14] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report December 1969, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group", 1.
[15] Army Concept Team in Vietnam (ACTIV). "Final Report: Employment of U.S. Army Psychological Operations Units in Vietnam", (Saigon, ACTIV, 7 June 1969), II-13.

06 December 1969, the 4th PSYOP Group and its subordinate units were awarded the Army's Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period 1 December 1967 to 31 December 1968 for contributing significantly to the success of the *Chieu Hoi* program.[16] The group also "established a Psychological Operations Development Center to study and analyze the effects and implications of various programs and to prepare guidelines and recommendations for improving psychological activities."[17]

Major Events of 1970

The 1 February 1970 redeployment increment, Operation Keystone Bluejay, was the first to affect PSYOP forces directly. By 14 April 1970, the 4th PSYOP Group headquarters was to be cut by ten personnel, the 6th, 7th, and 8th Battalions were each to be cut by thirty personnel, and the 10th Battalion was to be cut by eighty personnel.[18]

Despite the addition of qualified officers noted above, during the spring of 1970, PSYOP forces continued to struggle with inadequate logistical support. USARV noted that the request for an "emergency MTOE authorization of 92 AN/UIH-6 Public Address Sets for US Army combat units was disapproved by DA."[19] The DA indicated it would provide forty PA sets as an add-on to "Ensure

[16] Department of the Army, General Orders Number 4422, Subject: "Award of the Meritorious Unit Commendation", 6 December 1969, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[17] Ibid.
[18] MACV, *Command History 1970 Volume I*, IV-14.
[19] Headquarters US Army Vietnam (USARV), *Command Progress Report 3rd Quarter FY 70*, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 A1 787, 140.04.

197."[20] PSYOP were also short on bullhorns. These were available at the Army depot level, but had not yet been released by the supply system. Under a new schedule, USARV was set to receive 900 bullhorns between March and October 1970, with 145 bullhorns to be released from depot on 31 March 1970. Face-to-face PSYOP was repeatedly found to be the most effective means of communication; however, the shortage of equipment hindered its implementation.

By the summer of 1970, the emphasis on the mission had changed from one of conducting unilateral US PSYOP to one of training the South Vietnamese to conduct PSYOP.[21] A draft revision of USARV Regulation 515-1 focused on ending "direct US participation in civic action projects, emphasizing support of GVN conducted civic action and building the image of the GVN."[22] By the fall of 1970, the PSYOP mission changed again, this time with a focus on redeployment activities.

The next round of cuts for PSYOP units, announced on 16 October 1970 as part to Operation Keystone Robin (Bravo), were scheduled to be completed by 30 December 1970. They included a cut of nine personnel to the 4th PSYOP Group headquarters, ten personnel to the 6th Battalion, twelve to the 7th Battalion, fifteen to the 8th Battalion, and twenty-four to the 10th Battalion. As with the first round of cuts to PSYOP, these appear to have been arbitrary and

[20] Ibid.
[21] 4th PSYOP Group, "Effective PSYOPS for Vietnam", *Credibilis*, Summer 1971, 9.
[22] Headquarters US Army Vietnam (USARV), *Command Progress Report 3rd Quarter FY 70*, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 A1 787, 140.03.

without analysis as to the particular PSYOP missions in the various Military Regions.

Major Events of 1971

The Combined Campaign Plan (CCP) for 1971 included a PSYOP component, which noted "Psychological operations were to be characterized by time-phased communications with specific target audiences to achieve the desired behavior, such as providing Information, in support of military operations."[23] Commanders were to emphasize quick-reaction psychological operations as a normal adjunct to combat operations. These efforts were to be limited, however, solely to communications dealing with enemy target audiences. Advice and back-up mass-media psychological operations (PSYOP) material support would be provided to RVNAF and GVN agencies as they were requested.[24] Furthermore, "Psychological operations were to place primary emphasis on the neutralization of the VCI. Priority was to be given to the exercise of influence by all commanders and senior advisors to insure effective implementation of the People's Information Program."[25]

By this point in the war, PSYOP were well suited to implement the plan laid out in the CCP, having reached the pinnacle of their technical proficiency in South Vietnam. The technology set in place by Robert McNamara continued to expand such that, as noted by Henry Davis, "South Vietnamese television reached 80 percent of the country's population alone, not including the

[23] MACV, *Command History 1970 Volume I*, II-12.
[24] Ibid., IV-8.
[25] Ibid., II-13.

audiences receiving messaging through other media."[26] Davis further observed that the production capacity of PSYOP units had expanded to the point that "tactically, military units could be provided with customized loudspeaker broadcasts or leaflets within 24 hours and standardized products in two hours of being requested from anywhere in South Vietnam."[27]

Within a year of these achievements, however, the entire US military psychological operations organization in South Vietnam would be dismantled, with responsibility for production transferred to the RVNAF and augmented by the 7th PSYOP Group in Okinawa.[28] Even with the technical improvements to production capacity, the effectiveness of PSYOP evaluation was still lacking. Measurement of PSYOP effectiveness in 1971, even with data processing equipment, continued to be impractical due to a myriad of difficulties. Additionally, with the on-going drawdown, long-range studies of effectiveness could not be planned.[29]

In late March 1971, in an effort to support Lam Son 719, MACV PSYOP proposed that B-52s drop leaflet bombs over southern Laos and Cambodia. Abrams refused to endorse the plan. According to MACV's official history, his "high regard for the striking potency of the B-52" and the fact that he "considered the conventional firepower of the B-52 to be of such high value

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[26] Henry B. Davis, IV, "Mind Games: Setting Conditions for Successful Counterinsurgency Military Information Support Operations", Naval Post Graduate School Thesis, DTIC Document, December 2010, 30.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1971*, *Supplemental*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1972, TSS-4.
[29] Ibid., TSS-6.

that any degradation of the bomb load to accommodate leaflet bombs was not desirable."[30] This decision, when taken within the context of Abrams record on PSYOP, indicates either a lack of understanding on his part of the effect that psychological operations could have on the enemy, or a judgment on his part of the greater value of firepower. Either way, the decision suggests a command climate that was less enthusiastic about PSYOP than had been the case under Westmoreland. The point became moot, however, as soon after Lam Son 719 ended, the major mission of PSYOP became redeployment.

The timeline of PSYOP unit deactivations is as follows:

16 April 1971	-	10th PSYOP Battalion deactivated
26 June 1971	-	8th PSYOP Battalion deactivated
30 June 1971	-	6th PSYOP Battalion deactivated
2 October 1971	-	4th PSYOP Group deactivated
21 December 1971	-	7th PSYOP Battalion deactivated

The official MACV history stated that a planned residual support force structure would be in place when major US redeployments were complete, with PSYOP requirements met by "Vietnamese agencies, assets, and resources through the progressive augmentation of existing RVN PSYOP capabilities."[31] But, the GVN still lacked adequate resources with which to support the comprehensive nature of the PSYOP program previously implemented by US force.[32]

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[30] Military Assistance Command Vietnam. Command History, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam 1971 Volume I. Saigon: USMACV Military History Branch, 25 April 1972, VI-9.
[31] MACV, *Command History 1971*, *Supplemental*, TSS-5.
[32] Ibid.

Operation Keystone Lessons Learned

The initial focus of planning for Operation Keystone was on the mechanical aspects of redeployment rather than on its possible effects on the local population.[33] This is indicated by the fact that neither the 9th Infantry Division redeployment-planning group nor the USARV planning group had a PSYOP representative involved on the team.[34] The logistical plans were minutely detailed as to the exact requirements for the clearance of personnel, vehicles, and containers through customs.[35] We will examine seven of the first nine installments of the redeployment to determine the effect each had on the PSYOP function at MACV.

Eagle

The 9th Infantry's AAR stated they received minimal "guidance on the PSYOP exploitation of the redeployment."[36] The guidance that did come from JUSPAO and the MACJ3-11 only included the requirement for the 9th Infantry Division to start a redeployment PSYOP campaign.[37] By the time that the "first PSYOP material covering redeployment was disseminated" within the 9th Infantry's area, the enemy "had already initiated their own PSYOP activities."[38] Additionally, the VIS and GPWD failed to issue guidance to their subordinate agencies, thus making coordination between the US and GVN PSYOP entities

[33] Headquarters US Army Vietnam (USARV), *Redeployment Guide for Units*, Saigon, 19 September 1969, I-B-2.
[34] Ibid., I-A.
[35] Ibid., II-1-A-3.
[36] 9th Infantry Division, "Redeployment After Action Report," Department of the Army, San Francisco CA, 27 August 1969, C-2.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

all but impossible.[39] In fact, for a month after the redeployment had been announced, there was no guidance published by JUSPAO, VIS, or the GPWD.[40] The MACJ-3-11 did disseminate exploitation guidance after the Midway conference, but never issued any specific guidance for redeploying units.[41]

The 9th Infantry recommended that PSYOP guidance be issued immediately after a unit was notified it was to redeploy and that specific themes and media products be developed for dissemination and exploitation.[42] However, when one examines the 9th Infantry Division OPORD, Tab 1 to Annex I is written for Civic Affairs/PSYOP and clearly lists themes and target audiences for those themes.[43] These themes, drawn from existing guidance, were specified for the various audiences. The question, then, is why did the 9th Infantry Division not execute PSYOP in support and why did MACV not follow-up to ensure that PSYOP was being executed. Guidance was written in the 9th Infantry's redeployment order, was not implemented, and the 9th Infantry's AAR blames its higher headquarters for the failure. In the absence of supplemental guidance from from JUSPAO, the 9th Infantry relied on existing guidance, which was relatively vague.

The 9th Infantry Division identified two additional problems with the transition of PSYOP and civic action. The first concerned how to treat the three-thousand local Vietnamese nationals employed by US forces. Because

[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] 9th Infantry Division, Operational Order 1-69 (Redeployment), 3 July 1969, Annex 1-I-I.

these people had been hired to meet specific US needs, the majority of them would be unemployed by "Vietnamization."[44] The 9th recommended that close coordination with CORDS, local GVN agencies, and USARV staff to ensure this situation did not exacerbate unrest, increase support to the VC/NVA, or undermine support to "Vietnamization."[45] The second issue was the termination of civic-action projects. The sudden withdrawal of US forces and their monetary and material support to these projects could have had adverse consequences. The 9th Infantry recommended that careful planning be undertaken to ensure that either projects were completed, successfully handed over to GVN agencies, or stopped in such a way as to not present the VC/NVA with a propaganda opportunity.[46]

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Cardinal

The 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division seemingly ignored learned lessons from the 9th Infantry's AAR about PSYOP. As the 82nd Airborne's report stated "Psychological operations pertaining to the redeployment of the Brigade were not undertaken for several reasons."[47] First the province PSYOP Advisor and CMAC agreed to conduct a PSYOP campaign after the brigade had departed the area. Also, the 82nd Airborne was unaware of whether it were to be relieved by an ARVN unit or another American unit.[48] In light of this unknown circumstance, the brigade did not believe it wise to conduct a PSYOP

[44] USARV, *Redeployment Guide for Units*, II-3-3-1
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., II-3-3-2.
[47] 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, "Redeployment After Action Report," Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 11 December 1969, E-1.
[48] Ibid., E-2.

campaign based on relief by ARVN if in fact it were to be by a US unit.[49] The second reason why the brigade did not conduct a campaign was the view that it was better for a GVN agency to do it.[50] However, the brigade did continue to conduct tactical PSYOP in support of *Chieu Hoi* and pacification as long as it conducted operations.[51] Thus, Newton's first law of motion propelled the continuation of the *Chieu Hoi* PSYOP campaign and simultaneously prevented the start of a new PSYOP campaign in support of redeployment.

Robin (Alpha)

By the next iteration of Operation Keystone, the execution of PSYOP had begun to improve. The 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry conducted two, phased PSYOP campaigns to support redeployment. The first phase included *Chieu Hoi* support, GVN image bolstering efforts, local election support, and initial information on redeployment.[52] That phase began while the operation was still classified, and so its themes were general. The second phase began with the official announcement of the redeployment. The themes then changed to the growing strength of GVN forces, the declining strength of VC/NVA, and the increased ability of RF/PF and National Police. The audience for this campaign was primarily the local populace, the media, and included face-to-face meetings, tapes, and leaflets for dissemination. Ground teams from the 6th PSYOP Battalion, 3rd Brigade organic aircraft, battalion MEDCAPs, and Sector

[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., H-1.

G5 and VIS elements conducted the campaign.[53] The unit ensured the KCS were either transferred to another unit or released from the program.[54]

The 3rd Brigade deemed PSYOP a success for several reasons. First, planning began early to ensure that conditions were set for the inevitable news release. Second, the unit included the JUSPAO advisor and Sector G5 in the process. Additionally, the brigade minimized its own role in the area, while maximizing the role of the local GVN forces. Many GVN were included in the dissemination of materiel: the National Police, VIS, Vietnamese POLWAR section, and local newspapers. Additionally, local themes such as the success of local elections, combat victories, economic development and pride in their own local forces were emphasized to mitigate any possible VC/NVA propaganda to the contrary.[55] The team recommended that PSYOP planning start even earlier. The report noted, however, that security concerns inhibited PSYOP.[56]

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Robin (Bravo)

The most significant PSYOP problem for the 4th Infantry Division was the redeployment operation's security classification. This classification prevented the timely release of material explaining the redeployment to the local populace.[57] Thus, the 4th Infantry took no proactive PSYOP measures to exploit or mitigate the effects of Vietnamization. When the redeployment began, the 4th

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., H-2.
[55] Ibid., H-3.
[56] Ibid., H-5.
[57] 4th Infantry Division, "4th Infantry Division Keystone Robin-B After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 13 December 1970, 15.

Infantry sought to "satisfactorily terminate all civic action projects and programs including the Luc Luong 66 Program (KCS)."[58]

Here too there was tension between operational security (OPSEC) concerns and PSYOP.[59] The PSYOP planners at division had envisioned a two-phased operation. The first phase would set the conditions by bolstering the GVN image, while the second phase would concentrate to the "replacement" rather than "withdrawal" of American units.[60] The 4th ID got a late start at its PSYOP campaign, but coordinated with the 202 POLWAR platoon and VIS services to distribute leaflets and posters. As the division began the GVN image phase of its campaign, the very people whose image was being bolstered were the distributing the messages.[61]

Unfortunately, one lesson continued to be re-learned. The 4th ID noted "there was a lack of interest from citizens in populated areas to aerial broadcasts," and that "messages should be presented by personal contact."[62] For whatever reason, MACV continued to forget the value of face-to-face communication.

The 25th Infantry Division, the second major unit involved in this increment of the redeployment, also included a similar PSYOP program to counter VC/NVA propaganda.[63] The 25th ID's AAR noted that the division's redeployment, as set forth in the operations order, was developed from a

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[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., F-1.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid., F-2
[62] Ibid., F-5
[63] 25th Infantry Division, Operations Order 183-70 Keystone Robin Bravo, 16 October 1970, I-1.

careful study of MACV and USARV directives and the AARs of previously redeployed units.[64]

The guidance for PSYOP emphasized four main themes. First, RVNAF victories would be used to instill pride and confidence in their ability to protect the people from the VC/NVA. Second, campaigns would emphasize that joint planning between US and GVN leaders determined the scale and scope of redeployments. Third, pacification progress would be attributed to the capabilities displayed by the population. Fourth, that the division's redeployment represented progress toward peace and a concrete example of the desire for friendship the US had for the Vietnamese people.[65] The 25th ID also focused on specific enemy units and individuals prior to the announcement of the redeployment in an attempt to establish the conditions for a success.[66] This was the first instance of PSYOP being evident in Operation Keystone.

The second phase began with the public announcement and was coordinated with both the 5th and 25th ARVN divisions to continue the campaign after US forces departed.[67] The 25th ID's command group showed real interest in PSYOP, and it reiterated the success of pacification at every public opportunity. Commanders attended many ceremonies in dedication of Civic Action projects, presenting similar themes. [68] These actions indicate a

[64] Ibid.
[65] 25th Infantry Division, "After Action Report – Keystone Robin Bravo", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 December 1970, E-2.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., E-3.

grasp of psychological operations and the requirement of support by the commander.

The 25th transitioned PSYOP equipment though lateral transfers, which by now had eased some of the shortage of PSYOP equipment nationwide.[69] Unfortunately, the transition did not go smoothly because PSYOP equipment had not been procured though normal supply channels. USARV was slow to issue guidance on PSYOP equipment turn-in; and therefore, much was turned into supply depots for shipment back the US rather than being transferred to ARVN or other US units.[70]

The one failure experienced by the 25th Infantry was the attempted turnover of responsibility for PSYOP to the Division Support Command (DISCOM) S5, who was not equipped to handle a PSYOP campaign. The 25th ID recommended that future redeploying units not transfer PSYOP to their support commands. Those units heeded this warning.

Robin (Charlie)

The 1st Cavalry Division created a plan for PSYOP turnover that closely matched those of previously redeploying units.[71] The plan had two themes; enhancing the image of the GVN and emphasizing that the redeployment was a step toward peace and proof of US friendship.[72] But, despite this early

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[69] Ibid., E-4.
[70] Ibid., E-6.
[71] The entire section on PSYOP and Civic Action is mission from the 11th ACR report. See 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, "11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (-) Redeployment After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 5 March 1971.
[72] 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), "After Action Report – Keystone Robin Charlie", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 April 1971, C-5-1.

planning, the standardized redeployment leaflet was not initially available.[73] This absence indicates a problem at either the MACV-J3-11 or the 4th PSYOP Group.

The 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (2-25) planned a similar PSYOP campaign, but it also designed leaflets and forwarded them to IIFFV for prior approval. It then began an aggressive PSYOP campaign prior to the announcement of its redeployment.[74] The brigade was also proactive with PSYOP equipment turn-in, sending a letter to USARV requesting disposition instructions rather than waiting for guidance. This was done specifically because of lessons learned by previous units.[75]

Oriole (Alpha)

As part of Keystone Oriole (Alpha), PSYOP continued to absorb significant redeployment numbers. On 26 June 1971 the 4th PSYOP Group lost fourteen more personnel, and the 8th PSYOP Battalion inactivated, redeploying 110 personnel.[76] The JUSPAO element at MACV lost twenty-eight personnel, going from seventy to forty-two.

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[73] Ibid.
[74] 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, "After Action Report – Operation Keystone Robin (Charlie)", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 28 April 1971, 93.
[75] Ibid., 94.
[76] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1971*, *Volume II*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1972, F-1-8.

Oriole (Bravo)

The only notable observation from the 173rd Brigade's redeployment was that the unit incorporated PSYOP as an effort to "help cover the gradual withdrawal of Brigade units from combat operations."[77]

Oriole (Charlie)

When the 23rd Infantry Division received its redeployment notification, CA/PSYOP was focused on self-help projects in the local community under a joint US/GVN effort. Thus, the division made plans to use PSYOP to explain to the locals that the redeployment meant progress and that the GVN was capable and worthy of the people's confidence in them. The division also analyzed the effect the redeployment would have on the projects and the local community.[78] Plans included final visits to the district headquarters by partnered units, which included an assistance team to upgrade existing "automotive, communications, and weapons systems, a MEDCAP, and the turn over of vital medical supplies to local dispensaries."[79] The division had already turned over or completed all civic action projects in its TAOR and took steps to ensure that the GVN was able to continue supporting education, agriculture, public health, and public transportation facilities, "which previously had been supplemented by the Division Civic Action support."[80]

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[77] 173rd Airborne Brigade, "Redeployment After Action Report 1 July 1971 – 25 August 1971", Department of the Army, Fort Campbell, KY, 14 September 1971, F-1.
[78] 23rd Infantry Division, "23rd Infantry Division Keystone Oriole Charlie After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 December 1971, G-1.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid., G-2.

The PSYOP campaign was coordinated with the province advisor and the POLWAR officer of the 2nd ARVN Division to ensure the campaign to bolster confidence in the GVN would continue after the 23rd Division's redeployment had been completed.[81] By the time the division departed, the planned hand-off had taken effect, and the 2nd ARVN Division's POLWAR section was conducting PSYOP based on GVN policy guidance.[82]

Logistics continued to be a problem for PSYOP, as there were problems with the turnover of PSYOP specific equipment to the ARVN POLWAR. Again, because the PSYOP equipment was not issued through normal supply channels, a routine lateral transfer process was never properly established.[83] The Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics (DCSLOG) AAR also captures the difficulties with PSYOP specific equipment. In its report, it directs that "PSYOP peculiar equipment will only be laterally transferred or turned in IAW disposition instructions received from HQ USARV."[84]

Operation Keystone Oriole (Charlie) effectively ended strategic PSYOP within South Vietnam, because the 4th PSYOP Group deactivated on 2 October 1971, sending home 270 personnel.[85] The 7th PSYOP Battalion, the last PSYOP unit in South Vietnam, deactivated as part of Keystone Mallard. The operation

[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., G-3.
[83] Ibid.
[84] US Army Vietnam (USARV), Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics (DCSLOG), "After-Action Report - USARV Retrograde/Redeployment Operations, 1969-1972 Volume I", 6 October 1972, F-24.
[85] MACV, *Command History 1971*, *Volume II*, F-1-17.

began on 1 December 1971; and less than three weeks later, on 20 December 1971 all 143 personnel who had been assigned to the 7th Battalion were gone.[86]

Ironically, by the time the last PSYOP unit departed South Vietnam MACV was able to execute effective strategic and tactical PSYOP programs. At the strategic level, the RVNAF assumed responsibility for psychological operations and the tension, which had existed between the US and GVN philosophies disappeared. Arguably, the strategic level PSYOP was effective because in the end the South Vietnamese government lost to a conventional war and not to a counterinsurgency. At the tactical level, MACV successfully prevented redeployed US forces without significant interference on the part of the VC/NVA, the South Vietnamese population, or the ARVN. This was in part to the effective planning and implementation of the tactical PSYOP that units employed once they were notified of their redeployments. US units successfully disengaged from civic action projects, ended the Bounty program, and dissolved the KCS without any significant problems.

PSYOP Doctrine

The Army's PSYOP doctrinal manual issued on 4 February 1971 had only one significant change from the previous edition. This change was in the relationship of the PSYOP officer with the G3 and the G5. The PSYOP staff officer would now operate under the G5/S5.[87] As such, the G5/S5 would now

[86] Ibid., F-13 and F-124.
[87] Department of the Army. Department of the Army Field Manual 33-1: Psychological Operations: U.S. Army Doctrine. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 4 February 1971, 3-2.

be the \principal staff assistant to the commander in "all political, ideological, economic, social, and psychological aspects of military operations."[88] The G5/S5 was also responsible for the PSYOP techniques used to support command objectives.[89] This change has its origin in lessons learned by US forces in Vietnam and indicated that the institutional army, in this instance, valued those lessons and was open to changes based upon them. This was not a major victory, as the manual made no changes to evaluation criteria proposed for psychological operations.[90]

PSYOP-Related Senior Officer Debriefs

During this phase of the war, there were five particular senior officer debriefs that illustrate the degree to which MACV effectively implemented psychological operations. These debriefs are worth examining in some detail, because the senior commanders' perceptions about PSYOP are germane to our understanding of how well MACV performed the function.

The first debrief comes from Colonel Taro Katagiri, commander of the 4th PSYOP Group. The second comes from Colonel Harold Bentz, commander of the 7th PSYOP Group in Okinawa. The third comes from Brigadier General Carlton Preer, Jr., Deputy Senior Advisor, III Corps and III Corps Tactical Zone. The fourth is from Lieutenant General Michael Davison, Commanding General of II Field Force, Vietnam. The final debrief is from Lieutenant General Charles Corcoran, who served in a variety of positions including Assistant Chief of

[88] Ibid., 3-1.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid., 2-6.

Staff, Operations, J3 MACV; Chief of Staff, MACV; and Commanding General, I Field Force, Vietnam.

Colonel Taro Katagiri

Colonel Katagiri commanded the 4th PSYOP Group from 28 October 1968 to 13 March 1970. Thus, his insights allow for comparison with LTC Beck's comments from the previous phase. Katagiri observed that most of the problems in South Vietnam were probably not rectifiable in generations, much less in a year or two.[91] These problems included economics, especially inflation, and a lack of identity of the people with their government. He stated that the challenge for the PSYOP professional was "to seek opportunities for psychological exploitation within the limits" of what the existing situation provided.[92] His report made a number of recommendations in the areas of training, logistical support, intelligence support, command emphasis, evaluation criteria, effectiveness, and Vietnamization.

Training

According to Katagiri, the training level of PSYOP personnel had improved, but was still lacking. He observed that the DA was initially sending only officers who had psychology degrees, but PSYOP also needed officers with communication arts degrees. Furthermore, too many officers did not understand backward planning, which caused PSYOP products to be delivered

[91] Taro Katagiri, "Senior Officer Debriefing Report: COL Taro Katagiri, CO, 4th Psychological Operations Group, Period 4 October 1968 to 13 March 1970", (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 21 May 1970), 1.
[92] Ibid.

late.[93] In February 1970, only half of the one hundred and sixty-six officers assigned to the 4th PSYOP Group had received formal PSYOP training. Many officers were well educated with a total of 104 bachelors, 16 master's, 2 PhDs and one lawyer. Thus, they were capable of learning, but they required on-the-job training.[94] Even the school-trained PSYOP officers lacked Vietnamese culture and language training and lacked knowledge about basic military, economic, political and social aspects of the war. They also lacked an "understanding of the propaganda organization, operations and techniques for eh communists with the result that the often have not recognized enemy propaganda actives and there effects on the people. Also, many opportunities to exploit enemy weaknesses through counter-propaganda have been missed."[95] PSYOP NCOs fared no better, as Katagiri noted they lacked both leadership abilities and PSYOP experience, and the 96B military occupational specialty (MOS) soldiers did not make good company first sergeants.

Logistical Support to PSYOP Forces

The biggest problem with support to PSYOP specific equipment was that it was non-standard and thus not managed within normal Army logistics channels. To ameliorate the shortage of repair parts, PSYOP created its own Authorized Stockage lists (ASL). The Quick Reaction Procurement System (QRPS) was used to contract for repairs, parts, and stock items. In August 1969, many items were given a Federal Stock number, reducing the need for

[93] Ibid., 11.
[94] Ibid., 15.
[95] Ibid., 17.

QRPS. Nevertheless, Katagiri recommended maintaining QRPS for short-term needs.[96] One example he provided to illustrate the dysfunctional nature of PSYOP procurement was the AN/TRT-22 50,000 watt radio station, which had been designed specifically for PSYOP. This station was not compatible with the standard Armed Forces Radio Network stations. No one other than the original contractor could support the radio, which caused excessive delays in repairs and routine maintenance. To address many of these concerns, he recommended that the PSYOP Group headquarters be allotted a direct-support maintenance platoon to fix non-standard equipment.

Intelligence Support to PSYOP Forces

Katagiri observed that intelligence personnel assigned to PSYOP must "understand the basic political, social, economic, and military issues on a variety of levels and the interrelationships among them to produce effective propaganda an achieve desired behavioral goals."[97] Too often both intelligence and PSYOP intelligence personnel overlooked these factors. PSYOP personnel must use research and analysis, and not just the narrow field of audience analysis.[98]

Command Emphasis on PSYOP

Katagiri recommended that the PSYOP function be moved from the MACV J3 to the MACCORDS because the focus of MACV's mission was now on

[96] Ibid., 12.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., 13.

pacification/development and not combat.[99] He opined that too many people viewed PSYOP as a "separate and distinct function," but this should not have been the case.[100] He believed that senior officers understood this, but not lower-ranking officers, which caused problems in effective PSYOP implementation.[101] He provided an anecdote to illustrate this point. According to Katagiri, one US brigade commander boasted that his "Chieu Hoi program consisted of two 105 mm howitzers — one marked Chieu and the other, Hoi."[102] Another anecdote related to a senior Forward Air Controller who "was asked to drop leaflets during missions: he replied, 'That's mixing politics and war.'"[103]

Evaluation Criteria

Katagiri's most astute observation was in relation to the never-ending quest for PSYOP evaluation criteria.

> It is my opinion that an unnecessary and undue obsession is devoted to search for a measuring device with which effective of PSYOP can be answered quantitatively. Much money has been spent in a quest for such a measuring device. In my judgement [sic], I question whether further research will produce such a device that can be used in a combat situation. Moreover, even if it could be developed, I wonder whether it could be administer by laymen. I, therefor, recommend that researchers turn their attention to a search for a technique of assessing PSYOP results qualitatively, using, or instance, the technique of the sort used in historical research.[104]

[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid., 14.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.

Air S. Fairchild Research Information Center
Digital Collections
Air University–Maxwell AFB, AL

He was concerned that even if a measuring device were found, he was not sure it could be "administered by laymen in a combat situation."[105]

Vietnamization

To Katagiri, it was clear that GVN was making progress, and the enemy was concerned about the pacification program. "COSVN Resolution #9 and other captured enemy directives constantly remind their cadres of the urgent need to 'defeat the enemy's rural pacification scheme.'"[106] He noted that the Vietnamese were accepting the transfer of US equipment to the ARVN, that the enemy was testing the ARVN in an attempt to discredit it, and that PSYOP should encourage people to report intelligence information as part of their civic duties. He noted that in regards to these later efforts PSYOP materials were being developed.[107]

Despite these hopeful signs, there were challenges in the transfer of the US PSYOP mission to the GVN. The GVN had a two-part organization for dealing with information. The first was the Ministry of Information (MOI), which handled news and attempted to convince the people to support government programs.[108] The second was the GPWD, which was engaged in political warfare: command information, public information, social welfare, special service, and chaplain services.[109] The differences in capabilities between a US Army PSYOP Battalion and a Vietnamese POLWAR Battalion were also an

[105] Ibid., 9.
[106] Ibid., 1.
[107] Ibid., 2.
[108] Ibid., 4.
[109] Ibid., 5.

important consideration. A US battalion was authorized eight, #1250 Multilith Presses and two sheet-fed 17" by 22" presses as compared with two Model #1250 Multilith Presses for an ARVN battalion. If they were to take over the US mission, a change in equipment was required. At the time Katagiri changed command, there were no current plans to do so.[110]

Observations and Recommendations

Katagiri made several parting observations and recommendations for future operations and the PSYOP structure required to support tactical operations:

1. Each US division should have a PSYOP company in support, with ability to print/produce quick-reaction PSYOP.

2. Each US Brigade should have an audio/visual team. (Currently one per division)

3. Each US Battalion should have a combat loudspeaker team. (Currently one per Brigade)

4. PSYOP battalions should have the capacity to provide general support to area operations ISO pacification/development including liaison ability.[111]

5. Each Battalion should have its own aircraft for C2 and movement of personnel and light cargo, mess personnel and equipment, increased capacity for maintenance of low-density equipment such as printing press, loudspeakers, motion picture projectors, and the like.[112]

[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid., 6
[112] Ibid., 7.

6. In Vietnam, Information, PSYOP and Civil Affairs have operated independently with consequent loss of effectiveness. They operate together in the communist system.[113]

7. Failure of too many to appreciate PSYOP as a command function.[114]

8. PSYOP staff officers have been isolated from other staff sections, in particular the G2/S2.[115]

9. PSYOP lacks an SOP like there is for air or artillery support.[116]

Colonel Harold F. Bentz, Jr.

COL Bentz served as the Commander, 7th Psychological Operations Group, Okinawa, from 30 November 1968 to 16 May 1972. Thus, his perspective covers this entire phase of the war.[117] He made significant observations regarding leaflet production, training of PSYOP personnel, logistical support to PSYOP, intelligence support to PSYOP, command emphasis, and effectiveness.

Regarding leaflet production, Bentz noted that eighty-percent of leaflets and the majority of other printed material distributed in Vietnam were produced offshore.[118] The 7th PSYOP Group coordinated the printing of this material at multiple locations including the USIA Regional Service Center in Manila, Philippines; the US Army Printing and Publications Center, Japan (USAPPCJ); and the 7th PSYOP Group Printing Plant in Okinawa. This practice presented a logistical challenge. Because the leaflets had to be printed and

[113] Ibid., 15.
[114] Ibid., 16.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Harold F. Bentz Jr. (Colonel, USA). Senior Officer Debriefing Report: COL Harold F. Bentz, Jr., CDR, 7th Psychological Operations Group, Okinawa, 30 Nov 68 to 16 May 72. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 6 December 1972.
[118] Ibid., 7.

shipped from multiple locations, it was difficult to get the material to the user when it was needed.[119] Given the scale of the PSYOP mission in Vietnam, Bentz recommended that material production and delivery be given careful consideration in any potential future operations when planning and structuring PSYOP support.

Regarding training, Bentz observed that seven years into the Vietnam War there was still a problem with inexperienced and inadequately trained officers being assigned to the 7th PSYOP Group.[120] The command also continued to lack qualified printers in the E-3 to E-5 grade levels.[121] These shortages were not insurmountable. But they caused significant amounts of time to be spent in on-the-job training, which detracted from mission effectiveness. He also noted that military personnel assigned to PSYOP intelligence billets were well versed in order-of-battle estimates, but not in identifying the requirements for PSYOP support.[122]

Support to PSYOP equipment was a problem as well. Because of low stockage level of repair parts, the low density of PSYOP specific equipment, and the non-standard nature of PSYOP specific equipment, maintenance and repair problems were continual.[123] Bentz noted that the quick-reaction program (QRP) could not meet logistical requests from national stocks.[124] This process caused long periods of inoperative PSYOP equipment. Finally, planning for PSYOP

[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid., 3.
[121] Ibid., 5.
[122] Ibid., 6.
[123] Ibid., 10.
[124] Ibid.

infrastructure required long lead times because, for example radio stations had to be built from the ground up.[125] Mass media, especially in under-developed countries, required significant investment to put into place.

The 7th PSYOP Group had the responsibility to conduct PSYOP intelligence-research and analysis, in order to support ongoing operational requirements.[126] Initially, the group did not receive the intelligence required to complete the mission.[127] The 7th PSYOP Group thus had to convince the intelligence community that political, economic, and social reports by US Embassy components were required for adequate intelligence support.[128] Unfortunately, it was not until 1972, after all PSYOP units had departed Vietnam, that the 7th Group began receiving the intelligence it required.[129]

Bentz commented on the overall lack of PSYOP appreciation that "one major problem regarding PSYOP is the lack of understanding of PSYOP by some senior military commanders."[130] An incident at the end of the phase indicated the depth of this problem. The 7th PSYOP Group maintained a detachment in Vietnam through March 1971, which redeployed as part of package VI. Shortly after the five-man-detachment departed, the 4th PSYOP Group was inactivated. This action showed the lack of appreciation for PSYOP, because when US forces were being reduced, PSYOP should have either been increasing or maintaining its presence for a longer period of time. The

[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid., 5.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid., 6.
[130] Ibid., 2.

inactivation of the 7th Group's detachment was also inconsistent because the group maintained other detachments in Japan, Laos, and Korea, Taiwan.[131] The departure of PSYOP from Vietnam in March 1971 indicated a lack of command emphasis within MACV.

Bentz observed that measuring PSYOP effectiveness was difficult, but he did not offer any effective methodology with which to address the problem.[132] In that respect, if PSYOP professionals were unable to articulate effective measuring techniques, it would be unrealistic to assume that commanders could have discerned better ones.

Brigadier General Carlton Preer, Jr.

BG Carlton Preer, Jr. served as the Deputy Senior Advisor, III Corps and III Corps Tactical Zone, from 1 May 1969 to 30 November 1969.[133] According to Preer, "POLWAR was a major concept for the RVNAF and so got a major emphasis in III Corps."[134] His observations about Vietnamese POLWAR operations provide insight into the coordination between the RVNAF and FWMAFs, logistical support and adequate funding problems for the POLWAR units, and into an initial progress update on "Vietnamization."

Preer observed that the ARVN structure remained top-heavy, which led to difficulties in processing intelligence.[135] This problem was particularly acute

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[131] Ibid., 9.
[132] Ibid., 7.
[133] Carlton Preer Jr., (Brigadier General, USA), Senior Officer Debriefing Report: BG Carlton Preer, Jr., Deputy Senior Advisor, III Corps and III Corps Tactical Zone, 1 May 1969 to 30 November 1969 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 24 December 1969).
[134] Ibid., Appendix V, 1.
[135] Ibid., Appendix II, 1.

between the G2 and G3 sections, where the lack of coordination led to the virtual non-existence of collaborative planning between them.[136] There was also seldom any direct coordination between G2/G3 and POLWAR section.[137] To compensate for this deficiency, US staff advisors emphasized proper staff procedures and encouraged staff coordination.[138] There were, however, some positive indications of progress.

ARVN POLWAR units effectively supported three successful campaigns in the III CTZ. From 15 June to 15 July 1969, an accelerated *Chieu Hoi* campaign was conducted in Long An province that resulted in 268 enemy ralliers.[139] Additionally, from 15 June to 15 October 1969, a nationwide program termed *Nguyen Trai II* resulted in 3441 ralliers in the III CTZ.[140] Finally, the *Tinh Thuong*, aimed specifically at inducing NVA ralliers began on 15 November 1969 and was scheduled to run through the end of the year.[141] These campaigns introduced some interesting measures of effectiveness. For instance, as the number of aerial broadcast hours decreased, the number of *Chieu Hoi* ralliers increased, indicating the two variables were not dependent.[142] Also, as the number of leaflets distributed on the ground increased, so did rallying.[143] From April 1969 to October 1969 the number of

[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid., Appendix V, 1.
[138] Ibid., Appendix V, 3.
[139] Ibid., Appendix V, 1.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid., Appendix V, Tab C.
[143] Ibid., Appendix V, Tab B.

leaflets went from one million to five and one-half million.[144] During this same time, the number of ralliers went from six hundred to over twelve hundred.[145]

Some of this success was due to the Combined PSYWAR/PSYOPS Coordination Center (CPOC), which, as Preer noted, "had developed into a highly effective managerial tool for utilizing PSYWAR assets in III CTZ."[146] This center coordinated all leaflet missions and aerial broadcasts within the III CTZ and passed the mission requirements to the USAF's 9th SOS and to the VNAF's 112th Squadron.[147] The CPOC continued to evolve throughout the period observed by Preer and in October 1969 implemented its own Propaganda Development Section, "staffed by III Corps POLWAR section, 30th POLWAR Bn (ARVN), and 6th PSYOPS Bn (US)."[148] The CPOC not only coordinated RVNAF and FWMAF psychological operations, but also endeavored to prepare the RVNAF for Vietnamization.[149]

The 30th POLWAR Battalion implemented a new TOE effect 1 September 1969, which increased the number of teams from twenty to thirty-two. The 18th ARVN division took advantage of this increase by using the extra teams for a recruiting drive, which netted an average of four hundred recruits per month.[150] These increases were necessary, as the size of the RVNAF was increased to meet the concomitant decreases to FWMAF units. Preer implied that four hundred was a good number and that it was an increase over

[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., Appendix V, Tab C.
[146] Ibid., Appendix V, 1.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid., Appendix V, 2.

previous months. The new TOE did not have a similar increase in equipment. The RVNAF had a shortage of tape recorders, which made it difficult to exploit *Chieu Hoi* messages. In addition, the RVNAF was plagued by a shortage of replacement parts, and its deadline rate on audio-visual equipment was over fifty percent.[151] These equipment shortages, coupled with the prevailing risk-averse attitude in ARVN units, led to a heavy reliance on pre-planned leaflets and broadcasts.[152]

Vietnamization was still in its early stages but was already taking its toll on assets available to support PSYOP missions. Prior to August 1969, the USAF was using its C-47 aircraft to conduct aerial broadcasts because the aircraft was night capable. The drawdown of C-47 affected those missions, because "the VNAF lack that capability and are using the small U17."[153] The U-17 could not operate at night, so the total number of broadcast hours was reduced.[154] The only good news for PSYOP operators was that, at least temporarily, it was not possible to air "ghostly sounds" at night.

Preer ended his report with two recommendations related to PSYOP. The first was to "secure a C47 aircraft for the VNAF dedicated to PSYOPS on a permanent basis."[155] The second was to focus command attention on RVNAF logistical problems because to that point the PSYOPS community efforts to provide adequate logistical support had been unsuccessful.[156]

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[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid., Appendix V, 1.
[153] Ibid., Appendix V, 2.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid., Appendix V, 3.
[156] Ibid.

Lieutenant General Charles A. Corcoran

LTG Charles A. Corcoran served in South Vietnam from 23 May 1968 to 23 February 1970 and over the course of these twenty-two months he held a variety of positions. His entire tour was under the command of General Abrams, whom he served as Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations, J3 MACV; Chief of Staff, MACV; and Commanding General, I Field Force, Vietnam.

The most striking aspect of Corcoran's debrief is not what is does mention, but what it does not. Despite having served as the MACV J3, the position on the MACV staff responsible for PSYOP, he does not once mention psychological operations.[157] The lack of discussion or observation indicates that either Corcoran shared Abrams' views on PSYOP, or that Corcoran did not see PSYOP as an important aspect of his purview.

JUSPAO Policy Letters

During this phase of the war JUSPAO issued six PSYOP Policy letters. The last one was issued only three months after the Midway conference. The sudden slowdown in JUSPAO's issuing of policy letters indicated that MACV went from attempting to lead the PSYOP effort in South Vietnam to transferring the entire mission to the GVN. The last six letters continue the trend of PSYOP policy guidance being issued too late to have a substantive effect of the situation.

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[157] Charles A. Corcoran, "Senior Officer Debriefing Report: Operations, J3 MACV; I Field Force Vietnam, Period 23 May 1968 to 23 February 1970." Adjutant General's Office (Army) Washington DC, 22 April 1970.

The first, Policy Letter Number 81, was issued on 16 June 1969 and dealt with land reform.[158] The letter stated "the land reform program has President Thieu's backing: every effort must be given to make it work."[159] The policy also articulated a dissemination plan. The land-reform program details were to be passed to the populace through public meetings, radio, TV, locally broadcast tape recordings, and printed material that relied heavily on pictures to deal with the effects of illiteracy. The one significant shortcoming was that Thieu announced his plan on 6 February 1969 for a "vigorous" and truly revolutionary land-reform program designed to make the farmer-tiller the owner of the land he worked.[160] JUSPAO was four months behind in issuing guidance on a subject that the GVN was already ostensibly executing. This lag-time indicated that JUSPAO was neither closely tied to the GVN with RD plans, nor effectively responsive in adjusting to changing conditions.

The second policy, Letter Number 82 was issued on 27 June 1969. It addressed elections and the situation with the NLF.[161] The guidance stated that PSYOP should use the phrase "the NLF's Provisional Revolutionary Government" in order to ensure that the NLF is tied to the Provisional Revolutionary Government and dissuade support to it from the people and other third countries.[162] This policy was again issued too late to be fully

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[158] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 81 Joint Policy "PSYOP Support for the Freezing of Land Occupancy and Rent: Land Reform", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 16 June 1969.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid., 1.
[161] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 82 Joint PSYOP Policy GVN Ministry of Information, "NLF/Provisional Revolutionary Government" JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 27 June 1969.
[162] Ibid., 2.

effective. It was promulgated two weeks after State Department guidance and the GVN press spokesman's statement on 11 June. Had JUSPAO been well integrated and proactive, these policy guidance letters would have been issued simultaneously with State Department and GVN guidance.

The third letter, Letter Number 83, followed a similar pattern.[163] This letter was issued on 1 July 1969 and addressed the implications of the Midway conference from 8 June. The letter directed PSYOP to focus on the fact that US forces had not been defeated, but were departing to be replaced by ARVN. Additionally, the US was not abandoning the GVN because the ARVN were getting modern equipment, training, and support. In this case, JUSPAO was almost a month late in issuing guidance.

Policy Letter Number 84, issued on 15 July 69 directed PSYOP to take advantage of Thieu's proposals for peace because there were “consistent, reasonable and while in harmony with US policy were of Vietnamese origin.”[164] Policy Letter Number 85, issued on 25 July 1969, again addressed land reform and rescinded Letter Number 34, dated 6 May 1967. This guidance was also very detailed in the manner of engagement to be used, stating that units should use intense local publicity prior to face-to-face meetings, which should then be followed up with radio, TV and locally broadcast tape recordings. Each of these measures was designed to cope with the problem of illiteracy in the

[163] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 83 Joint PSYOP Policy GVN Ministry of Information and U.S. Mission, "Troop Replacement", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 1 July 1969.
[164] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 84 Joint PSYOP Policy GVN Ministry of Information and U.S. Mission, "President Thieu's July 11, 1969 Speech", JUSPAO Planning Office Saigon, Vietnam, 15 July 1969, 1.

countryside.[165] The guidance even went so far as to direct PSYOP forces to produce a TV puppet show on land reform.[166] It would appear, at least in this instance, that JUSPAO had also been seduced by the allure of "gimmickry."

The final Policy Letter issued by JUSPAO was Number 86 on 5 September 1969, addressing the death of Ho Chi Minh.[167] The letter directed PSYOP forces to balance condolences for his death, with the sadness of his having accepted communism and his attempt to impose it on his population.[168] The guidance wanted to ensure that his death did not motivate his followers. This guidance was issued three days after Ho's death and indicates that JUSPAO was still reactive. This example was one more, which illustrated how it had failed repeatedly to seize the initiative in the psychological aspects of the war.

Digital Collections

Command Progress Reports

The Command Progress Reports for this period continued to provide insight into the focus of MACV in relation to PSYOP by virtue of the statistics reported. There are six reports within this phase of the war, which indicated the changes evident within the PSYOP function at MACV.

The first report for this phase is from the 4th Quarter of FY69 (July to September). During this phase the PSYOP reporting requirement transitioned from the USARV G3 to the USARV G5. The transition reflects the lessons

[165] Ibid., 1
[166] Ibid., 6
[167] PSYOPS Policy, Policy Number 86, "The Death of Ho Chi Minh", Vietnam, 5 September 1969.
[168] Ibid.

learned about the close coordination required with the civic-action section. The change would also be reflected in the next PSYOP doctrinal update.[169]

The second report from 1st Quarter FY70 (October to December) noted a change to the civic action mission. The mission previously read:

> to improve the living condition of the people so as to remove the underlying causes of the insurgency; to assure that the arrival or continued stationing of US units in an area is welcomed by the Vietnamese and the troops conduct themselves properly in order to maintain good community relations; and to gain and maintain the support of the people for the GVN and the Free World Military Assistance Forces.[170]

The mission changed to read:

> to improve the economic and social well-being of the Vietnamese People through the use of available US Army personnel and material resources to assist the people in accomplishing self-help projects.[171]

The change was significant in that the scope of US projects and assistance to the Vietnamese was significantly curtailed. This change in the type of help provided would also be reflected in the type of PSYOP support provided. For PSYOP during this quarter, there was an increase in the amount of PSYOP specific equipment that arrived in South Vietnam - Polaroid cameras, cassette recorders, and 889 bullhorns - and increased demand for more quick reaction PSYOP material.[172]

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[169] Department of the Army. Department of the Army Field Manual 33-1: Psychological Operations: U.S. Army Doctrine. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 4 February 1971, 3-1.
[170] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 4th Quarter FY 68, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.
[171] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 1st Quarter FY 70, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.
[172] Ibid.

The third report was from the 3rd Quarter FY70 (April to June), immediately after the completion of Keystone Bluejay.[173] This report noted that despite the influx of PSYOP equipment into South Vietnam the previous quarter, there were lengthy delays in getting PSYOP equipment such as bullhorns, public address systems, and the Polaroid cameras to tactical commanders.[174]

The fourth report was from the 1st Quarter FY71 (October to December), and noted a restructuring of the USARV headquarters. Significant for our purposes is the creation of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (DCOS OPS). This section was now responsible for Kit Carson Scouts, PSYOP, and civic action.[175] PSYOP equipment distribution continued to be a challenge, despite the recent redeployment of 150,000 troops as part of operation Keystone Robin (Alpha) from July to mid-October 1970.

The last two reports from this phase are from the 2nd Quarter FY71 (January to March) and the 3rd Quarter FY71 (April to June).[176] Neither report has a section dedicated to the ACofS G5 or CORDS. There were no reports on either civic action projects or psychological operations. The focus of reporting was on tons of material shipped, numbers of tires retread, OMA, and on

[173] The 2nd Quarter FY70 report is missing from the Archives.
[174] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 3rd Quarter FY 70, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.
[175] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 1st Quarter FY 71, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.
[176] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 3rd Quarter FY 71, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.

minimizing the amount of overtime paid to DA civilians.[177] By this time, the 10th, 8th, and 6th PSYOP Battalions had inactivated and the MACV headquarters had ceased tracking the PSYOP function altogether, indicating that it was no longer important to the command.

Summary

During this phase of the war, PSYOP forces made many improvements during Operation Keystone in particular, but overall MACV continued to struggle with many of the same problems it had in the previous phases. The biggest accomplishment was that PSYOP forces successfully turned over the control of psychological operations to the South Vietnamese and subsequently redeployed personnel and equipment. PSYOP also passed lessons learned to the institutional Army, which were reflected in the latest doctrinal update for psychological operations. MACV made significant improvements over the course of operation Keystone, sharing key insights and ensuring that mistakes were rarely repeated. Finally, MACV PSYOP personnel effectively supported the *Chieu Hoi* program, improved the pre-testing of PSYOP material, and broadened the operational reach of PSYOP broadcast media.

On the other side of the coin, MACV continued to struggle with inadequate command emphasis on PSYOP; unrealistic expectations about PSYOP as a separate function apart from combat operations; a lack of adequate logistical support; and inadequately trained personnel.

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[177] Headquarters US Army Vietnam, Command Progress Report 2nd Quarter FY 71, Record Group 472, Box A1 787; National Archives II, Washington, DC.

Overall, PSYOP performed very well at the tactical level during operation Keystone, but failed to demonstrate progress at the strategic level. Now we will examine how the PSYOP function performed when assessed using Garvin's test questions.

Analysis of Learning about PSYOP

Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for PSYOP?

MACV rated a “Yes” for this criterion. It actively sought to learn things about itself, and then to act of that knowledge. Even when the focus of mission changed to Vietnamization, MACV continued to focus on learning the best way for PSYOP to support those operations, as is evidenced in the myriad AARs from redeploying units. It is ironic that in some respects the efforts PSYOP made earlier to convince commanders of its worth now paid dividends as many commanders included PSYOP early in the effort, integrated it well with civic action and KCS, and addressed concerns with PSYOP-specific equipment. MACV largely succeeded in turning over PSYOP to the ARVN. By the time the 23rd Division redeployed, the PSYOP campaign was coordinated with the provincial advisor and the POLWAR officer of the replacement ARVN division.

Was MACV open to discordant information regarding PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Yes" for this test was well because the 4th PSYOP Group in particular was open to discordant information. Its internal lessons-learned reports, insights from COL Katagiri's debrief, and Monthly Command Reports all have items that "push back" on what would have been considered the

"official party line." Doctrinal changes and subsequent orders for operations such as Keystone indicate that contrarian ideas and approaches were received and adopted.

Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with PSYOP?

MACV rates a "Partial" for this criterion. PSYOP continued to re-learn lessons and continued to struggle with the same problems it had for the previous two phases of the war. However, when one examines Operation Keystone, it appears to be a textbook-like model of learning at the micro level. The lessons learned by units involved in the first two installments of Keystone were rarely repeated, and by the end of the phase the 23rd Division executed a well-planned and executed PSYOP campaign.

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Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from PSYOP left the command?

MACV gets a "Partial" for this criterion as well. MACV successfully executed Operation Keystone and was able to continue learning and performing at the tactical level, despite the continual loss of key personnel. MACV also attempted to maintain knowledge by taking actions such as the institution of Mobile Advisory Teams in the 6th PSYOP Battalion, as a way to train new personnel, prevent the loss of institutional knowledge, and mitigate logistics and maintenance problems.[178] Additionally, MACV transferred the mission of

[178] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report October 1969, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group", (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 20 November 1969), 25.

PSYOP to the South Vietnamese, who were able to increase their PSYWAR activities.

However, as the pace of redeployments increased, MACV PSYOP were no longer able to maintain effective operations at the strategic level. As Bentz indicated in his report, the redeployment of the 7th PSYOP detachment and the subsequent inactivation of the 4th PSYOP Group removed PSYOP expertise from South Vietnam. PSYOP were not able to convince MACV that their services were an integral part of the mission, and thus the entirety of their mission ended.

Did MACV act on what it knew regarding PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Partial" for this criterion. During operation Keystone in particular, MACV took action on several PSYOP issues. The lessons learned by the 9th and 25th Infantry Divisions were shared throughout the MACV command and were included in subsequent redeployment operations orders. MACV also continued to improve technical production methods and PSYOP infrastructure. South Vietnam was now saturated with PSYOP media including television, radio, newspapers, handbills, and leaflets.

But, despite the evidence of improvement problems remained. MACV continued to delay the release of redeployment information, which prevented PSYOP from planning and executing operations aimed at denying the VC/NVA propaganda victories. USARV, despite the reports regarding logistical problems, did not issue timely guidance regarding PSYOP equipment

disposition instructions. MACV knew it need early, integrated planning for PSYOP, but failed to execute it.

Net Assessment

MACV successfully met two of the five evaluation criteria and partially met three of the five evaluation criteria related to PSYOP. Therefore it earned the rating of 3.5 out of 5 and is rated as **Marginally Effective** (Table 16) as a learning organization for psychological operations during this phase of the war.

Garvin's Learning Questions	June 1969 – December 1971
	PSYOP
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for PSYOP?	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding PSYOP?	**+**
Did MACV avoid repeat mistakes with PSYOP?	**/**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from PSYOP left the command?	**/**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding PSYOP?	**/**
Total	**3.5**

TABLE 16 – PSYOP ASSESSMENT, 1969 - 1971

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

During this phase of the war, MACV succeeded tactically with the integration of PSYOP, civic action, and the redeployment of combat forces. The lessons learned during Operation Keystone were shared with subsequent units and included in their redeployment plans, which prevented repetitive mistakes. At the strategic level, however, MACV continued to undervalue PSYOP as evidenced by the removal of all PSYOP units from South Vietnam including those of the 7th PSYOP Group.

Next we will examine how well MACV executed the coordination of intelligence and psychological operations during this phase of the war and then determine the extent to which this coordination displayed the characteristics of a learning organization.

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Coordination of Intelligence and PSYOP, June 1969 to December 1971

On the morning of 22 August 1969, the 196th Light Infantry Brigade of the Americal Division was in heavy contact with the 1st and 3rd Regiments of the 2nd NVA Division.[1] By 1000 a.m., the enemy had lost four hundred men but was continuing to fight. The division sought to exploit its tactical advantage; and, drawing on intelligence regarding the effective integration of combat and psychological operations, it requested that the 7th PSYOP Battalion produce a tailored "surrender of die" leaflet.[2]

The battalion's propaganda-development section worked rapidly to produce the leaflet. In order to save time, part of a leaflet already in progress was chosen for the backside of the leaflet. While this process was ongoing, an interpreter for the II CTZ Joint Propaganda Development Center (JPDC) hand-lettered the message for the front of the leaflet.[3] The message was photographed, and coupled with the product chosen for the back of the leaflet, was prepared for printing. Within an hour, the leaflet was finished and on the presses. By 3:00 p.m., 120,000 leaflets had been printed, cut, boxed and delivered to the 9th Special Operations Squadron (SOS), which had aircraft

[1] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report 1-31 August 1969, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group", (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 1 October 1969), 5.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

ready to deliver the drop. Less than sixty minutes later, the 9th SOS was dropping leaflets on enemy positions.[4] The total time required from request of the tactically tailored leaflet to delivery was six hours, an impressive display of teamwork and coordination between intelligence, PSYOP, combat operations, and the 9th SOS.

During this phase of the war, the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP matured at the tactical level. The two functions often worked through the G5/S5, which had assumed the responsibility for PSYOP in many US combat units. At the strategic level, the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP, which had previously struggled, showed signs of improvement early in the phase, but suffered difficulties during Vietnamization. By the end of 1970, the focus of intelligence and psychological operations sections had shifted to redeployment operations, and efforts to coordinate at the strategic largely withered.

This chapter begins with an overview of the coordination of intelligence and psychological operations during this phase of the war, examines their coordination during operation Keystone, explores the evolution of their coordination in the *Chieu Hoi* and KCS programs, and combs lessons learned reports and senior officer debriefs for insights into the successes and challenges MACV faced during this phase in its efforts to coordinate intelligence and PSYOP.

[4] Ibid.

Overview of Intelligence and PSYOP Coordination

Early in this phase of the war, the seeds MACV had planted in the previous phase to encourage effective coordination between intelligence and PSYOP began to bear fruit. One of the fruits harvested by MACV was in relation to the *Chieu Hoi* Program, which on 6 July 1969 reaped a large defection of VC personnel.[5] An individual who claimed to be a VC captain contacted sailors on a US Navy patrol boat, which was on patrol in the Mekong Delta just northwest of Tri Ton, in Chau Doc Province. He informed the sailors that he represented three hundred VC who wanted to enter the *Chieu Hoi* Program.[6] The unit made arrangements with the Vietnamese Border Control Center and, according to MACV's history, "by end of the day a total of 231 persons had crossed with a total of 108 individual and 14 crew served weapons."[7]

Positive results from the *Chieu Hoi* Program continued, as the GVN announced on 15 July 1969 that more than one thousand dissident soldiers had rallied within the previous three weeks. Additionally, more that six hundred members of a group known as "KKK" and almost five hundred Hoa Hoa had rallied in a piecemeal manner over the past three weeks.[8] The KKK were an outlaw band of Cambodian bandits and guerrillas organized into companies and battalions, threatening the local government in Chau Doc province by assassinating local leaders, attacking villages, and taxing the local

[5] MACV, *Command History 1969, Volume III*, L-20.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., L-21.

populace.[9] The Hoa Hoa were a Buddhist sect based largely in the same area of Vietnam, who had been opponents of the Diem regime, with many having previously joined the VC. Both groups of ralliers were an indication of the growing strength and influence of the GVN.

There were other indicators of the successful coordination between MACV intelligence and PSYOP. The CMEC process for captured weapons, for instance, included taking photographs and prints, which were then provided to PSYOP to be used in support of the Volunteer Information Program (VIP).[10] As part of its support to PSYOP, CIMC's analysts agreed to review the latest 6th PSYOP Battalion leaflet catalog using "specially trained Hoi Chanh including an ex-Special Region Political Cadre" to review the leaflets.[11] The CMIC also agreed to collaborate with the 6th PSYOP Battalion on the design of a new debriefing sheet to be provided to field teams.[12] This sheet would assist interrogation teams with the rapid extraction of pertinent, PSYOP-specific data from ralliers and prisoners.

On 27 August 1969, just prior to the completion of Operation Keystone Eagle, the GVN announced that the number of Hoi Chanh for the year had surpassed thirty thousand.[13] The coordination of intelligence and PSYOP were continuing to produce measurable results and the change of mission to Vietnamization had not yet adversely affected ongoing operations. There

[9] http://www.psywarrior.com/VietnamCommanders.html, accessed 7 April 2015.
[10] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Operational Report – Lessons Learned, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group, Period Ending 31 July 1969", (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 5 December 1969), 2.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] MACV, *Command History 1969*, *Volume III*, L-28.

however, were also indications that the coordination displayed in the previous events was not part of the institutional knowledge at MACV. The personnel assigned the respective functions of intelligence and PSYOP had learned to work together on *Chieu Hoi*; but when presented with a new problem, they failed to coordinate well. Here too is evidence of the staff inertia mentioned in the previous chapter. There were three other concrete examples of successful coordination continuing in programs that had been created during the previous phase of the war.

An armed propaganda team (APT) comprised of former NVA soldiers supported PSYOP teams on an operation involving the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division in Gia Dinh Province.[14] The APT obtained several names of individuals in the VCI and pass this information into intelligence channels.[15] The team's efforts also resulted in the capture of two VC informants who had been acting undercover as public entertainers.[16] In that guise, the VC had been able to obtain information from villagers and pass it to the local enemy commander.[17]

In the second example, the 10th PSYOP Battalion and elements of the intelligence community continued to coordinate concerning the VIP program. According to a 4th PSYOP Group's monthly report, "extensive testing of a leaflet series designed to motivate the audience toward the advantages of weapons

[14] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report 1-31 August 1969, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group", (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 1 October 1969), 4.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

reward through the use of visual association has been successfully completed."[18] The testing was designed to evaluate how relating one object to another, for example "if you turn in an AK-47 to the GVN, the money you would receive will enable you to purchase a pig," or "a weapons cache will enable you to buy a buffalo" would increase the motivation of the populace.[19] The test results had mixed success.[20] What mattered for this analysis was that intelligence and PSYOP personnel were coordinating on a program with both groups actively collaborating to make the total effort more successful.

The third example occurred at the IV CTZ Regional *Chieu Hoi* Center.[21] The center undertook a study to determine the degree of animosity between the local VC and their NVA replacements.[22] Based on the significant losses during Tet 1968, the North Vietnamese were forced to send NVA replacements to fill the ranks of many VC units. Intelligence reports indicated that the local VC believed that the NVA were there to take over what they felt should be a people's struggle.[23] The results of the study were to be used to support future PSYOP programs directed at exploiting this tension.[24]

Another example of innovation was evident in the development of a new method for directing PSYOP activities, which was created by a Marine regiment

[18] Ibid., 16.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report 1-30 September 1969, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group", (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 31 October 1969), 17.
[22] Ibid., 17.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

in the 1st Marine Division.[25] This method helped to assure that psychological operations were more closely tied to current intelligence. Using this procedure, the regimental S2 would periodically prepare for the S5 an overlay of his area of operations, which showed known enemy troop concentrations, locations of recent friendly and enemy operations, and locations of upcoming operations.[26] The overlay was divided into blocks, which were assigned numbers based on their category. This allowed the regimental S5 to review daily intelligence forecasts and call for leaflet drops and aerial broadcasts merely by indicating the block number to be targeted.[27] This process shows a close integration of intelligence and PSYOP at the tactical level.

Another example of effective tactical coordination involved the use of "sniffers." The reader should recall here that the "sniffer" was a technical innovation developed during the previous phase designed to detect enemy forces. The 7th PSYOP Battalion noted plans for integrating this intelligence asset with PSYOP. The technique developed involved two-ship aerial missions. The lead ship would be equipped with the "sniffer" apparatus and seek out "hot" readings. These readings would be passed to the trail ship, which would be equipped with a PSYOP capability. When a "hot" reading was passed from the lead ship, the PSYOP helicopter would fly over the area broadcasting pre-planned messages and dropping pre-selected leaflets.[28]

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[25] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report October 1969, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group", (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 20 November 1969), 10.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., 12-3.

The last three months of 1969 were replete with examples of successful intelligence and PSYOP coordination. PSYOP had supported the VIP; and when that program was suspended because of Vietnamization, PSYOP units shifted messages to appeal to the South Vietnamese based on patriotism and self-interest.[29]

During October the 10th PSYOP Battalion supported the *Phung Hoang* program by producing a wanted poster.[30] Within ten days of the initial request, the poster was delivered to the *Phung Hoang* Committee in and Cao Lanh District.[31] Two days after RD teams began distributing the posters, the number-one man on the poster was spotted, arrested, and brought into the Cao Lanh District for questioning.[32] Three days later, three other men on the poster rallied under the *Chieu Hoi* Program. Soon after, a fifth man on the poster was captured.[33] The success of the posters in the Coa Lanh District convinced members of the *Phung Hoang* Committee in the adjoining Kien Phong Province, who had been skeptical of the plan, of its value.[34]

By the end of October, the GVN reported that 1,310 *Hoi Chanh* had rallied during the week of 12-18 October, which was the second-highest weekly total since the program's inception.[35] In December 1969, the total *Chieu Hoi* for

[29]Memorandum Subject: "Input for LTC Coleman-Significant events in PDS, CY 69", 13 March 1970, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 4th PSYOP Group.
[30] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report October 1969," 21
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] MACV, *Command History 1969*, *Volume III*, , L-31

the year came to 47,023, a 257 percent increase over the 18,171 ralliers during 1968.[36]

Major Events, 1970

Similar patterns of coordination between intelligence and PSYOP were evident in the first few months of 1970. During the early part of 1970, PSYOP support to the Phoenix program continued to provide evidence of the coordination intelligence and psychological operations. In January, the 7th PSYOP Battalion produced sixteen wanted posters utilizing a revised format based on collaboration with members of the intelligence community.[37] The 7th Battalion has been developing wanted posters for the I Corps Phoenix/*Phung Hoang* Program and testing formats to determine the most effective approach.[38] The 7th PSYOP Battalion also tested a new technique of combining use of the VCI blacklist with combat loudspeaker teams and APTs. These units would circulate through hamlets in search of relatives and acquaintances of the black-listed personnel. The teams would then engage with the VCI's relatives and acquaintances face-to-face on the benefits of the *Chieu Hoi* program. The APTs would then give witness to what they did not enjoy about having been part of the VC and the benefits they now had after rallying.[39]

February 1970 brought similar support to the Phoenix program. The Joint Propaganda Development Center (JPDC) in I Corps revised a wanted

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[36] Ibid., L-39.
[37] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report January 1970, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group", (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 9 March 1970), 9.
[38] Ibid., 9.
[39] Ibid., 10.

poster originally developed by the 4th PSYOP Group. The wanted poster had originally used the Vietnamese national colors. But after careful analysis, the JPDC determined that the combination of national colors with the faces of the wanted persons would confuse many people in rural area who were largely illiterate. Therefore, the JPDC changed the coloring to one not including the National colors.[40]

But, by the end of April, the situation began to change when President Nixon announced the withdrawal of 150,000 troops over the course of the next year. This proved to be a watershed event for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP in MACV. Prior to this announcement, it appeared that both functions were working together much more closely than they had in previous phases and that MACV had acted upon many recommendations and lessons learned regarding such coordination. After the President's announcement however, operations within MACV changed drastically. The efforts that intelligence and PSYOP had put into coordination shifted focus toward redeployment.

The inactivation of US units, the transition of equipment and responsibility to ARVN, and the subsequent redeployment of US forces led to a decline in the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. The reduction was largely due to the change of mission and the concomitant decrease in personnel with whom to effect coordination. MACV did not suddenly abandon

[40] 4th Psychological Operations Group, "Monthly Operational Report February 1970, Headquarters 4th Psychological Operations Group", (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 20 March 1970), 8.

PSYOP; but its attention on PSYOP and, therefore, on its efficacious coordination with intelligence, slowly began to erode.

At the end of November 1970, MACV and GVN coordinated on a special three-month *Chieu Hoi* campaign, launched to induce an additional 12,100 enemy soldiers to rally to the GVN. By 28 February 1971 it had attracted only 9,560 ralliers.[41] The goal was not reached, due in part to reduced military activity.[42]

Major Events, 1971

In April 1971, the first US PSYOP Battalion was inactivated, effectively ending any meaningful US-sponsored psychological operations in South Vietnam. From 17 April to 15 December 1971, MACV supported the GVN led *Nguyen Trai* IV Campaign, with both leaflet production and aerial PSYOP support. But even with US support, the GVN failed to maintain the previous momentum, and the program failed to achieve the kinds of results achieved in earlier campaigns.[43] 1971 ended without any US PSYOP forces in South Vietnam, and with the *Chieu Hoi* Program having attracted only 20,357 ralliers.[44]

A noteworthy mention about intelligence and PSYOP coordination comes from ARPA. On 25 May 1971 it issued the "Final Technical Report:

[41] MACV, *Command 1971, Volume I,* VII-7.
[42] Ibid., VII-6.
[43] MACV, *Command History 1971*, *Supplemental*, TSS-6.
[44] MACV, *Command 1971, Volume I*, VII-25

Psychological Operations Studies - Vietnam."[45] The lead authors identified specific intelligence-collection requirements for assessing the effectiveness of PSYOP. These included questions for use by interrogators to determine the extent to which *Hoi Chanh* and PWs had seen or been influenced by GVN/US PSYOP messages.[46] While these questions identified how PSYOP messages spread, the questions did not elicit the specificity required by PSYOP to develop effective messages. The other irony was that this information was published after the 6th PSYOP Battalion had inactivated, with the remainder of PSYOP forces were soon to follow. In other words, these questions, while interesting, were too late to achieve the goals originally established by the ARPA contract. As was the case with many instances of the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP at MACV, it was learned and implemented too late to affect the outcome significantly.

We will now examine the coordination between intelligence and PSYOP at MACV by exploring evidence from Operation Keystone, the special programs of *Chieu Hoi* and KCS, key reports and studies, MACV lesson-learned reports, and senior officer debriefs.

Operation Keystone Lessons Learned

By this point in the war, the reader should recall that the S5/G5 in many units had assumed responsibility for psychological operations. Because of this

[45] Bairdain, Ernest F., Edith M. Bairdain. *Final Technical Report: Psychological Operations Studies – Vietnam, Volume II.* Washington, D.C.: Advanced Research Projects Agency, 25 May 1971.
[46] Ibid., 377-8.

change in staff relationship, we need to look more closely at civic action operations to determine the degree to which intelligence and PSYOP coordinating during the redeployment of US forces. We will examine seven iterations of Operation Keystone: Eagle; Cardinal; Robin (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie); and Oriole (Bravo and Charlie).

There were no explicit lessons from Operation Keystone Eagle on the coordination of intelligence and psychological operations. The closest measure of coordination occurred with Civic Action Projects, which was to be expected given the responsibility of the S5/G5 for PSYOP. Upon closer examination, one finds several insights about the effects of coordination.

The 9th Infantry had a large number of reconstruction projects in various states of progress and once it was alerted to redeploy, it canceled all projects not already begun. For the projects that had already started, the division coordinated with the civil affairs platoon to get them to take on some of the projects and transferred the funding with which to do so.[47] The division did not analyze the second and third order effects of canceling projects, however. Its focus was on finishing what was practicable and then redeploying. The division gave minimal thought to the loss of construction jobs on the local economy and did not consider how this abrupt change might undermine local support to the GVN. The projects had been designed to cement the people's ties to the GNV, however, the same logic was not used when it was time to cancel them.

[47] 9th Infantry Division, "Redeployment After Action Report," Department of the Army, San Francisco CA, 27 August 1969, C-1.

The second issue identified by the 9th Infantry was with MEDCAPs. The 7th ARVN Division, which was replacing the 9th Infantry, agreed to take on MEDCAP responsibilities, but it lacked the capacity to assume the complete schedule that the 9th Infantry had developed.[48] The lack of integrated prior planning put the local nationals is a bind, because they had come to expect a certain level of medical services provided by US resources.

For the second iteration of redeployment, operation Keystone Cardinal, the 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division (3-82) learned lessons from the 9th Infantry in regard to coordination of PSYOP and intelligence. Prior to receiving its notification, the 82nd Division had already begun closing down civic action projects in Gia Dinh province.[49] The brigade had a much more deliberate approach to ending its civic action mission, given the potential impact on the local population. As its battalions consolidated their operations and moved to new areas in preparation for redeployment, the units did not initiate any new projects requiring longer than two to three days to complete.[50] The brigade worked at civic action until the end of its mission, but changed its expectations about results. It began turning over MEDCAPs to the relieving unit and providing it with material support. The ARVN unit that replaced the 3rd Brigade was conducting MEDCAPs when 3-82 departed.[51] The brigade reported

[48] Ibid.
[49] 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, "Redeployment After Action Report," Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 11 December 1969, E-1.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

that it experienced no significant problems with shutting down the civic action part of its operations.[52]

For operation Keystone Robin (Alpha) the 199th Brigade did not repeat mistakes made by the 9th Infantry. The process of learning regarding redeployment was occurring within MACV. The 199th went further in its planning as well, considering how its redeployment would affect the KCS program.[53] The 199th carefully planned this transition and the KCS turnover went smoothly as other units recruited a total of fifty-four KCS while the remaining KCS were transferred to the *Chieu Hoi* agencies from which they came.[54] The KCS needed to be handled well, because they had taken a risk to be with Americans, but could also have proved a very valuable tool for the enemy if any could have been turned into double-agents. It is a testimony thus far that little to no evidence exists that any KCS turned back to the VC/NVA.

Operation Keystone Robin (Bravo) included the 4th Infantry Division and the 25th Infantry Division. The 4th Infantry noted that they too learned from previous lessons learned reports. The 4th Infantry planned out the transfer of KCS in detail. If another unit did not recruit a scout, he was to be terminated. He was to be provided overnight accommodations, if required, and transportation to either his home area or his new unit.[55] This was an effort to prevent the scouts getting "lost" in a division area without supervision. For the

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[52] Ibid.
[53] 199th Infantry Brigade (Separate), "Operation Keystone Robin: The Redeployment of the 199th Infantry Brigade (Separate) (Light) from the Republic of Vietnam", Department of the Army, 12 October 1970, 120.
[54] Ibid.
[55] 4th Infantry Division, "4th Infantry Division Keystone Robin-B After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 13 December 1970, F-1.

KCS, only one issue of concern was noted: that one advisory team hired two scouts, but did not have the money to fund their employment.[56] The report noted that in the future, units should ensure they have adequate funding prior to recruiting scouts. The 4th Infantry also experienced a shortage of construction material, which prevented them from completing all of the active civic action projects.[57] The recommendation was for MACV to do a better job of coordinating the redeployments to ensure enough time and material were allocated to the completion of civic action projects.[58] It was relatively easy to move troops, it was not so easy to extricate them from all of the involvement they had within local communities.

The 25th Infantry Division also learned and implemented lessons from the previous redeployment operations. The division implemented an integrated civil affairs and psychological operations program in order to "reduce civilian interference with redeployment and lessen the impact upon the people and their local government officials" within local and adjacent provinces.[59]
The 25th Infantry ensured coordination with the G-4 to ensure that adequate material, including scrap and donatable excesses, would be released to the control of US advisory personnel.[60] For the KCS program, the 25th Infantry terminated the program in the 1st and 3rd Brigades, thus releasing the KCS to be transferred to other units. Additionally, it reduced the number of

[56] Ibid., F-5.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] 25th Infantry Division, Operations Order 183-70 Keystone Robin Bravo, 16 October 1970, I-1.
[60] Ibid.

authorization to what was required for DISCOM and DIVARTY elements to prevent potential over-hiring.[61] Furthermore, each KCS would be assessed if he were worthy of retention. The 25th devoted an appendix of its annex on redeployment to the detailed planning required for the successful termination of each active civic action program, ensuring the the impact on the local community would be minimized.[62] The most significant problem for the division was the number of KCS who went AWOL.[63] The AWOL KCS though eased some of the burden on the unit, which was required to return KCS to their *Chieu Hoi* center of origin. Not all KCS wanted to leave their new area, as they had established themselves there, and the division lacked adequate transportation resources to shuttle the KCS to the ten different recruiting centers from which they had come. The division recommended a change to the MACV policy that either the division make a reasonable effort to repatriate KCS, or that MACV take over that particular mission.[64]

The next operation to examine is Keystone Robin (Charlie).[65] The 1st Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) noted in its AAR that it was able to mitigate many potential problems because it was able to plan early for the transition of civic action projects and the KCS program.[66] The KCS in particular were

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., I-2-1.
[63] 25th Infantry Division, "After Action Report – Keystone Robin Bravo", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 December 1970, E-5.
[64] Ibid., E-6.
[65] The 11th ACR section on PSYOP and CIVIC action is missing. See 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, "11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (-) Redeployment After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 5 March 1971.
[66] 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), "After Action Report – Keystone Robin Charlie", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 April 1971, C-5-1.

involved early on in planning for transition, which mitigated the AWOL problems experienced previously by the 25th Infantry.[67]

The 2nd Brigade of the 25th Infantry also redeployed as part of Keystone Robin (Charlie) and avoided the mistakes made by the other two brigades in the division during their redeployment during Keystone Robin (Bravo).[68] For the 2nd Brigade, the KCS transition went smoothly because it was planned and executed in three phases.[69] The first phase, begun while the order to redeploy was still classified, involved the gradual reduction in KCS numbers through natural attrition, and the termination of AWOL or otherwise undesirable scouts.[70] During the second phase, the brigade prepared efficiency reports on the KCS and shared these documents with other units, who could decide which scouts they wanted to recruit.[71] The second phase resulted in one hundred and five scouts being hired by other units. The third phase involved the transfer or termination of the KCS and their movement to the *Chieu Hoi* center they from which they entered the program.[72] The only problem noted by the brigade was with the transportation of KCS to their original *Chieu Hoi* centers.[73] There simply was not enough organic transportation available within the brigade to execute the mission. This was a previous lesson learned that was not addressed by either the unit or MACV.

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[67] Ibid.
[68] 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, "After Action Report – Operation Keystone Robin (Charlie)", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 28 April 1971, 95.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade redeployed during operation Keystone Oriole (Bravo) and learned from the previous units' experiences. Of the forty-nine scouts at the start of redeployment, twenty-three transferred to other units, twenty-two elected termination, three were disabled and no longer able to work and were returned to the *Chieu Hoi* center for new training, and one was terminated for stealing.[74] The 173rd Brigade did not have any significant problems with the termination of its KCS program.

The last redeployment operation to be examined during this phase is Keystone Oriole (Charle), which involved the 23rd Infantry Division. For the division, the VIP had been a successful outgrowth of the intelligence program, and exemplified the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP at the tactical level. But, in accordance with GVN desires, the VIP was stopped. The RVNAF viewed it as a moral duty to turn in found munitions and thus did not believe it efficacious to offer a reward.[75] Taking their cue from their Vietnamese counterparts, the 23rd Infantry discontinued the VIP operation.

The division also visited district centers one last time prior to its departure, using assistance teams and MEDCAPs to conduct many repairs and provide one last medical treatment session for the local people.[76] Unfortunately, this was a temporary solution. Local GVN administrators and RVNAF forces were unable to maintain their American-issued equipment

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[74] 173rd Airborne Brigade, "Redeployment After Action Report 1 July 1971 – 25 August 1971", Department of the Army, Fort Campbell, KY, 14 September 1971, F-1.
[75] 23rd Infantry Division, "23rd Infantry Division Keystone Oriole Charlie After Action Report", Department of the Army, San Francisco, CA, 15 December 1971, G-3.
[76] Ibid., G-2-1.

adequately because they lacked the resources to purchase spare parts required for the maintenance.[77]

In sum, MACV learned lessons over the course of its redeployment operations and passed those lessons to subsequently redeploying units so that those did not make the same mistakes their predecessors had. In this phase of the war, operation Keystone was an example of learning by the entire MACV staff.

Chieu Hoi

Throughout this phase of the war, the *Chieu Hoi* Program remained the most successful example of what the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP could accomplish. From the start of the program in 1963 through the end of 1970, over 170,000 former enemy soldiers had rallied to the GVN. Additionally, information provided from interrogations of *Hoi Chanh* accounted for twenty-one percent, or over 22,000, of all VCI neutralizations.[78] But, MACV was concerned about the program because the overall numbers for 1970 were well below the pace of defections in 1969.

In February 1970 a Human Sciences Research (HSR) team, working under an ARPA contract to serve JUSPAO and the MACV-J3-11, completed an initial study on the obstacles to enemy defection.[79] The final report, written by

[77] Beck, "Operation Keystone – The Redeployment of United States Army Forces from the Republic of Vietnam," ii.
[78] Jeanette A. Koch, *The Chieu Hoi Program in South Vietnam, 1963-1971*. Vol. R-1172-ARPA, January 1973. As of June 24, 2010: http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R1172.html ed. Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 1973, 92.
[79] MACV, *Command History 1970, Volume II*, VIII-73

Ernest and Edith Bairdain, was published in April as the "Semi-Annual PSYOP Study."[80]

The study made several important findings related to the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP in relation to the *Chieu Hoi* Program. First, it found a problem with what it called circular intelligence reporting related to PSYOP targeting.[81] The intelligence community lacked a systematic approach to determining the enemy's psychological vulnerabilities. Second, the study found an inadequate means of measuring effectiveness. The study noted that some aspects of JUSPAO communications media had been in existence for seven years, but there had been limited efforts to measure either saturation or readership, "beginning with the very basic question of media reaching its intended audience."[82] The third observation was that because the tactical situation varied from area to area within South Vietnam, interrogators were reluctant to use standardized forms.[83] Such standardized forms were, however, exactly what PSYOP required to determine the effectiveness of its campaigns.

The study observed several obstacles to rallying and recommended that PSYOP address the obstacles rather than the audience or situation. These obstacles included fear of being harmed by either the GVN or the VC, fear of damaging one's future, the physical difficulty of escape, and idealism – "better to die in glory than live in shame."[84]

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[80] Bairdain, Ernest F., Edith M. Bairdain. Semi-Annual Report: Psychological Operations Studies – Vietnam. Washington, D.C.: Advanced Research Projects Agency, April 1970.
[81] Ibid., 27.
[82] Ibid., 36.
[83] Ibid., 33.
[84] Ibid., 54.

Perhaps their most insightful finding was that PSYOP should seek to "present" information and not "sell" it.[85] PSYOP had been using a Madison-Avenue-like technique of selling the image of the GVN or the value of freedom to the South Vietnamese. This technique was deemed to be ineffective in changing minds and winning hearts. Finally, the study reaffirmed the fact that an integrated combination of military pressure and PSYOP was likely to lead to rallying.[86]

Following this report, and the successful results of the *Nguyen Trai* I and II campaigns in 1969, which were GVN-designed *Chieu Hoi* campaigns, the GPWD in coordination with the MACJ3-11 planned a new nationwide campaign designated *Nguyen Trai* III, planned to be conducted from 1 May to 30 August.[87] But because of the diversion of RVNAF assets to the Cambodia campaign, *Nguyen Trai* III was extended to 16 October.[88] According to MACV's history, "the total programmed US support included 430 million leaflets of which all but 177 million were developed by the GVN GPWD."[89] By 20 July, RVNAF aircraft had demonstrated their ability to take over operations by supporting the mission with over 480 million leaflets disseminated.[90] *Nguyen Trai* III had to that point helped in attracting 7,115 of the 12,000 ralliers that constituted the campaign's goal.[91]

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[85] Ibid., 84.
[86] Ibid., 87.
[87] MACV, *Command History 1970, Volume II*, , VIII-73.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

During 1971 the number of *Chieu Hoi* ralliers fluctuated wildly from a high of 3,070 in February to a low of 754 in September.[92] The total for 1971 was well below that of 1970, coming in at just over 20,000 ralliers.[93] Part of this decline according to Koch came "with the expansion of GVN control and 'presence,' the 'soft-core' VC areas had been cleaned out, leaving the 'hard-core' areas which produce fewer Hoi Chanh."[94] Enemy infiltration also became a problem in 1971. By 21 June 1971, in the Mekong Delta area of South Vietnam, sixty-six outposts had been overrun, when only sixty-five had been overrun in all of 1970.[95] A major factor here was the enemy's use of "VC agents defection to the GVN as 'false ralliers,' joining the paramilitary forces, and then helping their VC comrades overrun the posts."[96]

Despite these difficulties during the transition from US to GVN control, by the end of 1971 the *Chieu Hoi* Program had deprived the VC/NVA of over 194,000 enemy adherents and personnel.[97] Since the program began in 1963, ralliers served honorably on KCS, on APTs, as *Phuong Huong* interrogators, and in various technical training programs. The most successful year was 1969 during which over 47,000 rallied.[98] 1970 saw a decline in ralliers to just over 32,600. This decline was attributed to three factors. First, the level of ground combat declined.[99] Most VC chose to rally when the pressure of ground

[92] Koch, *The Chieu Hoi Program in South Vietnam, 1963-1971*, 56.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] MACV, *Command History 1971 Volume I*, IV-37.
[96] Koch, *The Chieu Hoi Program in South Vietnam, 1963-1971*, 57.
[97] Ibid., iii.
[98] MACV, *Command History 1970, Volume II*, VIII-71.
[99] Ibid.

combat was combined with psychological operations. When ARVN troops took over for US forces as the latter departed, the enemy generally avoided contact.[100] The second reason for the decline were the measures taken by the VC/NVA to counter US/GVN PSYOP.[101] The enemy reorganized its units into three-man cells, with each man responsible for the other two.[102] This structure of nearly constant observation inhibited both for reading leaflets and planning escape. The VC/NVA also threatened the families of ralliers.[103] The third reason was the replacement of VC with NVA forces. The NVA were largely immune to PSYOP efforts aimed at defection. Over the course of the war only 1,041 NVA chose to rally.[104] NVA soldiers' ties were to their families in the North, which dissuaded them from joining the GVN cause.[105] Also, Giap oversaw a very successful political indoctrination program, which, according to Davidson, was perhaps his greatest accomplishment.[106]

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Kit Carson Scouts

By the end of 1969, the FWMAF employed 2,245 Kit Carson Scouts.[107] The program had grown considerably since its inception and with the process of Vietnamization about to increase speed, there was a need to recast the

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[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, 60.
[107] Historical Research Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV, *Command History, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1970*, *Volume II*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Information Management Support Agency, Alexandria, VA, 1971, VIII-73.

program. The name “Kit Carson” did not have the same meaning for the Vietnamese as it did the Americans. The new name, “*Luc Luong 66*,” was selected in January 1970 by the Minister of *Chieu Hoi,* which translated as “Force 66.”[108] The number 66 was chosen for the year the program was established and the fact that is was initiated with six scouts.[109]

The force continued to expand throughout the spring of 1970 with the number of *Luc Luong 66* rising to 2,275 in January; 2,288 in February; and 2,341 in March. But, despite the members’ reputation for bravery, resourcefulness, and dedication, their retention in the program became difficult.[110] According to MACV's history, "” rising cost of living, coupled with increased pay for ARVN soldiers, makes it increasingly difficult to retain scouts. Scouts are joining the ARVN with a slight reduction in pay with a possibility of getting more time off and having less dangerous jobs.”[111] They were simply not paid on the same scale as ARVN soldiers.[112] The pay problem was solved at the end of May with an across-the-board pay increase of $VN 2,500 per month.

By the summer of 1970 the KCS program was continuing to grow and develop. But the rapid pace of US redeployments intersected with the previous increases to the *Luc Luong 66* program. For the program to survive, the Vietnamese would have to accept their former enemies as trusted comrades, the *Luc Luong 66* members themselves would have to be willing to move away

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[108] MACV, *Command History 1970*, *Volume II*, VIII-74.
[109] Koch, *The Chieu Hoi Program in South Vietnam, 1963-1971*, 105.
[110] MACV, *Command History 1970*, *Volume II*, VIII-74.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.

from their local areas, and the GVN would have to continue to fund the program. When the 1st Infantry Division redeployed as part of operations Keystone Bluejay, for example, other units recruited 239 of their *Luc Luong 66* members, while 51 were released from the program.[113] To prevent too many scouts from being retained, MACV set authorizations for the total number of *Luc Loung 66* at a ceiling for USARV of 2,530 scouts.[114] This number included ceilings for 350 at division-level, 150 at brigade, 30 for separate battalions, and 100 per CTZ on Provincial Advisor Teams.[115]

In November 1970 Abrams changed the Kit Carson ceilings for 1971. For the first six months of the year, the maximum number of scouts for USARV would be 1,900. Ror the second half of the year, the number would drop to 1,100.[116] By the end of 1971 there were just over four hundred scouts still employed by US forces, with the ceiling set for five hundred.[117]

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MACV Lessons-Learned Reports

During this phase of the war, MACV issued nine lessons-learned reports. But not all of these contained lessons about the coordination of intelligence and PYSOP. The reports that did contain insights were "Cordon and Search," "Vietnamization," "Fire Support Coordination," and "US Combat Forces in Support of Pacification." Each will be explored to determine the extent to which

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[113] Headquarters US Army Vietnam (USARV), *Command Progress Report 3rd Quarter FY 70*, National Archives II, College Park, MD, RG472 A1 787, 140.02.
[114] MACV, *Command History 1970*, *Volume II*, VIII-74.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., VIII-75.
[117] Koch, *The Chieu Hoi Program in South Vietnam, 1963-1971*, 106.

the coordination of intelligence and psychological operations were either observed or evaluated as being important to MACV.

MACV Lesson Learned 75, "Cordon and Search Operations," issued 20 January 1970 contained several key observations on the integration of intelligence and PSYOP during tactical operations. The report noted that the best intelligence available usually came from the PIOCC/DIOCC.[118] The 1971 update to the FM 30-5 section on Stability Operations included the requirement for the sorts of data about local population that PIOCC/DIOCC reports included.[119] The report also noted that *Chieu Hoi* Centers were a valuable contribution to the Phoenix program because ralliers often possessed valuable information to be exploited for timely operations.[120] *Hoi Chanhs* were also used successfully in Armed Propaganda Teams, Kit Carson Scouts, and the Provincial Reconstruction Units (PRU).[121] Unfortunately, a year later, as Davison noted, the valuable resources of *Hoi Chanhs* and PW were still not being fully exploited.[122] PSYOP and psychological actions (PSYACTS) were also seen as vital to successful cordon and search operations. PSYOP were especially effective "following military operations which have disrupted their

[118] Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). Lessons Learned Number 75: Cordon and Search Operations. (Saigon: Military Assistance Command, MACJ3-052, Vietnam, 20 January 1970), 13.
[119] Department of the Army. Department of the Army Field Manual 30-5: Combat Intelligence: U.S. Army Doctrine. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 12 February 1971, 11-1.
[120] Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). Lessons Learned Number 75: Cordon and Search Operations. (Saigon: Military Assistance Command, MACJ3-052, Vietnam, 20 January 1970), 16.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Michael S. Davison, LTG, *Senior Officer Debriefing Report: II Field Force Vietnam and Third Regional Assistance Command*. DTIC Document, 1971, 8

lives, induce defections and elicit popular support for the GVN."[123] For the PSYACTS, medical civil assistance programs (MEDCAP) were encouraged only when they had been well planned based on good intelligence about their likely success in a given area, lest they be discredited.[124] The report stressed that proper conduct of personnel was vital to establishing good rapport – "disregard of private property, crop destruction, pillaging by troops and other indications of lack of proper respect for the people, will quickly negate all other efforts being made."[125] Finally, coordination with the local GVN officials, ARVN, and the VIS were seen as crucial to success of cordon-and-search operations.[126]

MACV Lesson Learned 76, "Vietnamization," was issued on 22 November 1969, just before the second iteration of operation Keystone was complete. This report offered detailed guidance related to the coordination required to complete the transfer of responsibility to GVN. The three areas relevant to this coordination were the KCS, PSYOP, and CORDS. Experience showed that KCS might not readily accept employment with another unit, which stemmed from an unwillingness to move away from their homes.[127] The report encouraged units to develop a positive recruiting campaign aimed at retaining scouts and the development of a liberal leave policy, to include transportation, to help

[123] Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). Lessons Learned Number 75: Cordon and Search Operations, 16.
[124] Ibid., 21.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid., 20-1.
[127] Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). Lessons Learned Number 76: Vietnamization. (Saigon: Military Assistance Command, MACJ3-053, Vietnam, 22 November 1969), 11.

overcome their reluctance to work with another unit.[128] For PSYOP, the report noted, "Vietnamization must be supported by a maximum PSYOP program, as redeployments can generate apprehension and feelings of insecurity among both the military and civilian populations of the RVN and other Free World nations."[129] The utility of this guidance was evident by the 9th Infantry Division's not receiving PSYOP guidance until after the redeployment order had been issued.[130] The report stated, "this delayed the start of any PSYOP campaign in the Upper [Mekong] Delta until five days after the enemy began his PSYOP exploitation of the redeployment."[131] US and GVN coordination was not possible either because the GVN had not issued policy guidance for redeployment operations. Based on the lessons learned from Keystone Eagle, MACV recommended that a well-coordinated PSYOP campaign was crucial to successful Vietnamization. This required that units receive clear and early guidance, coordinate through all phases with the GPWD, authorize subordinate units to conduct preliminary planning, and "in all possible cases, RVNAF units should physically replace US units being redeployed, following a public announcement to this effect made in advance. A public ceremony transferring responsibility to RVNAF units is also desirable."[132]

For CORDS, the report recommended that redeploying units should "do their utmost to ensure" MEDCAP and military civic action programs (MILCAP)

[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid., 23-4.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.

programs continue, including urging RVNAF units to do the same.[133] MACV recommended that, "projects which are underway should not be abandoned as there is likely to be an unfavorable psychological and material impact. Projects not yet underway may be terminated, except certain extraordinary projects or those which can be completed before the unit leaves."[134] Additionally, detailed planning was required to ensure that new units were introduced to local officials and that a smooth transition of relationships occurred. The report also observed, "as US units depart, ARVN are not yet up to the task and require improvement to bridge the gap."[135]

MACV Lesson Learned 77, "Fire Support Coordination," issued on 20 May 1970, identified two lessons regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. The first was the effect B-52 strikes had on the enemy. The report mentioned, "psychologically, too, the B-52s have had a damaging effect on the morale of the enemy, as verified by captured enemy and other sources. In some cases, it has taken several days for survivors of B-52 strikes to regroup as an effective force."[136] The second was from an AAR from operation Cobra Strike, which took place from 30 October 1969 to 10 November 1969. PSYOP were conducted in support of this operation to warn the local population away from mined areas, the danger of entering the target area, and to induce the enemy to

[133] Ibid., 39.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid., 15.
[136] Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). Lessons Learned Number 77: Fire Support Coordination, (Saigon: Military Assistance Command, MACJ3-052, Vietnam, 22 November 1969), C-36.

join the *Chieu Hoi* program.[137] The PSYOP were evaluated as having been successful because they helped keep the populace out of the mined areas and because ARVN had planned and conducted the PSYOP campaign.[138]

Lesson Learned Number 80, "Combat Forces in Support of Pacification," was issued on 29 June 1970.[139] This report defined pacification as follows:

> the military, political, economic and social process of establishing local government responsive to and involving the participation of the people. It includes the provision of sustained, credible territorial security, the destruction of the enemy's underground government, the assertion of political control and involvement of the people in government, and the initiation of economic and social activity capable of self-sustenance and expansion. The economic element of pacification includes the opening, securing and improving of lines of communication important to economic and military Activity.[140]

The report further noted that the S2 should assist the Civil Affairs officer with PSYOP material to motivate people and publicize events.[141] The report also mentioned that Combined Unit Pacification Program (CUPP) operations should assist GVN agencies with the *Chieu Hoi* Program by distributing PSYOP information through tapes, loudspeakers and responsive leaflet drops.[142] The report's finding on VCI neutralization concluded that a mutual exchange of intelligence between the GVN and US was critical to a successful program.[143]

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[137] Ibid., F-4.
[138] Ibid., F-8.
[139] Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). Lessons Learned Number 80: Combat Forces in Support of Pacification, (Saigon: Military Assistance Command, MACJ3-052, Vietnam, 29 June 1970).
[140] Ibid., i.
[141] Ibid., 20.
[142] Ibid., 7.
[143] Ibid., 24.

Senior-Officer Debriefs

The senior-officer debriefs from this phase of the war provide useful insights into the thinking of MACV commanders. Some of the senior leaders provided volumes of observations, while others were more concise. But when taken holistically, even the pithy observations provide worthy insights into this phase of the war.

Lieutenant General Julian J. Ewell

LTG Ewell served as the Commanding General, II Field Force (III CTZ) from 2 April 1969 to 15 April 1970. His debrief clearly indicated the lack of emphasis he placed on civic action and psychological operations. Ewell stated, "military power is the way to handle the communists" because they were in his words "more MAOIST than MAO himself."[144] Ewell also noted of CORDS, "I am not minimizing the importance of good civic action projects; just that they are second in importance to force."[145] Ewell's final point about psychological warfare was that, "we required all units to conduct a super active psy-war campaign covering all aspects from Chieu Hoi to how inept a certain unit was. I don't know how much it hurt the enemy, but it made us feel better."[146]

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[144] Julian J. Ewell, (Lieutenant General, USA), Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG Julian J. Ewell, CG II Field Force, Vietnam 2 April 1969 to 15 April 1970. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 15 June 1970), 4.
[145] Ibid., 5.
[146] Ibid., 9. Ewell's expressed sentiment is in contrast to the 9th Infantry's pacification mission, which had as its foundation PSYOP to win hearts and minds, assistance to the victims of the war, health-care assistance, educational support, and facility construction and repair. See Ira A. , Jr., *Losing Vietnam: How America Abandoned Southeast Asia*, (University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 66.

Ewell's comments are of interest because of his seniority and the time period in which he served. Ewell clearly did not believe that civic action and psychological operations were valuable. He was forthright in expressing his opinion about their lack of worth. His neglect and denigration of PSYOP parallel those of Abrams and provide further evidence of a lack of understanding among senior Army leaders about PSYOP capabilities.

Lieutenant General Melvin Zais

LTG Zais served as Commanding General, XXIV Corps, from 26 June 1969 to 18 June 1970.[147] He had extensive experience in South Vietnam, the year prior having served as the Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division.[148] Zais stated that his prior experience afforded him a relatively smooth transition to his new position.[149] His report was very detailed tactically with regard to the position of forces, but he also had several observations useful for our purposes.

Zais saw his major role as corps commander as being to provide security for US units as they withdrew.[150] Thus, his focus was on the tactical aspect of Vietnamization, for which he provided much detail. For PSYOP and civic action, he had a different philosophy.[151] He made no mention of the *Chieu Hoi* Program

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[147] Melvin Zais, (Lieutenant General, USA), Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG Melvin Zais, Commanding General, XXIV Corps, 26 June 1969 to 18 June 1970 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 20 August 1970).
[148] Incidentally, during the infamous Battle of Hamburger Hill.
[149] Zais, , Senior Officer Debriefing Report, 2.
[150] Ibid., 11.
[151] Ibid.

in his report. As for Civic Action, Zais believed that good deeds spoke for themselves. He thus did not want signs saying "Contributed by" or "Constructed by" US units affixed to civic-action projects.[152]

He mentioned one PSYOP campaign, “The High Price of Rice,” which attempted to deny the enemy food.[153] Intelligence indicated that the fall of 1969 the VC/NVA were subsisting on half rations.[154] During the three months of the operation from October to December 1969, over ten tons of rice was discovered, with some having been hidden in sandbags. The PSYOP campaign used fifteen-million leaflets and one-hundred hours of aerial and ground broadcasting to promulgate the message of NVA deprivation.[155] Zais noted that this campaign was a joint effort between the US and GVN, which in his opinion constituted its true success.[156]

Lieutenant General James W. Sutherland, Jr.

LTG Sutherland served as Commanding General, XXIV Corps, from 18 June 1970 to 9 July 1971.[157] His debrief contrasts with Ewell's and Zais' in his emphasis on intelligence and PSYOP coordination, indicating also a clear understanding of the relationship between the two functions.

Sutherland noted that the Combined Campaign Plan (CCP) for 1971 changed the role of FWMAF from the 1970 role of “to conduct operations” to the

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[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid., 17.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid., 18.
[157] James W. Sutherland Jr., (Lieutenant General, USA), Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG James W. Sutherland, Jr., Commanding General, XXIV Corps, 18 June 1970 to 9 July 1971 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 31 August 1971).

1971 role of "to support and assist" South Vietnamese Forces.[158] This change in mission was evident in the concomitant reduction of PSYOP forces during 1971. He observed that the enemy's morale was vulnerable to PSYOP, particularly in light of VC/NVA defeats, fear of death, battle hardships, disease, and poor medical facilities.[159] He also noted that the failure of the VC/NVA to support the needs and aspirations of the South Vietnamese people, contrasted with the GVN's growing ability to support those desires.[160] Sutherland mentioned the success of two major PYSOP programs in I CTZ. The Rice Denial program exploited the continuing food shortage being experienced by VC/NVA forces. The second program sought to induce the population to locate and report mines and booby traps.[161] Finally, he was concerned that the enemy would take advantage of the US withdrawal for propaganda purposes.[162]

Sutherland also mentioned that vocational training for *Hoi Chanh* was initiated in September 1970.[163] He recommended a renewed effort to entice VC/NVA to enter the *Cheiu Hoi* Program.[164] His positive comments regarding the program were based on the growing success of *Hoi Chanh* tactical intelligence collection efforts on part of GVN.[165] He also noted that *Hoi Chanh* were being successfully trained as *Phung Hoang* interrogators.[166] Despite these

[158] Ibid., 15.
[159] Ibid., 14.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid., 19.
[162] Ibid., 25.
[163] Ibid., 17.
[164] Ibid., 19.
[165] Ibid., 17.
[166] Ibid.

successes, however, there was still resistance to the Phoenix program on the part of GVN.[167]

He noted that Vietnamization was progressing. His example for intelligence was the continued improvements in the unattended ground sensors (UGS) and the developments of collateral intelligence.[168] For PSYOP, he noted that the VIS had recently obtained printing presses from JSUPAO, which were used to bolster GVN support with programs such as "Land to the Tiller."[169] Additionally, two new radio stations were scheduled for completion in Da Nang, and new television service was scheduled for Hue.[170] These developments occurred with little direct US PSYOP support, because by this point most PSYOP forces had left South Vietnam.

Major General Verne L. Bowers

MG Bowers, served as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel and Administration, US Army, Vietnam (USARV), from 30 March 1969 to 10 September 1970.[171] He noted that over the course of his eighteen months in South Vietnam the changes were stunning.[172] When he assumed the position at USARV, he had "an open checkbook and personnel flooding the country into the middle of 1969," but by the time he completed his

[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid. 18.
[169] Ibid., 19.
[170] Ibid., 18.
[171] Verne L. Bowers, (Major General, USA), Senior Officer Debriefing Report: MG Verne L. Bowers, Deputy Chief of Staff, (Personnel and Administration) US Army, Vietnam (USARV), 30 March 1969 to 10 September 1970 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 10 November 1970).
[172] Ibid., 3.

tour, troop strength had dropped by 74,000 personnel and there were significant shortfalls in officer and enlisted replacement fill.[173] Additionally, the FY 71 budget was only projected to be about fifty-six percent of the FY 70 budget, with controls placed on ammunition allocation, construction projects and various other resources.[174]

Despite the significant reductions in resources and the shortfalls in replacement personnel, Bowers mentioned, "the new ideas and energy provided by the continual influx of new personnel more than compensate for the lack of continuity caused by the rapid turnover."[175] His observation is contrarian to the prevailing wisdom about the short-tours in Vietnam. While the short-tours were a source of frustration and loss of institutional knowledge, they did not play as significant a role during this phase of the war. The short-tours did not seem to have undermined operation Keystone to the extent they did psychological operations.

Lieutenant Frank T. Mildren

LTG Mildren served as the Deputy Command General for USARV from 22 June 1968 to 1 July 1970.[176] His observations about PSYOP were that its effectiveness was difficult to measure, but "indicators and effects" led to a belief

[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid., 18.
[176] Frank T. Mildren, (Lieutenant General, USA), Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG Frank T. Mildren, Deputy Commander, US Army, Vietnam (USARV), 22 June 1968 to 1 July 1970 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 2 September 1970).

it was working.[177] Several of these indicators were the increase of *Hoi Chanh* during 1969 (2.5 times 1968), aggressive enemy counter measures toward friendly PSYOP, and the steady progress on pacification, which was attributed to various influences including PSYOP.[178] He also noted that although the 4th PSYOP Group had been redesignated and expanded at the end of 1967, it was slow to fill to full strength.[179] He also noted that the MTOE for PSYOP increased equipment authorizations for items such as airborne loudspeaker systems, bullhorns, tape recorders, and Polaroid camera.[180] These items were designed to allow tactical commanders the ability to exploit rapidly the psychological opportunities presented by quick reaction to changing tactical situation.[181]

Writing about "Vietnamization," Mildren observed that after 1969 civic action projects shifted to the Vietnamese with US units rarely conducting unilateral operations, but rather assisting various Vietnamese government and military agencies.[182] Mildred also encouraged the creation of friendship councils to discuss problems, and revamped initial orientation training "of newly assigned personnel, unit training in cultural relations, expanded use of information media to improve understanding, and preparation of a handbook for unit commanders to use in identifying and correcting problems," in an effort to prevent misunderstandings between American and Vietnamese soldiers.[183]

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[177] Ibid., 40.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid., 41.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.

Lieutenant General W.J. McCaffrey

LTG McCaffrey replaced Mildren as the Deputy Commanding General for USARV on 15 June 1970 and served in that capacity until 5 September 1972.[184] McCaffrey made a few observations pertinent to our purposes. The first was that "a great effort was made during the Vietnam War to substitute gadgets for men and to reduce friendly battlefield casualties to the absolute minimum."[185] Sensor programs were expensive and complex to operate and in his opinion had a long way to go to get its full potential. McCaffrey also noted that many other gadgets were rushed to Vietnam to be tested in combat, but in "almost every case it would have been better and quicker to have tried the item out under controlled conditions in CONUS."[186] Finally, McCaffrey noted that the US effort was never unified.[187] He stated that tactics, operations, psychological warfare and strategy all had several headquarters involved, which intervened directing into the war at various times, including CINCPAC, SAC, PACAF, 7th AF, the JCS, the Secretary of Defense, CIA, and the White House.[188]

Major General Charles P. Brown

MG Brown was the Commanding General of I Field Force, Vietnam, and the Commanding General of the Second Regional Assistance Command, from

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[184] W. J. McCaffrey, (Lieutenant General, USA), Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG W. J. McCaffrey, Deputy Commander, US Army, Vietnam (USARV), 15 June 1970 to 5 September 1972 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, December 1972).
[185] Ibid., 7.
[186] Ibid., 8.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.

31 March 1970 to 15 May 1971.[189] During his time in command, Vietnamization was well under way as the US presence of troops drew down considerably. At the start of his command, the I FFV included the 4th Infantry Division, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and TF South (a multi-battalion force operating in Binh Thuan Provice). By the end of his commander, US units under his command had reduced to the 173rd Airborne Brigade plus two separate battalions and a Ranger company. [190]

In his report, he mentioned nothing about either intelligence or PSYOP. His entire brief concentrated on the lack of ARVN leadership abilities and on their inability to coordinate maneuver and firepower. His focus was on the ARVN's lack of ability to execute the small unit tactics of combat effectiveness, leadership, behavior under fire, training, and logistics. [191]

Lieutenant General Michael S. Davison

LTG Davison served as the Commanding General, II FFV from 15 April 1970 to 26 May 1971 - the same time period that MG Brown was in command in I FFV.[192] Unlike Brown, Davison's brief was thorough and included all manner of operation, not only those focused at the tactical level.

Shortly after Davison assumed command, Abrams personally tasked him "to plan and execute a campaign to eliminate the North Vietnamese base areas

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[189] Charles P. Brown, (Major General, USA), Senior Officer Debriefing Report: MG Charles P. Brown, CG, I Field Force, Vietnam, CG, Second Regional Assistance Command, 31 March 1970 to 15 May 1971 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 18 August 1971).
[190] Ibid., 1.
[191] Ibid., 9-10.
[192] Davison, Senior Officer Debriefing Report.

in the Fishhook region of Cambodia adjacent to MR3."[193] Davison had several observations from the Cambodian invasion that related to intelligence and PSYOP.

The first was that intelligence "had absolutely no idea of the manner in which the NVA had established their storage areas."[194] So, the search for caches became a painstakingly slow infantry process.[195] Unfortunately, the "Iron Barnacle" Navy gear was too sensitive. It picked up empty C-rations and beer cans so was only ten percent effective on finding good hits.[196] Davison also noted that, "prisoners and Hoi Chanhs proved useful on occasion, but this valuable resource was not fully exploited."[197]

Despite these tactical difficulties, the operation was a success because as Davison observed, the "enemy was psychologically shocked because of 1300 enemy who rallied as a result of the Cambodian campaign."[198] The PSYOP used in the campaign was aggressive toward the enemy and also successful with warning the Cambodia people away from battle areas and in directing them where to seek medical assistance.[199] The defection of so many *Hoi Chanh* to include a large number of political cadre who had lost faith in the "inevitable communist victory" was a severe psychological blow to the enemy.[200] Unfortunately, so many PW and *Hoi Chanh* rallied during the campaign that

[193] Ibid., 5.
[194] Ibid., 6.
[195] Ibid., 8.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid., 7.
[199] Ibid., 8-9.
[200] Ibid., 10.

the GVN and US were unable to effectively interrogate all of them.[201] The US ground role in Cambodia terminated on 30 June 1970.

Reflecting back on his time in command, Davison made three other observations related to the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. The first was that intelligence continued to rely too much on the technical means of finding the enemy. The devices were not transferred to the ARVN, which had come to rely on US intelligence, causing problems with ARVN's development of an organic intelligence capacity. US Army units relied on the US Air Force to find the enemy on infiltration routes using infrared and unattended ground sensors, side looking airborne radar (SLAR), vertical and panoramic photo camera, YO-3A quite aircraft, and the XM3 personnel detector (Sniffer).[202] Similarly, ARVN came to rely on the VNAF, but the VNAF was limited to visual reconnaissance and aerial photography, which severely limited its usefulness.[203] This technology gap created false expectations and a capability gap for the ARVN.

A few other problems arose during "Vietnamization." The *Phung Hoang* program had limited success during the transition because of the limited support the program received from GVN officials.[204] Civic action programs were well intentioned, but caused a reliance on US personnel, which was detrimental to the transition of the projects to the Vietnamese.[205] In one

[201] Ibid., 9.
[202] Ibid., 14.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid., 15.
[205] Ibid., 25.

example, the local populace ignored a well-stocked GVN medical clinic, because the people had become accustomed to receiving medical care from Americans.[206] Davison recommended using PSYOP to publicize GVN dispensary locations as US forces departed, and including Vietnamese personal in MEDCAP operations so as to ease the transition as US forces redeployed.[207]

The coordination of intelligence and PSYOP at MACV was too often personality dependent. Commanders who understood the complementary nature of intelligence and PSYOP and emphasized their integration with combat operations and civic action programs enjoyed success. Those commanders who viewed PSYOP as a separate function or who held unrealistic expectations about PSYOP's potential often failed. These wide discrepancies presented in senior officer debriefs confirm the fact that neither the Army nor MACV had created a cultural norm infusing its senior leaders with the vital importance of coordinating intelligence and psychological operations.

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Summary

During this phase of the war, the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP was initially productive at both the strategic and tactical levels. The changes made during the previous phase to the *Chieu Hoi* and KCS programs continued to be effective. During Operation Keystone, the initial coordination was absent, but MACV learned lessons and applied them to subsequent iterations. The coordination of intelligence and PSYOP improved and was functioning well by

[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.

the December 1971. The change in responsibility from the G3/S3 to the G5/S5 was also fruitful. The transition of responsibility for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP was accomplished, albeit with differences. Programs such as the VIP were discontinued. Programs such as *Chieu Hoi* were continued, but on a much smaller scale. Programs such as *Luc Luong 66* seem to have faded away.

MACV continued to struggle with appropriate command emphasis on the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. Those commanders who displayed a correct understanding executed effective PSYOP programs. What was different during this phase of the war was that positive momentum overcame those commanders who did not emphasize coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. By January 1970, staff processes and intelligence and PSYOP infrastructure were in place and in some respects functioning like a well oiled bureaucracy.

In sum, throughout this phase, the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP in MACV was successful at both the strategic and tactical levels until April 1971, when the pace of PSYOP redeployments became too rapid for effective coordination to continue.

Analysis of Learning about Intelligence and PSYOP Coordination

Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Yes" for this standard. The focus of learning changed, however, from an enemy focused one at the start of the phase to one of turning over responsibility to the Vietnamese and redeployment by the middle of the

phase. MACV continued letting contracts for studying effective intelligence support to PSYOP, even at the point that PSYOP forces were redeploying and no longer conducting operations.

Was MACV open to discordant information regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Yes" for this criterion as well. During the course of the two-and-one-half years examined, MACV was open to the problems that the AARs and the lessons-learned reports identified and ensured that these lessons were incorporated into later unit orders. MACV was more eager to adopt lessons learned on its way out of Vietnam than it was on to its way in. Also, by this point in the war MACV was listening to the GVN's position and acting upon it. An example was that The VIP was stopped during the 23rd Infantry Division's turn redeployment during Operation Keystone Oriole (Charlie).

Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?

MACV rates a "Yes" for this question. MACV continued to learn throughout operation Keystone. It captured lessons, shared them with its subordinate units, and rarely repated mistakes. There were problems at the MACV level at the beginning with the redeployments. But as time went on, units learned to ensure that the same mistakes were not repeated in the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP.

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Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people involved with the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP left the command?

MACV rated a "Yes" for this criterion. The coordination of intelligence and PSYOP continued through this period until redeploying *became* the mission. During Operation Keystone, intelligence and PSYOP were coordinated to ensure that the tactical redeployments were successfully executed to include integration with civic action. In many cases, the successful integration continued in spite of the changes in commanders, which in several noteworthy cases did not have an appreciation for PYSOP.

Did MACV act on what it knew regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?

MACV rated a "Yes" for this criterion as well. In a previous report, MACV had noted that whenever possible, MEDCAP and psychological operations should be integrated.[208] This recommendation was both implemented and validated during Operation Keystone. After the first two iterations of the operation, units coordinated intelligence and PSYOP to ensure that responsibility was effectively transitioned to the ARVN, that local communities were not adversely affected, and that US forces were able to safely redeploy. As noted by Sutherland, the integration of intelligence and PSYOP were critical.

[208] Operations Report - Lessons Learned 2-68 - "Medical Lessons Learned", Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Adjutant General, 16 April 1968, 41.

Net Assessment

During this phase, MACV successfully met five of the five criteria as a learning organization for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP and therefore is rated as **Very Effective**. (Table 17)

Garvin's Learning Questions	June 1969 - December 19671
	Coordination
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**+**
Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**+**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?	**+**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP?	**+**
Total	**5**

TABLE 17 – COORDINATION OF INTELLIGENCE AND PSYOP ASSESSMENT, 1969 - 1971

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

During this phase of the war, the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP at MACV significantly improved. This improvement is largely due to the change in mission for MACV headquarters. Operation Keystone was a complicated mission, but not a complex one. Thus, commanders and staff were able to fairly easily grasp the tactics required to accomplish the mission successfully. MACV

successfully coordinating intelligence and PSYOP to meet the objectives of Keystone and in so doing exhibited the criteria of a learning organization.

The next chapter will provide an overall assessment of MACV as a learning organization from the perspective of intelligence, PSYOP and the coordination between the two.

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Conclusions Phase III, June 1969 to December 1971

Tonight I can report that Vietnamization has succeeded.

- President Nixon, 7 April 1970

This phase of the war in Vietnam provides another vantage point from which to consider MACV as a learning organization. The changes brought about by the Vietnamization of the war and by the subsequent redeployments show that MACV learned lessons, avoided repeating mistakes, and adapted well to its new mission. Yet, as was the case in particular with PSYOP, there were persistent problems, which MACV appeared almost willfully to ignore. This chapter will review the conclusions about MACV's performance of intelligence, psychological operations, and their coordination during Vietnamization. It will then present an evaluation of MACV's overall performance as a learning organization during this phase of the war.

Intelligence

The intelligence function in MACV was performed well during Vietnamization, as MACV transferred technology, responsibility, and assets to RVNAF without a significant loss, compromise, or degradation of productivity. This phase included a roughly six-month period during which nearly one-

hundred percent of MI unit commanders were replaced. MACV effectively conducted liaison with the JGS to address shortcomings identified during the intelligence transition to the ARVN. Finally, lessons learned about intelligence were included in the Army's last revision of its intelligence manual during the Vietnam War.

MACV, however, still struggled with some areas of intelligence. It concentrated on measuring activity and output rather than progress or effectiveness versus the enemy. MACV also continued to rely heavily on technological solutions to its intelligence-collection requirements. The third problem was that intelligence personnel struggled to assist the ARVN with coordinating between its intelligence and operations sections.

Because it met four of the five criteria of a learning organization in the intelligence function, MACV's overall rating here was **Somewhat Effective.** This represents an increase of one level from the previous phase, during which it received a rating of **Marginally Effective**.

PSYOP

MACV continued to struggle with many of the same problems it did in the previous phase of the war. The PSYOP function at MACV lacked useful measures of effectiveness, appropriate command emphasis, adequate logistical support, and properly trained personnel. Commanders also continued to view psychological operations as something separate and distinct from combat operations. Nevertheless, MACV's execution of PSYOP improved considerably during Operation Keystone. The biggest accomplishment was the transfer of

the control of psychological operations to the GVN and the successful redeployment of PSYOP personnel and equipment. MACV also passed lessons learned to the institutional Army, which were reflected in the latest doctrinal update for psychological operations. In PSYOP, MACV earned a rating of **Marginally Effective** because it met two of the five evaluation criteria, and partially met three of the five evaluation criteria.

Coordination of Intelligence and PSYOP

The changes MACV instituted to *Chieu Hoi* and KCS programs continued to be effective throughout this phase of the war. MACV initially failed to coordinate intelligence and PSYOP during Operation Keystone, but quickly learned lessons and applied those lessons to subsequent iterations of the redeployment process. The change in responsibility of PSYOP from the G3/S3 to the G5/S5 also appears to have facilitated better coordination with the G2/S2 sections. Throughout this phase, MACV successfully coordinated intelligence and PSYOP at both the strategic and tactical levels until the pace of PSYOP redeployments negated the need for coordination. MACV met all of the criteria as a learning organization for the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP and therefore earned the rating of **Very Effective** for this phase of the war.

Conclusions

During this phase of the Vietnam War here studied, MACV achieved an overall score of 12.5 of 15 (see Table 18), thus earning the rating of **Somewhat**

Effective (Table 3) as a learning organization. This is a marked improvement from the rating of **Marginally Effective** MACV earned during the previous phase of the war. The biggest difference between the two phases was the change in mission directed by President Nixon. The problems MACV experienced in the previous phases with regard to intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination continued to linger, but were now background problems because the primary mission of MACV had changed. Vietnamization and redeployment were both more tangible missions than fighting a mixed war of counterinsurgency against the VC and semi-conventional operations against the NVA.

Level of Effectiveness	Score for Each Level	Total Score for the Period
Very Effective	5 of 5	14-15 of 15
Somewhat Effective	4 of 5	11-13 of 15
Marginally Effective	3 of 5	8-10 of 15
Ineffective	2 of 5	4-7 of 15
Dysfunctional	1 or 0 of 5	0-3 of 15

TABLE 3 – QUANTIFICATION OF GARVIN'S LEARNING CRITERIA

Garvin's Learning Questions	June 1969 - December 1971		
	Intelligence	PSYOP	Coordination
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	+	+
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	-	+	+
Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	/	+
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?	+	/	+
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	/	+
Total	**4**	**3.5**	**5**
	Total for Time Period		**12.5**

TABLE 18 – MACV ASSESSMENT AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION, 1969 - 1971

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

But the command's performance was not perfect. MACV as a whole continued to concentrate on measuring production rather than on seeking to measure the effect its actions had on the enemy or the GVN. The intelligence function tracked and reported numbers of studies completed, documents translated and examined, prisoners interrogated, and numbers of IIRs that directly led to combat operations. The PSYOP function tracked leaflets

produced and distributed, total broadcast hours of radio and television programs, numbers of *Hoi Chanh*, etc. With the exception of the *Hoi Chanh*, neither function was able to present meaningful data from which to support evaluations of its own effectiveness. The PSYOP function also continued to struggle with the same problems areas: intelligence support, command emphasis, logistical support, and personnel training.

Despite these problems, when it came to Operation Keystone, MACV personnel appeared to behave differently. MACV shared lessons learned, instituted appropriate changes, and largely avoided repeating mistakes. Had MACV executed its previous missions in the manner it did Operation Keystone, one wonders if the outcome of the war might have been different. The difference, then, was not so much in MACV, but in the nature of the mission. Several factors led to MACV's improvement during this phase: the change of mission; the difference in performance measures; the improvement in command guidance; and the difference in the enemy.

On 15 August 1969, MACV issued its official change of mission from "defeat the enemy and force his withdrawal," to "provide maximum assistance to strengthen the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam, to increase support to the pacification effort, and to reduce the flow of supplies to the enemy down the Ho Chi Minh Trail."[1] While MACV's mission did not read "to securely redeploy US forces from South Vietnam," that was what became the de facto mission in April 1970 with Nixon's decision to withdraw an additional 150,000

[1] Willbanks, "Vietnam 1968-1975," Dole Institute of Politics, August 16, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByO0vN5iwPA, accessed 09 January 2015.

troops.

The second factor was that the redeployment mission was one that was easily measured. It was a logistically complicated mission, but it was not complex. In the case of Operation Keystone, MACV's measures of performance equated to measures of effectiveness. Each iteration of Keystone had distinct units of measure, which nested under easily identifiable objectives.

President Nixon also provided clearly defined objectives. Despite the fact that the numbers chosen seemed arbitrary from the perspective of military efficiency, they were clear and they were also meaningful in terms of Nixon's goal of achieving "Peace with Honor," which strongly implied America's disengagement from the war.[2] MACV had the tools available to plan and execute to meet that goal. This guidance centered on an easily identifiable problem, enabled commanders and their staffs to meet his intent. MACV never failed to redeploy forces in accordance with the President's schedule.

On 6 August 1969, soon after Nixon's visit to Saigon and as elements of the 9th Infantry Division were preparing to redeploy, the VC/NVA attacked Cam Ranh Bay.[3] Five days later, the VC/NVA attacked over one-hundred towns, villages, and bases throughout South Vietnam.[4] Despite the initial scale of the attacks, the VC/NVA never mounted a serious threat to MACV's redeployment

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[2] Prior to 5 May 1968, Nixon spoke of a "victorious peace," but during the New Hampshire primary, he used the term "honorable peace." http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/O-W/The-Vietnam-War-and-Its-Impact-Nixon-s-peace-with-honor.html, accessed 22 April 2015. This concept evolved throughout his presidency. Nixon used the phrase "Peace with honor" on 23 January 1973, during his nationally televised speech announcing the formal end to the Vietnam War. http://watergate.info/1973/01/23/nixon-peace-with-honor-broadcast.html, accessed 22 April 2015.

[3] Willbanks, *A Raid Too Far*, 18

[4] Ibid.

operations. MACV did not have to fight a retrograde operation with a delaying force. It was able to move men and material out of South Vietnam without much interference from the VC/NVA, which was likely due to the fact that the VC/NVA's "position and strength on the South Vietnamese battlefield had declined."[5] Some of this decrease was also probably because the NVA could afford to bide their time until American forces had left South Vietnam and did not intend to take any overt action to impede that process.

These contributing factors provided the difference between the Phase III and the previous two phases. Regardless of the reasons, MACV's performance during Vietnamization, and its execution of Operation Keystone in particular, provide a good example of a learning organization.

Having completed the evaluation of intelligence, psychological operations, and their coordination at MACV over this last phase of the war, the next chapter will examine the conclusions to be drawn from this analysis. The chapter will recapitulate the conclusions of each phase and synthesize insights from examining MACV as a learning organization in the areas of intelligence, PSYOP, and the coordination of the two during the entire period studied.

[5] Pribbenow, *Victory in Vietnam*, 257

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CONCLUSIONS

In the early morning hours of 30 April 1975, as the last American helicopter lifted off from the rooftop of the American Embassy in Saigon, the US Army could take little comfort in the nature of the defeat. The South Vietnamese government had fallen to an armed offensive from the North, rather than as the result of an insurgency. The nature of their defeat was ironic. MACV, and General Westmoreland in particular, had been criticized for the concentration on conventional operations to the exclusion of counterinsurgency. Westmoreland had predicted this criticism, however, as he left command:

> MACV strategy will be the target of a great deal of criticism. Since the enemy never won any major military battles, critics…will of necessity have to concentrate on psychological, civic action, CORDS type of activities destined to gain broad polar support of the peasantry. They will say MACV neglected this area, concentrated on military operations, built-up their own forces and relegated to a secondary role the build-up of ARVN and the strengthening of the image of the Saigon government.[1]

Yet in the end it *was* the conventional fight that was the South's undoing. Regardless of the reason, the fact remains that the United States, and the Army in particular, lost the war in South Vietnam. But, as Daddis noted, "the fact that the U.S. Army lost in Vietnam fails to prove that it did not

[1] Daddis, *Westmoreland's War,* 171

learn."[2] MACV did learn during the course of the war. This chapter will review MACV's learning processes and identify the causal factors of both the command's successes and its failures.

This analysis proceeds through four phases. It first briefly reviews the findings from each of the three phases of the war. It next identifies MACV's achievements and failures in its execution of intelligence, PSYOP, and the coordination of the two functions. It then analyzes trends that developed over the course of the entire war and explicates underlying causes for MACV's learning and non-learning. It closes by answering the research question, answering several pertinent additional questions, and suggesting areas for further research.

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Phase I Conclusions, July 1965 to January 1968

MACV's mission changed considerably during the thirty months from July 1965 to January 1968. The command went from advising and supporting the GVN, to taking the lead in combat operations. This change caused significant alterations in MACV's approach to intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination.

During this phase MACV's intelligence function expanded in scope and scale, created an impressive infrastructure, experimented with new collection technology, implemented a lessons-learned mechanism, created new programs such as the Bounty Program, and supported combat units in operations such

[2] Daddis, "Eating Soup with a Spoon: The U.S. Army as a ``Learning Organization'' in the Vietnam War." *JOURNAL OF MILITARY HISTORY* 77, no. 1 (2013), 230

as Junction City. But the intelligence function was overly focused on order-of-battle analysis, relied too heavily on technological solutions and data analysis, and too frequently sought methods of quantifiable assessment.

MACV's psychological operations also expanded, growing from a handful of MTTs to an entire group. MACV built a significant radio and television broadcast infrastructure, experimented with new technologies for audio-visual distribution, and continually sought expert advice from academia and research companies in order to improve its PSYOP effectiveness. But as it did in intelligence, MACV was overly focused on easily quantifiable means to measure the effectiveness of its PSYOP programs. Westmoreland adamantly refused to create a J7 section at MACV because he believed that the commander should be his own PSYOP officer. Westmoreland failed to realize that although his impulse was admirable, the lack of a J7 staff section at MACV headquarters prevented PSYOP from having either the institutional authority or the coordination capabilities they required to be fully effective.

MACV's coordination of intelligence and PSYOP had initial success with its support to the *Chieu Hoi* Program, but was hindered by lukewarm support and a paucity of funding from the GVN. The MACV intelligence function produced some valuable analysis that supported PSYOP, but these efforts were episodic and lacking in systemic coordination. MACV sought to develop both intelligence and PSYOP, but the lack of a J7 and Westmoreland's inappropriate command emphasis retarded the development of coordination between the two functions.

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During the initial phase of the war, MACV met eleven of the fifteen attributes of a learning organization in the interactions of the MACV J2, J3-PD, JUSPAO and PSYOP, earning the overall rating of being **Somewhat Effective** as a learning organization. (See Table 3 and 8).

Level of Effectiveness	**Score for Each Level**	**Total Score for the Period**
Very Effective	5 of 5	14-15 of 15
Somewhat Effective	4 of 5	11-13 of 15
Marginally Effective	3 of 5	8-10 of 15
Ineffective	2 of 5	4-7 of 15
Dysfunctional	1 or 0 of 5	0-3 of 15

TABLE 3 – QUANTIFICATION OF GARVIN'S LEARNING CRITERIA

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Garvin's Learning Questions	July 1965 - January 1968		
	Intelligence	**PSYOP**	**Coordination**
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	**+**	**+**	**+**
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	**-**	**+**	**+**
Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	**-**	**-**	**-**
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?	**+**	**+**	**+**
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	**+**	**+**	**+**
Total	**3**	**4**	**4**
	Total for Time Period		**11**

TABLE 8 – MACV ASSESSMENT AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION, 1965 - 1967

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

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Phase II Conclusions, January 1968 to June 1969

By the end of this phase, the situation in South Vietnam had undergone a seismic shift. The ARVN had performed well during the Tet Offensive, the VC had been defeated and were no longer an existential threat to the GVN, and pacification efforts were improving, as the GVN was gaining control over more of the countryside.[3] US combat losses were declining, and skyrocketing *Chieu Hoi* numbers indicated that the GVN narrative was gaining strength. The government in South Vietnam was beginning to display the concrete results that form the foundation upon which an effective PSYOP program could be built. But on the grand-strategic level all their advances had been undermined by the juxtaposition of favorable prognostications emanating from MACV, DOD, and the White House in late 1967 and early 1968 with the scale, scope, and ferocity of the Tet Offensive.

During this phase of the war, MACV performed well in some areas of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination, but continued to struggle in others. MACV improved the J2's collection and analysis infrastructure, implemented several intelligence-related technologies to gain an advantage over the enemy, and created prioritization criteria to enhance efficiency. But, despite all these improvements, the failure of MACV J2 to anticipate the scope and scale of the Tet Offensive proved disastrous. MACV remained defensive about its intelligence estimates and continued to pursue order-of-battle analysis to the neglect of qualitative counterinsurgency estimates.

[3] George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 85.

MACV also made several improvements in its psychological operations programs. PSYOP agencies and organizations reacted well to the Tet Offensive, developed new measures to assess the effectiveness of their programs, sought advice from external entities, took action on internal and external studies, and created PSYOP Coordinating Committees at the provincial level and US/FWMAF PSYOP operation centers in each CTZ to coordinate psychological operations. Nevertheless, MACV continued to struggle with a lack of effective evaluation criteria, inappropriate command emphasis, inadequate integration with operational planning, a lack of logistical support, and an overly reactive approach.

MACV also succeeded in the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP in some areas but struggled in others. The KCS program was one example of positive coordination between intelligence and PSYOP, indicating MACV's openness to innovative ideas. The program that began locally was rapidly adopted nationally. It was also a concrete demonstration of the utility of the *Chieu Hoi* Program. Other ideas such as the "leaflet-at-a-glance" operation demonstrated the effective coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. However, MACV's coordination of intelligence and psychological operations too often represented a "pull" system on the part of PSYOP. In other words, no routine coordination process between intelligence and PSYOP had been established. Coordination efforts depended on particular circumstances and personalities, rather than on systemic staff processes.

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MACV met eight of the fifteen criteria of a learning organization in the interactions of MACV J2, J3-PD, JUSPAO and PSYOP, the overall rating of these interactions during the period January 1968 to June 1969 was **Marginally Effective.** (See Table 3 and12). This represents a discernable degradation of learning from that observed during Phase I.

Level of Effectiveness	Score for Each Level	Total Score for the Period
Very Effective	5 of 5	14-15 of 15
Somewhat Effective	4 of 5	11-13 of 15
Marginally Effective	3 of 5	8-10 of 15
Ineffective	2 of 5	4-7 of 15
Dysfunctional	1 or 0 of 5	0-3 of 15

TABLE 3 – QUANTIFICATION OF GARVIN'S LEARNING CRITERIA

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Garvin's Learning Questions	January 1968 - July 1969		
	Intelligence	PSYOP	Coordination
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	+	+
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	-	+	/
Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	-	-	-
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?	+	-	-
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	+	/
Total	**3**	**3**	**2**
	Total for Time Period		**8**

TABLE 12 – MACV ASSESSMENT AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION, 1968 - 1969

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

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Phase III Conclusions, June 1969 to December 1971

The changes brought about by the Vietnamization of the war provide another perspective from which to consider MACV as a learning organization. As with the previous phases of the war, MACV performed well in some areas and struggled in others. However, MACV's overall performance during this phase was a marked improvement over the previous phase due largely to its conduct of Operation Keystone.

In its execution of the intelligence function, MACV did several things correctly. First, it transferred technology, responsibility, and assets to RVNAF without a significant loss, compromise, or degradation of productivity. This process included a 181-day period during which nearly all MI unit commanders were replaced. Second, MACV worked with the JGS to correct shortcomings identified during the intelligence transition to the ARVN. Finally, MACV ensured that lessons learned about intelligence were included in the Army's latest intelligence manual. Nevertheless, challenges remained. MACV J2 continued to concentrate on quantifiable results, leading to counting caches, pacified villages, and the numbers of intelligence reports it created. MACV also continue to rely heavily on technological solutions to its intelligence collection requirements. Finally, intelligence personnel struggled to assist the ARVN with overcoming internal coordination problems between the ARVN G-2 and G-3 sections.

MACV's execution of PSYOP remained largely the same as during the previous phases, except for the marked improvement during Operation

Keystone. The biggest accomplishment during Keystone was the transition of the control of psychological operations to the GVN and the successful redeployment of PSYOP personnel and equipment. MACV also passed lessons learned to the institutional Army, which were reflected in the latest doctrinal update for psychological operations.

But MACV continued to struggle with many of the same problems it had in the previous phase of the war. PSYOP lacked useful measures of effectiveness, adequate command emphasis, effective logistical support, and properly trained personnel. Commanders also continued to view psychological operations as something separate and distinct from combat operations, which contributed to their unrealistic expectations about PSYOP's potential.

During this phase of the war, MACV successfully coordinated intelligence and PSYOP at both the strategic and tactical levels, but did not begin any new programs. The changes MACV instituted to the *Chieu Hoi* and KCS programs in the previous phase continued to work effectively throughout this phase. During Operation Keystone, MACV initially failed to coordinate intelligence and PSYOP effectively, but quickly learned from its mistakes and applied that learning to subsequent operations. The change in responsibility for PSYOP from the G3/S3 to the G5/S5 also facilitated more effective coordination between intelligence and PYSOP.

Overall, MACV rated a 12.5 of 15 (see Table 18) for this phase, and thus earned the rating of **Somewhat Effective** as a learning organization. This was a discernable improvement over the previous rating of **Marginally Effective**.

Level of Effectiveness	Score for Each Level	Total Score for the Period
Very Effective	5 of 5	14-15 of 15
Somewhat Effective	4 of 5	11-13 of 15
Marginally Effective	3 of 5	8-10 of 15
Ineffective	2 of 5	4-7 of 15
Dysfunctional	1 or 0 of 5	0-3 of 15

TABLE 3 – QUANTIFICATION OF GARVIN'S LEARNING CRITERIA

Garvin's Learning Questions	June 1969 - December 1971		
	Intelligence	PSYOP	Coordination
Did MACV have a defined learning agenda for intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	+	+
Was MACV open to discordant information regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	-	+	+
Did MACV avoid repeated mistakes with intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	/	+
Did MACV avoid the loss of critical knowledge when key people from intelligence and PSYOP left the command?	+	/	+
Did MACV act on what it knew regarding intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination?	+	/	+
Total	**4**	**3.5**	**5**
	Total for Time Period		**12.5**

TABLE 18 – MACV ASSESSMENT AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION, 1969 - 1971

"+" – met criterion (1)
"/" – partially met criterion (.5)
"-" – did not meet criterion (0)

Summary Findings

In sum, one finds by conducting a qualitative analysis of MACV's performance as a learning organization during the Vietnam War in the areas of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination and applying Garvin's criteria for a learning organization to that analysis that MACV's performance as a learning organization was episodic. During the build-up of forces and transition to major combat operations it was **Somewhat Effective**. In the period before, during, and after the Tet Offensive, it was **Marginally Effective**. During the period of Vietnamization, it reverted to being **Somewhat Effective**. What follows is a recapitulation of the evidence concerning MACV's successes and failures at learning in the three areas here studied.

Successes and Failures

During the three phases of the Vietnam War examined by this study, MACV had both successes and failures in its execution of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination. These successes and failures fall within the three broad categories of *innovation, infrastructure, and institutionalization.*

Innovation includes changes in technology, methodology, and implementation. *Infrastructure* includes changes to force structure (MTOE), logistical support, and command relationships. *Institutionalization* includes bureaucratic, doctrinal, and policy changes. We will now examine the successes and failures MACV had in the innovation, infrastructure, and institutionalization of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination.

Intelligence

Over the course of the six years examined by this study, MACV had several intelligence successes. It experimented with various intelligence collecting and processing technologies that mitigated its disadvantage in manpower. Developments such as infrared devices, night-vision technology, radar improvements, and UGS were but a few examples. The MACV J2 also effectively conducted liaison with and mentorship of the South Vietnamese JGS. MACV developed an excellent understanding of the VC/NVA order of battle, often down to the individual level. The command's infrastructure changes were equally impressive. The intelligence function grew rapidly during the initial phase, maintained is structure during the second phase, and redeployed nearly as rapidly in the third phase - all while not allowing an appreciable decline in the volume of intelligence assessments produced. Finally, MACV institutionalized its approach to intelligence, which mitigated some of the adverse effects of the one-year tours. MACV methodically collected, processed, and shared shared lessons-learned insights both within and without the command. The latter were ultimately reflected in Army doctrinal changes. MACV also created a robust infrastructure within South Vietnam, which consisted of organizations such as the PIOCC, DIOCC, CICV, CDEC, CMIC, all of which were created to fuse, produce, and share actionable, timely intelligence.

MACV's intelligence function also had its share of failures with innovation, infrastructure, and institutionalization. The concentration on

enemy order of battle kept MACV from collecting and analyzing those elements of intelligence vital to a counterinsurgency. This focus on the order of battle contributed to a concentration on counting and measuring data in an attempt to discern progress. Such myopia was partially responsible for the creation of separate intelligence infrastructure within both CORDS and the 4th PSYOP Group. MACV intelligence relied too much on technology, to the detriment of other forms and avenues of intelligence collection. Regarding infrastructure, while the force structure grew rapidly, it was often filled with personnel who lacked the requisite skills. These individuals required extensive on-the-job training, which reduced productivity. Neither the institutional Army nor other national-level agencies helped MACV, as both McChristian and Davidson lamented the lack of Vietnamese experts available in academia, the Army, or other agencies.

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PSYOP

A letter from the 4th PSYOP Group commander, Colonel Frank S. Westing, published in the PSYOP magazine *Credibilis* in the summer of 1971, just a few short months prior to the inactivation of the 4th PSYOP Group, opined that "Perhaps at times the PSYOP role in Vietnam has been imperfectly understood," but that this was not surprising given the "high-order intellectual discipline, the complete nature and complexities of which have not yet been fully grasped even by the most learned scholars in the field of communications

research."[1] While his observation about the complexity of PSYOP was astute, it did not tell the entire story.

Psychological operations are, in and of themselves, rarely decisive. For PSYOP to be effective, they must be coupled with a tangible reality. Thus, as was seen with *Hoi Chanh* rates, when *Chieu Hoi* appeals were made in conjunction with effective combat operations, the desertions were much higher. General William E. DePuy, who served as MACV's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations in 1964 and as the Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division, in 1966 observed, "You can sit and write extremely clever leaflets, broadcasts and appeals, and nothing will happen unless you combine it with a tremendous amount of military pressure."[2] PSYOP and combat are complementary. This was too frequently not the case at MACV, which viewed PSYOP as a separate function.

MACV innovated in its approach to PSYOP by extensively testing leaflet dispersal patterns to ensure the precision of leaflet drops and by adopting new technologies such as Earlyword. MACV's PSYOP infrastructure increased dramatically during the first phase, maintained during the second, and rapidly decreased during the third. MACV personnel embraced radio and television, of which the latter was a relatively new mass-media technology, enhanced the radio infrastructure, and built the entire television infrastructure in South

[1] 4th PSYOP Group, "To the Men of 4th PSYOP Group", *Credibilis*, Summer 1971, 5.
[2] Quoted from William E. DePuy, "Lecture of Opportunity - 'Vietnam'" Selected Papers of William E. DePuy, 51 See Thom Duffy Frohnhoefer, "General Creighton Abrams and the Operational Approach of Attrition in the Vietnam War." Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 2013. http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a583871.pdf, 22

Vietnam. The PSYOP function at MACV supported *Chieu Hoi*, the County Fair Program, and A/V teams in support of cordon-and-search operations. MACV also sought advice from academics and other external sources to examine its approach to PSYOP messaging, target audiences, and assessment of progress. MACV learned during Operation Keystone, and by the end of the operation was conducting active PSYOP while transitioning responsibility and equipment to the ARVN. MACV sought to institutionalize PSYOP by publishing directives, issuing JUSPAO Policy Letters, and collecting and disseminating lessons-learned reports. MACV also provided information and recommendations on PSYOP doctrinal updates and developed training for newly arrived personnel such as the PSYOP handbook and the PSYOP leaflet catalog. The planning, production, and delivery of leaflets for new PSYOP programs was an extensive undertaking, which was well supported logistically.

MACV struggled, however, with many aspects of its psychological operations program. The command continued to re-learn the lesson about the efficacy of face-to-face operations, relying instead on technical means of delivery. MACV personnel failed to develop effective means of measuring PSYOP's performance. MACV analysts continued to equate leaflet drops, aerial broadcasts, and radio and television broadcasts with the intended audience's having received, absorbed, and accepted the message being transmitted. The command failed to grasp the concept that data on leaflets, newspapers, posters, and hours of airtime did not measure success. MACV leaders held unrealistic expectations for PSYOP's capabilities, limitations, and employment

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principles. Commanders tended to believe that PSYOP should have nearly instantaneous results and thus resorted to using gimmicks to generate “quick wins.” Several commanders displayed a marked ignorance of human psychology and a concomitant prejudice against the attributes of the Vietnamese psyche. MACV largely failed to integrate PSYOP into either its combat or civic action missions. This failure was despite the clear guidance issued both by Westmoreland and MACV Directive 525-3.[3] The successes MACV had in this area were episodic and seemingly forgotten during successive personnel rotations. In the area of infrastructure, MACV never managed to institutionalize both the personnel and maintenance systems required to support PSYOP. Too few PSYOP officers possessed specific psychological operations experience. The Army schools did not help. Even the officers who were school-trained in PSYOP lacked many of the requisite skills needed in South Vietnam. During the entire war, PSYOP maintenance support fell outside of normal Army supply channels and was not effectively managed or tracked, resulting in both excessive shortages of equipment and the spare parts needed to fix broken equipment. Inappropriate command emphasis by Westmoreland and neglect by Abrams was a major factor here. Westmoreland's decision to not form a J7 at MACV and his insistence on writing his own messages undermined his intended effect. Abrams’s lack of emphasis contributed to an overall lack of support for PSYOP. As for institutionalization,

[3] Military Assistance Command Vietnam. USMACV Directive 525-3, "Minimizing Non-Combatant Battle Casualties", 7 September 1965, Virtual Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech, Accessed 13 October 2014.

the majority of JUSPAO policy letters were reactive rather than anticipatory, undermining their effectiveness.

Coordination of PSYOP and Intelligence

MACV exhibited several innovations in its coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. The first were programs such as the KCSs and APTs. These innovate approaches toward the operationalization of intelligence and PYSOP worked very well at the tactical level. Despite Ambassador Komer's inappropriate direction of tactical PSYOP during the Tet Offensive, MACV's ability to adapt rapidly to changing conditions was evident in the targeting of the 9th NVA Division during Tet and the use of colored leaflets in support of intelligence requirements. By the end of 1971, MACV had also honed the use of interrogations to help determine the effectiveness of its PSYOP messages. MACV did not have much in the way of infrastructure development to support the integration of intelligence and PSYOP. Those changes that did occur happened within the intelligence and PSYOP functions respectively. Institutionally, MACV's creation of the CPOCs and the Combined JGS council in the last phase of the war indicated a grasp of the integration required for successful PSYOP to occur. The irony is that this particular realization came near the end of the US involvement in South Vietnam. The shift of responsibility for PSYOP from the G3/S3 to the G5/S5 was also an effective change. MACV displayed the quintessential characteristics of a learning organization during Operation Keystone, which indicated that MACV, as an

organization, was capable of learning from its mistakes, adapting to changing conditions, and implementing measures to exploit the initiative.

MACV's cutting-edge technological innovations sliced both ways, however, at times preventing the coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. For example, the MACV J2 collected and archived large volumes of data, but PSYOP units lacked the 3M readers required to exploit this resource. MACV lacked the command relationships and force structure needed for better coordination of intelligence and PSYOP. The dearth of personnel with the intelligence background required to assist PSYOP was detrimental to the mission. So, too, was the rapid turnover of personnel, which further eroded the institutional knowledge within MACV headquarters and subordinate units. One major institutional challenge for MACV was the philosophical differences with the GVN over the proper implementation of and audiences for psychological operations. Another problem for MACV was the underlying political, economic, and social situation in South Vietnam. As McNamara later observed, "we built a progressively more massive effort on an inherently unstable foundation. External military force cannot substitute for the political order and stability that must be forged *by* people *for* themselves."[4]

Trend Analysis

Over these three phases, several trends both facilitated MACV's noteworthy successes and contributed to MACV's failures.

[4] McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 333.

Trends Underpinning Successful Operations

Over the course of the war, MACV did several things well which indicate the command possessed some attributes of a learning organization. The first was an innovative approach to problem solving and the adoption of new technology. MACV sought to exploit the best of American technological and scientific innovations to help it fight the war. This openness to new ideas and possibilities was positive. So, too, was junior-leader initiative. A lieutenant, for example, developed the KCS. The ability of junior leaders to create and implement new programs was a sign of adaptability and openness on the part of MACV to new ways of thinking. Many commanders encouraged the use of calculated risk to learn and out-think the enemy. This is evident in the myriad lessons-learned reports in which junior personnel shared their experiences in order to better the organization. They were also allowed to try unorthodox approaches. With the exception of PSYOP maintenance, adequate logistical support was also a cornerstone of MACV's success. The command was able to move large amounts of men and material across the nation, enabling MACV to have both strategic and tactical flexibility not enjoyed by the VC and NVA.

Trends Underpinning Failures

Unfortunately for MACV, the failures during much of the war undermined the successes. These failures came not from malevolent intent, but from a disordered good. To understand this paradox, it is useful to borrow from G.K. Chesterton, the early 20th-century philosopher, poet, and historian. When he wrote about the seven deadly sins, he saw them as a disordered pursuit of a

good. For example, one should pursue leisure passionately but not pursue laziness; and one should think that fighting is often right, but that wrath is always wrong.[5] MACV personnel had a similar problem with their approach to the "good" things required to fight a successful war.

The first example is command emphasis, which is vital for successful PYSOP. But in MACV's implementation, such emphasis was too often inappropriate. In today's parlance, one could argue that MACV suffered in this instance from a climate of toxic leadership. A recent article by James Auvil is worth considering at some length because the anecdote he provides captures the syndrome at MACV for both intelligence and PSYOP, particularly during Westmoreland's tenure of command. Auvil dubs some leaders "Boxers."

> The prototypical Boxer policy is an over-reaction that fails to solve the problem coupled with metrics that fail to capture the impact relative to the need. If a Boxer wants to shade a picnic table, he/she doesn't buy an umbrella or move the table into nearby existing shade. The Boxer plants an oak tree and requires subordinates to report the daily growth rate in inches during the morning stand up meeting. The Boxer becomes frustrated at the dismal rate of progress and demands his staff make the tree grow faster. The staff understands that, much like organizational culture, this is a slow-growing hardwood and heroic measurement efforts won't make the tree grow faster. The tree needs time to grow, but staff members don't have the luxury of time, so they respond by measuring the oak in centimeters, which increases the daily status report number by 254% with no change in actual growth. Still frustrated by the lack of progress, the Boxer demands additional staff effort to make the tree grow faster. They switch to millimeters and include an additional 1000% increase in the number on their annual evaluations despite no change in actual growth.[6]

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[5] http://www.chesterton.org/the-deadly-sins/, accessed 16 April 2015.
[6] James Auvil, "Measure the Shade, Part I: A Prescription for Toxicosis", https://medium.com/the-smoking-gun/measure-the-shade-74cba4b982fd, accessed 12 March 2015.

This is almost a picture-perfect description of PSYOP during Westmoreland's tenure as MACV commander. PSYOP suffered the converse problem under Abrams, who gave little if any guidance about PSYOP. In the few recorded instances he spoke about PSYOP at all, it was with thinly veiled disdain.

The second disorder was the worship given to technology as a type of "Deus ex machina." Too often, MACV personnel tended to view technology *as* the solution, rather than as merely a tool to assist with the solution. This approach led to an intellectually lazy approach to how MACV solved problems with intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination. For intelligence, the focus became the collection of data for data's sake. For PSYOP, the focus became message saturation. The goal was a television in every home, and precision dispersal patterns for leaflets, rather than analysis concerning what the message should be and how it would be received. For the coordination of the two functions, MACV assumed the coordination was occurring and that the command did not have to create staff processes to facilitate such coordination.

The third problem was that MACV fought the Vietnam War using a conventional-warfare paradigm, which it misapplied to counterinsurgency operations. This mentality led MACV to view PSYOP, civil affairs, and pacification as functions with a linear progression. Because MACV leaders lacked both an understanding of and lexicon for counterinsurgency, even when they spoke about the need for pacification, they were unable to apply anything but conventional-warfare measuring techniques. This misapplication led directly to two other problems: a "metric mentality," and a desire for immediate

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results. MACV measured the wrong things and sought success in volume of production rather than in, but difficult to assess, qualitative progress. Additionally, the need for quick results led to MACV's use of gimmickery on the part of PSYOP, and "technophilia" on the part of the intelligence.

The final factor was the demand that the Vietnamese fight the war in an American style. MACV personnel did not grasp the differences between the GVN and American approaches to intelligence and PSYOP. At the tactical level, American soldiers readily trained their ARVN counterparts. Vietnamese soldiers learned how to produce leaflets, maintain printing presses, and coordinate leaflet drops. However, the technical or "scientific" know-how did not translate into the "art" of how to use that know-how. Furthermore, the differing philosophies about the proper role of PSYOP between the two allies often colored American assessment of Vietnamese progress.

In sum, MACV succeeded in creating and employing the technical means of intelligence collection and PSYOP dissemination. The command relentlessly pursued lessons-learned, senior leader reports, and other means of collecting and disseminating best practices to improve its performance. MACV was also open to junior leader initiatives and managed an impressive logistical support system for US forces. However, the command relied too heavily on technology as the solution to its problems and believed too strongly in a management approach to war fighting. It attempted to fight the Vietnam War in a manner Antoine Bousquet described as *cybernetic*, where information could be used to

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bring order to chaos and where automation and prediction could be used to defeat one's enemies.[7]

Answering the Research Question

"What can be determined about MACV's performance as a learning organization by examining military intelligence, psychological operations and the coordination between the two within the headquarters?"

Several findings of this study situate it within the historiography of the war. MACV was able to learn as a headquarters, albeit imperfectly. MACV's learning tended to be through the lens of conventional warfare, rather than from a more complex framework of counterinsurgency. This did not mean the MACV was unaware of the nature of the conflict. Both Westmoreland and Abrams were well aware of the different wars fought simultaneously within South Vietnam. They simply applied techniques from how WWII successes were measured to the problems of Vietnam. Thomas Kuhn observed a similar phenomenon in his work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.*[8] A paradigm is a collection of shared beliefs about how to understand problems. It is the lens through which one filters information to make sense of the world. For MACV, the lens was conventional warfare and its associated linear progression toward an obtainable objective. The assumption that progress in a limited war could be measured and managed became a fundamental tenet of American policy in

[7] Antoine J. Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 106. Ibid., 126.
[8] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

South Vietnam. As McNamara later observed, "We failed to analyze our assumptions critically, then or later."[9] McNamara's business-model approach to warfare, coupled with the US Army's "can-do" attitude, was unable to interpret the shifting sands of South Vietnamese political and social instability. As Daddis puts it, "faith in the utility of force simply was too ingrained in a generation that believed the United States could achieve its policy goals once committed to war."[10] Perhaps Douglas Pike identified the root cause when he asked, "The question is, how far can foreigners, outsiders, go in a country in winning political struggle?"[11]

During Phase I, General Westmoreland's unrealistic expectation regarding immediate results for PSYOP programs indicated a conventional-warfare approach toward assessing effectiveness. During Phase II, the J2's preoccupation with enemy order-of-battle analysis and PSYOP's continued focus on counting leaflets implied MACV's continued use of a conventional-warfare paradigm to measure effectiveness. In Phase III, Operation Keystone indicated a conventional-warfare approach toward the transfer of technology, logistics, intelligence operations, and PSYOP to the South Vietnamese. MACV used measures of performance, rather than measures of effectiveness as benchmarks of progress. These conventional-warfare inclinations prevented MACV personnel from developing the lexicon necessary to articulate, understand, and assess what realistic progress in South Vietnam would look

[9] McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 33.
[10] Daddis, *Westmoreland's War*, 72.
[11] Ibid., 178

like. In the end, MACV's inability to break out of a conventional-warfare paradigm degraded its implementation of intelligence, PSYOP, and their coordination. As PSYOP units departed South Vietnam in December 1971, the VC/NVA no longer posed an existential threat to the GVN, the *Chieu Hoi* program had been a success, and the US had built almost from the ground up a mass-media infrastructure in South Vietnam. If the South Vietnamese Government could continue to develop and rely on external US support, it appeared to have a chance. And in the end, no amount of PSYOP - no matter how tactically effective - could bridge the gap and yield the required increase in popular support for the South Vietnamese government.

It is now appropriate to ask, "Where do these findings fit within the existing literature?" Based on the evidence examined in the course of this study, Nagl and Krepinevich's criticisms of the US Army are overly harsh. Army culture did not prevent MACV from learning. The Army culture was one of learning, as evidenced by its performance during Operation Keystone. Rather, the type of learning the Army did was too narrow in scope for the situation it faced. Furthermore, Lewis Sorley's characterizations of Westmoreland and Abrams are too harsh toward the former and too charitable toward the latter. Westmoreland got things right and got things wrong, but he was certainly *not* the general who lost the war in Vietnam. Conversely, Abrams did not always conduct a "better war." While he certainly performed his mission well, he performed poorly in several areas and missed opportunities to press his advantage. Most of the changes observed under Abrams' command

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came from the changes in the enemy situation in the aftermath of Tet and from the change of mission directed by President Nixon. These changes did not always come from Abrams' better grasp of the situation in South Vietnam. They stemmed also from the fundamental reality that his was a different war than Westmoreland's.

Michael Barger posited that commanders viewed PSYOP as a sideshow, rather than as a valuable combat multiplier. While this was true in certain instances, it was not universally so. Many commanders valued PSYOP, but they were disappointed in the results they observed because they harbored unrealistic expectations about the potential for instantaneous results. The artillery commander who named his artillery tubes "Chieu" and "Hoi" provided a pithy sound bite to future historians, but his attitude was not the norm.

The larger problem was that MACV attempted to use PSYOP to accomplish the nearly impossible. As Daddis notes, "the Army alone could not solve fundamental weaknesses of the Saigon government or bridge the chasm between the Vietnamese people and their political leadership. Tactical success, whether in combat or civic action, too often did not yield increases in popular support for the GVN."[12] Here MACV had little leverage. According to psychological research conducted by Elizabeth Reid, "Telling or forcing others to act in certain ways, even if done for their benefit, strips them of a sense of

[12] Daddis, "Eating Soup with a Spoon: The U.S. Army as a ``Learning Organization'' in the Vietnam War." *Journal Of Military History* 77, no. 1 (2013), 254.

agency and rarely leads to change."[13] The ultimate downfall of the mission in South Vietnam lies in the fundamental realities of the GVN's sovereignty and ineptitude. Daddis' work articulates this concept when he observes that "Whether is be hubris or naiveté, the reluctance to consider the limitations of US power abroad held lasting ramifications for American military strategy in South Vietnam."[14]

Perhaps the most important observation about MACV as a learning institution stems from the fact that warfare involves both art and science. MACV's ability to implement new technologies, build infrastructure, supply the war, maintain strategic and tactical mobility, and train the ARVN indicate that the command was successful in learning about the science of warfare. MACV possessed all of the tools required to fight the war. However, the rapid turnover of personnel, the inadequate training of new personnel, the lack of appreciation for the Vietnamese style of warfare, and the conventional paradigm through which commanders viewed the war stifled the creativity required for it to learn about the art. MACV used the tools at its disposal as a means unto themselves. The command lacked the *coup d'oeil* required to use those tools creatively. This is clear when observing the trends in MACV over the three phases of the war. In the first phase, MACV used the science of war to deploy forces and build the infrastructure with which to fight the war. Likewise, in the third phase when the primary mission changed to redeployment, MACV performed relatively well

[13] Elizabeth Reid, "A Future If One Is Still Alive, The challenge of the HIV Epidemic", in Jonathan Moore, *Hard Choices : Moral Dilemmas in Humanitarian Intervention*, (Lanham, Md, Rowman & Littlefield,1998), 284.
[14] Ibid., 179.

in its use of the science of war. In the second phase, however, when the art of war was at its greatest premium, MACV performed relatively poorly. The command was unable to fight creatively when required by the environmental mix of counterinsurgency and conventional warfare to do so. In short, MACV excelled at learning about the science of war in Vietnam, but failed to as for learning about the art.

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Answering Additional Questions

At the beginning of this study I asked several additional questions about the performance of intelligence and PSYOP at MACV. What follows reviews those questions and provides the answers to them.

If General Westmoreland's disappointment in PSYOP performance was deserved, was the root cause of the failure organizational dysfunction, inadequate doctrine, or something else such as cultural stereotyping?

Westmoreland's disappointment in the performance of PSYOP was largely due to his own misunderstanding as to the capabilities, limitations, and employment principles of psychological operations. His relentless pursuit of quantifiable measures of effectiveness coupled with his desire for rapid results, led to PSYOP's being unable to meet his expectations. His decision to be MACV's PSYOP officer created an organizational dysfunction within the headquarters that hindered proper staff integration of the PSYOP function.

Did PSYOP alter their tactics, techniques, and procedures based on the latest intelligence available?

Partially. PSYOP were altered based on available intelligence. That intelligence was, however, overly difficult to acquire. This led to inevitable delays and imperfections in PSYOP responses. PSYOP personnel actively sought access to intelligence and were open to receiving both internal and external reports about the efficacy of their operations. There were many examples in which changes to intelligence assessments altered the messages and means PSYOP used to engage the enemy. But they were not as effective as

they could and should have been had a more systematic effort been made to integrate them.

Did intelligence provide the necessary requirements for PSYOP to persuade the population effectively as to the worthiness of the RVN government and its allegiance?

No. The MACV intelligence function was almost single-minded in its pursuit of order-of-battle analyses. There were instances of intelligence products and analysis supporting psychological operations requirements. But these were episodic, of a lesser priority than order of battle information, and too often personality-based rather than delivered by a routine, bureaucratic process.

Did Westmoreland really believe in PSYOP?

Yes. Westmoreland whole-heartedly believed in PSYOP, which might be part of the reason for his deep disappointment. Westmoreland's belief was, however, misplaced. He believed that PSYOP could accomplish nearly impossible goals on an accelerated timeline.

Did Abrams really believe in PSYOP?

No. Abrams did not believe in the efficacy of psychological operations. The few, recorded comments he made about PSYOP were derisive and cynical. The dearth of material from Abrams is indicative of the relative emphasis he placed on the function.

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Suggestions for Future Research

Several areas examined in this study require further analysis. The first is the development of communications theory during the Vietnam War and the effect of that theory on the execution of psychological operations. The second is the US Army intelligence and PSYOP training institutes, both of which failed to provide adequately trained personnel for the mission in South Vietnam. It would also be worthwhile to examine the CGSC and Army War College curricula to determine the extent to which Army officers received instruction in the art and science of intelligence and PSYOP.

A more detailed study of MACV's lessons-learned program and senior-leader debriefings could determine the extent to which MACV's system of capturing exit reports from its senior leaders was successful at translating their observations and recommendations into actions. The reports were dutifully captured and disseminated, but there does not appear to have been any follow-up by the MACV staff on these recommendations. Finally, a study of the Vietnamese archives might reveal the extent to which US PSYOP affected NVA plans and the extent to which North Vietnamese acted to counter those operations. The post-Tet period would be a particularly important time to pursue this line of research.

In short, just as with many other eras, the Vietnam War represents a rich treasure trove for a wide variety of disciplines. This study has sought to add to our understanding of that war on the particular area of MACV's

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effectiveness as a learning organization dealing with three specific staff functions, but much work remains.

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Chronology

Major Events of 1965

8–9 Mar 1965	- 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines land near Da Nang
6 Apr 1965	- NSAM 328 authorizes US personnel to take offensive action to secure "enclaves" and to support the Army of the Republic of Vietnam
3–12 May 1965	- 3,500 men of the 173rd Airborne Brigade arrive in Vietnam
14 May 1964	- Formation of the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) announced in U.S. Embassy Instruction VN 186
28–30 June 1965	- 173rd Airborne Brigade commences first large-scale US offensive action in War Zone D
22 July 1965	- 1st Provisional PSYOP Detachment ordered to Vietnam by U.S. Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity Pacific (USABVAPAC)
27 July 1965	- Johnson decided to embark on a major ground war in Southeast Asia.[1]
2 September 1965	- 24th PSYOP Detachment (USARPAC) arrives in Qui Nhon.
23 Oct - 2 Nov 1965	- 1st Cavalry Division battles NVA in Ia Drang Valley
Nov 1965	- Widespread antiwar demonstrations in US
31 Dec 1965	- Total US strength in South Vietnam: 181,000

[1] McNamara, Robert S., and Brian VanDeMark. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam.* New York: Times Books, 1995.

Major Events of 1966

20 Jan 1966	- Intensive US-GVN psychological warfare campaign to encourage enemy defections under the *Chieu Hoi* program.[1]
24 Jan 1966	- An intensive psychological warfare campaign begins against NVA infiltrators along routes from NVN through Laos to RVN
24 Jan–6 Mar 1966	- Operation Masher/White Wing – largest search and destroy operation to date
31 January 1966	- US resumes bombing of North Vietnam
7 February 1966	- "Declaration of Honolulu" outlines joint US/GVN goals of military efforts and attacks on Hunger, Ignorance, and disease in Vietnam. - 6th PSYOP Battalion activated at Tan Son Nhut - Television formally begins in SVN.
10 February 1966	- 244th, 245th, and 246th Tactical Propaganda Companies activated at Nha Trang, Pleiku, and Bien Hoa respectively
4–8 March 1966	- Operation Utah – Marines' first major battle with PAVN near Quang Ngai
31 March 1966	- Record number of Chieu Hoi is 2,336
12 April 1966	- B-52s bomb targets in North Vietnam for the first time
3 August 1966	- Political Warfare Advisory Directorate redesignated Psychological Operations Directorate (MACPD), remained under supervision of ACofS, J-3
11 September 1966	- Elections held in RVN for Constituent Assembly
7 November 1966	- Advisory Committee for PSYOP comprised of senior representatives of JUSPAO, MACV, USAID, CAS and

[1] MACV, *Command History 1966*, 867.

	Embassy Political Section is established to advise Mission Command.
19 November 1966	- 19th PSYOP Company (Advice and Support) activated at Can Tho
30 November 1966	- 694.5 hours of aerial loudspeaker broadcast (highest monthly total). 1,803 PSYOP sorties were flown to accomplish this.[2]
31 December 1966	- Total US strength in South Vietnam: 385,000 - Total of 272 million leaflets over NVN and SVN this month. Exceeding any previous month's totals.

Major Events of 1967

8–26 January 1967	- Operation Cedar Falls
21 February 1967	- Dr. Bernard Fall killed by enemy mine while covering Operation CHINOOK II
22 February - 14 May 1967	- Operation Junction City – largest US operation to date – 22 battalions
28 February 1967	- COMNAVFOR establishes the Mekong Delta Mobile Riverine Force
15 March 1967	- LBJ announces AMB Ellsworth Bunker will replace AMB H.C. Lodge in Saigon.
April 1967	- COMUSMACV directed MACV ACofS J5 to conduct study on PSYOP structure and effectiveness
6 April 1967	- White House announces General Creighton W. Abrams, Jr. USA, as DEPCOMUSMACV
19 April 1967	- Prime Minister Ky announces National Reconciliation Program.
25 April 1967	- Westmoreland addresses annual Associated Press luncheon in New York.
28 April 1967	- Westmoreland addresses joint session of congress

[2] Ibid., 853.

4 May 1967	- Ambassador Robert W. Komer becomes Westmoreland's Deputy for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS); Abrams arrives Saigon.
11 May 1967	- Ambassador Bunker announces RD field programs will be under COMUSMACV
19 May 1967	- Abrams assumes duties DEPCOMUSMACV
28 May 1967	- Komer, assumes duties as DEPCOMUSMACV for CORDS
1 June 1967	- BG Phillip B, Davidson Jr., USA, assumes duty as ACofS MACV J2
20 June 1967	- GVN ceases censorship of Vietnamese Press.
22 June 1967	- 130-man company of 173rd Airborne Brigade virtually wiped out in an ambush at Dak To
July 1967	- Initiation of ARPA study on novel approaches to PSYOP in Vietnamese culture
August 1967	- Initiation of ARPA study on method of pretesting leaflets and other communications models and to develop operational situations for pretests.
22 September 1967	- 72.9% of registered voters turn out for lower house elections.
October 1967	- MACV J5 follow-up study on PSYOP
3 October 1967	- General Nguyen Van Thieu elected president of South Vietnam
29 November 1967	- President Johnson announces McNamara will resign to head World Bank.
1 December 1967	- 6th PSYOP Bn redesignated 4th PSYOP Grp - 244th PSYOP Co redesignated 7th PSYOP Bn - 246th PSYOP Co redesignated 8th PSYOP Bn - 19th PSYOP Co redesignated 10th PSYOP Bn
5 December 1967	- 245th PSYOP Co redesignated 6th PSYOP Bn

13 December 1967	– US Troop strength in RVN surpasses number in Korean War
20 December 1967	– Phoenix officially formed[3]
31 December 1967	- Total US military strength in South Vietnam: 486,000 - Total Chieu Hoi for year is 27,178 (compared to 20,242 in 1966) - 34.2% increase - US Casualties since 1 Jan 1961 KIA 16,106; WIA 100,830, MIA 584, PW 231.

Major Events of 1968

08 January 1968	- Kit Carson Scout (KCS) Program formally established by MACV
15 January 1968	-President Thieu delivers major address stating that the GVN must play a central role in any peace negotiations. (Statement caused by speculation regarding US unilateral peace initiative and talk of a coalition government including NLF). See 11 May 1968 decision.
20 Jan–14 Apr 1968	- Battle of Khe Sanh
30 Jan–26 Feb 1968	- Tet Offensive
30 Jan–7 Feb 1968	- Battle of Saigon
31 Jan–2 Mar 1968	- Battle of Hue
7 February 1968	- VC make first attempt to disrupt communications in attacking Phu Lam Telephone Relay station with mortar fire. Minor damage incurred.[4]
10–17 February 1968	- Weekly US casualties: 543 KIA; 2,547 WIA
February 1968	- Westmoreland requests 206,000 more troops
16 March 1968	- Civilians massacred at My Lai (not reported in Official History)

[3] Daddis, *Westmoreland's War,* 135.
[4] MACV, *Command History 1968, Volume II*, 1032.

31 March 1968	- LBJ announces a partial bombing halt and that he will not run again for President
10 April 1968	- LBJ announces that General Creighton Abrams will succeed Westmoreland as COMUSMACV in June
3–10 May 1968	- Highest US weekly hostile casualty toll of the war: 562 KIA
3 May 1968	- Terrorists explode a truck loaded with explosives outside Saigon AFRTS studio (3 civ killed, 30 wounded (5 US)). Broadcast service momentarily disrupted.[5]
5–13 May 1968	- North Vietnamese "Mini-Tet" offensive
11 May 1968	- US and NVN representatives in Paris agree to exclude representatives from other governments from initial conversations. (See Thieu Speech 15 Jan 1968)
12 May 1968	- GVN announces 9 May defection of VC regimental commander LTC Truong Trung Doan of VC 165th Rgt, 7th Div. Second highest-ranking defector to date.[6]
13 May 1968	- Delegates from the US and North Vietnam hold their first formal meeting in Paris
6 June 1968	- VC terrorists detonate at 200 lbs of C-4 and destroy Chinese "A Shau" newspaper plant in Cholon, Gia Dinh Prov (5 civs killed).[7]
9 June 1968	- GEN Creighton Abrams assumes temporary command of MACV.
16 June 1968	- CPT Phan Van Xuong, XO of VC Quyet Thang (273rd) Regt defects to ARVN forces in Co Vap, Cia Dinh Prov.
18 June 1968	- GVN announces largest enemy group surrender to date. 141 VC from 273d Regt, most of whom are NVN, surrender to ARVN SF and VNMC units in Gia Dinh Prov, just NE of Saigon.

[5] Ibid., 1044.
[6] Ibid., 1046.
[7] Ibid., 1049.

20 June 1968	- II FFORCEV becomes CMAC.
23 June 1968	- Khe Sanh combat base abandoned
3 July 1968	- GEN Abrams assume command of MACV.
11 July 1968	- GEN Andrew J. Goodpaster assumes duties of DEPCOMUSMACV
08 August 1968	- MACV announces 1,844 *Chieu Hoi* during the month of July, the highest monthly total since August 1967. Also, the number of officers and NCO returnees is more than double that of 1967, although overall figures are down.
17 Aug 1968	- Enemy documents captured by Allied forces indicate 17 August as day called for by COSVN for start of Third Offensive which is to last until November 1968 to influence US political conventions, quadrennial elections, raise NVA/VC morale, force GVN to accept a coalition government, and make SVN demand a halt to the bombing of the north.[8]
3 September 1968	- 3 VC terrorists explode a grenade in front of USAID headquarters on Le Van Duyet St in Saigon, wounding 7 civilians. Another grenade wounds 8 civilians in Saigon dock area.
9 September 1968	- 9 VC terrorists set off a 79-lb charge at GVN Information Office in Saigon's VI Precinct at 2030, destroying the building, killing 9 civilians and wounding 95.
30 September 1968	- battleship *New Jersey* goes into action, shelling PAVN positions in the DMZ first battleship action since July 1953 - MACV announces that all FWMAF commanders and the RVN JGS have signed AB-144, the Combined Campaign Plan for 1969. First time US, Vietnamese, and all Allies have signed the combined plan, formerly a joint US/RVN document. - CORDS announces secure population reaches 66. 8%. Just below all-time high of 67.20, reached just prior to the Tet Offensive.

[8] Ibid., 1056.

1 October 1968	- GVN begins national registration (ID Cards) for all citizens
5 October 1968	- GEN Duong Van "Big" Minh returns to Saigon from 4 years exile in Bangkok.
10 October 1968	- GVN denies coup was attempted against President Nguyen Van Thieu on 8 Oct despite full national armed forces alert that date.
21 October 1968	- In a surprise move MACV announces "C' Day -- the conversion of all current series 641 MPC. First mass currency conversion since the introduction of MPC into Vietnam in August 1965. $20 MPC note is introduced.
24 October 1968	- MACV announces that weekly US casualty figure for 7 days ending 19 Oct is 100 KIA, the lowest KIA figure in 14 months (12 Aug 67, when 82 US were KIA in that 7-day period).
28 October 1968	- President Johnson announces appointment of Komer as American Ambassador to Turkey. William E. Colby, Deputy Assistant for CORDS, will replace Komer.
31 October 1968	- Operation Rolling Thunder ends (922 aircraft lost during duration of operation)
1 November 1968	- Accelerated Pacification Campaign commences (APC)
1 November 1968	- Johnson orders complete cessation of air, ground, and naval bombardment of NVN to begin this date (announcement was 31 Oct in Washington)
2 November 1968	- Pres Thieu announces that GVN won't send delegates to Paris talks on 6 November because of NLF participation.
27 November 1968	- RVN agrees to send delegates to Paris peace negotiations. Saigon government will be lead negotiators, and VP Ky will lead them.
November 1968	- Richard M. Nixon elected president and promises "peace with honor"

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31 November 1968	- GVN releases 140 VC prisoners in simultaneous ceremonies in Saigon, Pleiku and Da Nang. All prisoners choose to remain in SVN.[9]
30 December 1968	- A record of 123 Hoi Chanh, return to GVN cause in IV CTZ.
31 December 1968	- Peak US annual combat deaths: 14,592; total US strength in South Vietnam: 536,000 - Chieu Hoi returnees for 1968 total 18,171 compared to 27,178 for 1967; a decrease of 33 percent. - US casualties since 1 Jan 196161 are KIA: 30,543.

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[9] Not 31 days in November, but this is how it is written in the record. Ibid., 1064.

Major Events of 1969

19 January 1969	- Negotiating teams meet for more than five hours in Paris and complete procedural discussions
20 January 1969	- Richard M. Nixon assumes office of President of the United States; Melvin R. Laird assumes office of SECDEF, Henry Cabot Lodge becomes head of US negotiating team in Paris.
25 January 1969	- Formal truce negotiations begin in Paris
31 January 1969	- Accelerated Pacification Campaign, which began on 1 November 1968 terminates. Goal of 5,000 *Hoi Chanh* exceeded by over 70 percent as 8,651 VC return to GVN cause during this period.
26 February 1969	- Enemy again conducts number of indirect fire harassing attacks against FW/RVN units and installations in all four CTZs in fourth day of current offensive. Population centers also receive indirect fire attacks. Approximately 50 locations, country-wide, are attacked. Several enemy ground probes also reported.
1 March 1969	- 1,005 Hoi Chanh reported for week ending 1 March. Highest number in one week since 7 March 1967.
5 March 1969	- 100,000 Hoi Chanh returned to GVN cause.
12 March 1969	- Nixon announced that LTG Goodpaster will assume duties as Supreme Allied Commander Europe.
14 March 1969	- BG Wheelock USA, assumed duties as MACJ3
16 March 1969	- Enemy conducts 65 mortar and rocket attacks on various military and population centers. Highest number of attacks since start of current offensive.
18 March 1969	- MENU B-52 bombings of Cambodia begin (would not terminate until Apr 1970)
22 March 1969	- Latest in a series of large caches discovered. Elements of 2d Bn, 3d Mar Regt participating in Operation MAINE CRAG discover enemy cache 17 km

	southeast of Khe Sanh, Quang Tri Province. Cache includes 356 tons of rice, 3. 5 tons of salt, 100 lbs lard, 1 ton canned food, 1 ton powdered milk, 2. 5 tons of TNT, 600 meters comm. wire, 3 trucks, 44 lZ2mm rockets, 9, 044 rounds 82mm mortar, 587 rounds 60mm mortar, 3,503 rounds RPG, 7,500 rounds 12. 7mmx ammo, 100 rounds 57mm, 854,280 rounds small arms ammo, 339 I/W, and 13 C/S.
24 March 1969	- LTG Rosson to replace LTG Goodpaster as DEPCOMUSMACV
29 March 1969	- 1,043 Hoi Chanh for 23-29 March. Highest number for one week since March 1967.
29 March 1969	- US combat deaths for the week raise the total to 33,641 KIA – more than KIA in the Korean War
31 March 1969	- BG E. Bautz, Jr., USA assumes duties as MACJ3.
1 April 1969	- Melvin Laird announces B-52 strikes will be reduced from 1,800 to 1,600 per month due to reaction in defense spending. Each B-52 sortie cost approximately $33,000.
30 April 1969	- Peak US troop strength in South Vietnam: 543,482
1 May 1969	- BG William E. Potts, USA, assumes duties as MACJ2.
11 May 1969	- GEN Abrams departs for Washington, DC to confer with President Nixon.
10–20 May 1969	- Battle of Hamburger Hill
2 June 1969	- Hoi Chanh for 1969 at 18,758 and now exceed the 1968 total of 18,171.
1 June –2 July 1969	- Siege of Ben Het. Rallier states that if Ben Het can be occupied, enemy will claim another Dien Bien Phu - object is to support the Paris talks.
8 June 1969	- President Nixon meets with President Thieu and General Abrams at Midway; announces the planned withdrawal of 25,000 American combat troops start of Vietnamization

11 June 1969	- DOD announces that troops to be redeployed will include both combat and combat support units.
6 July 1969	- A person, claiming to be a VC captain, contacts a USN PBR and states he has 300 VC who want to Chieu Hoi. Arrangements are completed by 44th SZ and Border Control Center and by end of the day a total of 231 persons had crossed with a total of 108 individual and 14 crew served weapons. Incident occurs 18 km northwest of Tri Ton, Chau Doc Province.
15 July 1969	- 15 GVN announces that more than 1, 000 dissident soldiers have rallied to the government since 25 June. The 600 KKK and 400-500 Hoa Hao who rallied piecemeal over the last three weeks have been officially accepted by the Ministry of Chieu Hoi as ralliers.
30 July 1969	- President Nixon arrives in RVN for discussions with President Thieu and with US embassy and military officials.
12 August 1969	-149 enemy initiated attacks by fire country-wide. Viewed as significant increase, because 68 incidents are normally considered significant.
26 August 1969	- An unknown number of suspected VC terrorists throw four hand grenades into a building in which a meeting between villagers and RVN RD cadre was being conducted 8 km northwest of Phu Cat, Binh Dinh Province. The resulting explosions kill 24 VN civilians and wound 81 others, in terms of casualties, this is the worst single terrorist act of the year and one of the worst recorded in the war.
27 August 1969	- Number of Hoi Chanh surpasses the 30,000 mark.
29 August 1969	- Withdrawal of first 25,000 troops completed
4 September 1969	- Ho Chi Minh dies
10 September 1969	- GEN Abrams departs RVN for meetings with President Nixon in Washington

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16 September 1969	- President Nixon announces that he will withdraw an additional 35,000 troops. Authorized troop ceiling will be 484,000
02 October 1969	- US casualties (21-27 September) are lowest in more than two years. They include 95 KIA.
09 October 1969	- US casualties (28 September - 04 October) lowest in nearly three years. Include 64 KIA.
15 October 1969	- "Moratorium" – massive antiwar demonstrations in the United States, along with Geneva, Paris, Rome.
21 October 1969	- 1,310 Hoi Chanh for week of 12-18 October. Second highest weekly total since the inception of the program. - US casualties for week of 12-18 Oct include 78 KIA.
4 November 1969	- President Nixon's major Vietnam policy address to the nation is heard live by forces in RVN.
10 November 1969	- GVN announces Hoi Chanh rate passes the 40,000 mark.
15 November 1969	- Anti-war demonstrations occur in the US, second in a series scheduled for remainder of the year.
15 November 1969	- 20 helicopters destroyed in attack on 4th Infantry Division's Camp Radcliffe at An Khe
21 November 1969	- Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, US representative to Paris Peace Talks, announces resignation effective 8 Dec.
24 November 1969	- DA announces general courts-martial of 1LT William L. Calley, Jr. For alleged My Lai Hamlet massacre of 109 Vietnamese in Mar 1968.
27 November 1969	- Phase II redeployment of 35,000 exceeded. US in country strength is below 484,000.
15 December 1969	- President Nixon announces that an additional 50,000 American troops will be withdrawn by 15 April 1970
18 December 1969	- General Abrams departs RVN for conferences with President Nixon

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21 December 1969	- Thailand announces that it will withdraw its 12,000-man contingent from South Vietnam
31 December 1969	- US troop strength in South Vietnam: 483,326. US casualties since 1 Jan 1961 are 37,270 KIA. - Hoi Chanh for the year are 47,023 compared with 18,171 for the previous year. An increase of 257 percent.

Major Events of 1970

18 March 1970	- General Lon Nol ousts Prince Norodom Sihanouk and seizes power in Cambodia
27 March 1970	- South Vietnamese forces, supported by US helicopters, attack Communist base camps across the Cambodian border
4 April 1970	- An estimated 50,000 persons gather in Washington, DC, to demonstrate support for President Nixon's conduct of the war in Vietnam
11 April 1970	- Senators Frank Church and John Sherman Cooper propose an amendment forbidding the funding of American ground operations in Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos
1 May–30 Jun 1970	- Cambodian Incursion
2 May 1970	- Antiwar demonstrations break out on a number of US college campuses
4 May 1970	- Four students fatally shot during protest at Kent State University; additional protests break out at 400 other colleges
15 October 1970	- President Nixon announces that a further 40,000 American troops would be withdrawn by the end of the year
21 November 1970	- Raid on Son Tay POW Camp - US warplanes carry out the heaviest and most sustained bombing of North Vietnam since 1 Nov 1968

	– 200 fighter-bombers and 100 support aircraft take part
30 December 1970	- US Navy ends its four-year role in inland waterway combat and turns over mission to South Vietnamese Navy
31 December 1970	- Congress repeals Tonkin Gulf Resolution; US military strength in Vietnam: 335,000

Major Events of 1971

30 January –6 April 1971	- Operations Dewey Canyon and Lam Son 719 (Laos Campaign)
7 April 1971	- President Nixon announces that 100,000 American troops will leave South Vietnam by the end of the year
16 April 1971	- 10th PSYOP Battalion inactivated
24 April 1971	- 500,000 antiwar protesters converge upon Washington. DC; 150,000 take part in a similar demonstration in San Francisco
26 June 1971	- Last Marine combat unit departs South Vietnam
	- 8th PSYOP Battalion inactivated
30 June 1971	- 6th PSYOP Battalion inactivated
8–9 July 1971	- Last US positions along DMZ turned over to ARVN
2 October 1971	– 4th PSYOP Group inactivated
8 October 1971	- Operation Jefferson Glenn concluded – final major US operation in Vietnam by 8 battalions from 101st Airborne Division
12 November 1971	- President Nixon announces that an additional 45,000 American troops will leave South Vietnam during December and January
21 December 1971	- 7th PSYOP Battalion inactivated; last PSYOP headquarters departs Vietnam

1973

29 March 1973	- MACV closes down and last US troops depart South Vietnam; only military contingent remaining is Defense Attaché Office (limited to 50 military positions)

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Abbreviations

AAR	After Action Report
ACofS	Assistant Chief of Staff
ACTIV	Army Concept Team in Vietnam
ADP	Automated Data Processing
ADSRS	Automated Document Storage and Retrieval System
AFRTS	Armed Forces Ratio and Television Network
AFVN	American Forces Vietnam Network
AIK	Assistance in Kind
AO	Area of Operations
AP	Armed Propaganda
APC	Accelerated Pacification Campaign
APT	Armed Propaganda Team
ARPA-RDFU-V	Advanced Research Projects Agency, Research and Development Field Unit, Vietnam
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
B&VA	Broadcasting and Visual Activity
CDEC	Combined Document Exploitation Center
CHICOM	Chinese Communist
CHP	*Chieu Hoi* (Open Arms) Program
CICV	Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific
CJCS	Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff

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CJGS	Chief Joint General Staff
CMAC	Capital Military Assistance Command
CMEC	Combined Materiel Exploitation Center
CMIC	Combined Military Interrogation Center
CofS	Chief of Staff
CORDS	Civil Operations and Revolutionary (also "Rural") Development Support
COMUSMACV	Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
CORDS	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development
COSVN	Central Office for South Vietnam
CTZ	Corps Tactical Zone
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)
F2F	Face to Face
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FF	Field Force
FFORCEV	Field Force Vietnam (also FFV)
FWMAF	Free World Military Assistance (or Armed) Forces
GPWD	General Political Warfare Department
GVN	Government of Vietnam (South Vietnam)
HES	Hamlet Evaluation System
ICEX	Infrastructure Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JGS	Joint General Staff (RVNAF)

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JUSPAO	Joint United States Public Affairs Office
KIA	Killed in Action
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MACCORDS	Military Assistance Command Civil Operations and Revolutionary (or Rural) Development Support
MACJ3-11	Psychological Operations Directorate of the Military Assistance Command
MACOI	Military Assistance Command, Office of Information
MACPD	Military Assistance Command Psychological Operations Directorate
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MAF	Marine Amphibious Force
MEDCAP	Medical Civil Assistance Program
MICH	Ministry of Information and *Chieu Hoi*
MILCAP	Military Civic Action Program
MILPHAP	Military Province Hospital Assistance Program
MOI	Ministry of Information (GVN)
MPC	Military Payment Certificates
MR1, 2, 3, 4	Military Region One, Two, Three, Four
MSUG	Michigan State University Vietnam Advisory Group (also known as Michigan State University Group)
MTT	Mobile Training Team
NIC	National Interrogation Center
NLD	New Life Development
NLF	National Liberation Front (Viet Cong)
NP	National Police

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NVA	North Vietnamese Army
NVN	North Vietnam
OJT	On-the-Job Training
OPPR	Office of Policy, Plans, and Research, JUSPAO
ORLL	Operations (or Operational) Report – Lessons Learned
OSS	Office of Strategic Services (WW II)
OWI	Office of War Information (WW II)
PAD	Public Administration Division, USAID
PAVN	People's Army of Vietnam (North Vietnam)
PDC	Propaganda Development Center
PF	Popular Force
PLA/PLAF	People's Liberation Army / Armed Forces (Viet Cong)
POD	Psychological Operations Division (or Directorate) (of CORDS)
POET	Psychological Operations Exploitation Team
POLWAR	Political Warfare
POW (or PW)	Prisoner of War
PRU	Provincial Reconstruction Unit
PSYACT	Psychological Action
PSYOP	Psychological Operations (also PSYOPS, psyops, or PsyOps)
PSYWAR	Psychological Warfare
RD	Revolutionary (later Rural) Development
RF	Regional Force
RVN	Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (South Vietnam)

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SFG	Special Forces Group
SVN	South Vietnam
TA	Target Audience
TAOR	Tactical Area of Responsibility
TDY	Temporary duty
TOE	Table of Organization and Equipment
TSN	Tan Son Nhut
USABVAPAC	US Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity Pacific
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USARV	United States Army, Vietnam
USIA	United States Information Agency
USIS	United States Information Service
USMACV	U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
USSFV	United States Special Forces, Vietnam
USOM	U.S. Embassy's United States Operations Mission
VC	Viet Cong
VCI	Viet Cong Infrastructure
VIS	Vietnamese Information Service (South Vietnam)
VN	Vietnam or Vietnamese
VNAF	Vietnamese Air Force (South Vietnam)
VOA	Voice of America
VOF	Voice of Freedom
VTVN	Vietnam National Radio

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