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# A LOOK AT THE VC CADRES: DINH TUONG PROVINCE, 1965-1966

D. W. P. Elliott and C. A. H. Thomson

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# A LOOK AT THE VC CADRES: DINH TUONG PROVINCE, 1965-1966

(10) D. W. P. Elliott and C. A. H. Thomson

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## FOREWORD

This report is one of a series of Rand studies that examine the organization, operations, motivation, and morale of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces that fought in South Vietnam.

Between August 1964 and December 1968 The Rand Corporation conducted approximately 2400 interviews with Vietnamese who were familiar with the activities of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army. Reports of those interviews, totaling some 62,000 pages, were reviewed and released to the public in June 1972. They can be obtained from the National Technical Information Service of the Department of Commerce.

The release of the interviews has made possible the declassification and release of some of the classified Rand reports derived from them. To remain consistent with the policy followed in reviewing the interviews, information that could lead to the identification of individual interviewees was deleted, along with a few specific references to sources that remain classified. In most cases, it was necessary to drop or to change only a word or two, and in some cases, a footnote. The meaning of a sentence or the intent of the author was not altered.

The reports contain information and interpretations relating to issues that are still being debated. It should be pointed out that there was substantive disagreement among the Rand researchers involved in Vietnam research at the time, and contrary points of view with totally different implications for U.S. operations can be found in the reports. This internal debate mirrored the debate that was then current throughout the nation.

A complete list of the Rand reports that have been released to the public is contained in the bibliography that follows.

(CRC, BJ: May 1975)

## Bibliography of Related Rand Reports

For a description of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Project and interviewing process, the reader should first consult W. Phillips Davison, *User's Guide to the Rand Interviews in Vietnam*, R-1024-ARPA, March 1972.

These reports can be obtained from The Rand Corporation.


RM-4507/3 Viet Cong Motivation and Morale in 1964: A Preliminary Report, J. C. Donnell, G. J. Pauker, J. J. Zasloff, March 1965.

RM-4517-1 Some Impressions of the Effects of Military Operations on Viet Cong Behavior, L. Goure, August 1965.

RM-4552-1 Evolution of a Vietnamese Village -- Part I: The Present, After Eight Months of Pacification, R. M. Pearce, April 1965.

RM-4692-1 Evolution of a Vietnamese Village -- Part II: The Past, August 1945 to April 1964, R. M. Pearce, April 1966.

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RM-4830-2 Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: The Special Case of Chieu Hoi, J. M. Carrier, C.A.H. Thomson, May 1966.

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RM-5013-1 A Profile of the PAVN Soldier in South Vietnam, K. Kellen, June 1966.

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RM-5163/2 Origins of the Insurgency in South Vietnam, 1954-1960: The Role of the Southern Vietminh Cadres, J. J. Zasloff, May 1968.

RM-5239-1 Insurgent Organization and Operations: A Case Study of the Viet Cong in the Delta, 1964-1966, M. Anderson, M. Arnsten, H. Averch, August 1967.

RM-5267/2 Some Observations on Viet Cong Operations in the Villages, W. P. Davison, May 1968.

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RM-5353-1 The War in the Delta: Views from Three Viet Cong Battalions, M. Gurtov, September 1967.

RM-5414-1 Viet Cong Cadres and the Cadre System: A Study of the Main and Local Forces, M. Gurtov, December 1967.

RM-5423-1 Viet Cong Logistics, L. P. Holliday, R. M. Gurfield, June 1968.

RM-5446-1 An Evaluation of Chemical Crop Destruction in Vietnam, R. Betts, F. Denton, October 1967.

RM-5450-1 A Statistical Analysis of the U.S. Crop Spraying Program in South Vietnam, A. J. Russo, October 1967.

RM-5462-1 A View of the VC: Elements of Cohesion in the Enemy Camp in 1966-1967, K. Kellen, November 1969.

RM-5486-1 Viet Cong Recruitment: Why and How Men Join, J. C. Donnell, December 1967.

RM-5487-1 The Viet Cong Style of Politics, N. Leites, May 1969.

RM-5522-1 Inducements and Deterrents to Defection: An Analysis of the Motives of 125 Defectors, L. Goure, August 1968.

RM-5533-1 The Insurgent Environment, R. M. Pearce, May 1969.

RM-5647 Volunteers for the Viet Cong, F. Denton, September 1968.

RM-5788 Pacification and the Viet Cong System in Dinh Tuong: 1966-1967, D.W.P. Elliott, W. A. Stewart, January 1969.

RM-5799 The Viet Cong in Saigon: Tactics and Objectives During the Tet Offensive, V. Pohle, January 1969.

RM-5848 Documents of an Elite Viet Cong Delta Unit: The Demolition Platoon of the 514th Battalion -- Part One: Unit Composition and Personnel, D.W.P. Elliott, M. Elliott, May 1969.

RM-5849 Documents of an Elite Viet Cong Delta Unit: The Demolition Platoon of the 514th Battalion -- Part Two: Party Organization, D.W.P. Elliott, M. Elliott, May 1969.

RM-5850 Documents of an Elite Viet Cong Delta Unit: The Demolition Platoon of the 514th Battalion -- Part Three: Military Organization and Activities, D.W.P. Elliott, M. Elliott, May 1969.

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RM-6131-1 Conversations with Enemy Soldiers in Late 1968/Early 1969: A Study of Motivation and Morale, K. Kellen, September 1970.

RM-6375-1 Rallying Potential Among the North Vietnemese Armed Forces, A Sweetland, December 1970.

## PREFACE

Since July 1964, The RAND Corporation has been engaged in research on Viet Cong motivation and morale, mainly through interrogations of prisoners and defectors. The research is sponsored jointly by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs and the Advanced Research Projects Agency.

At the suggestion of MAC/V, RAND agreed in June 1964 to establish a team in one province to conduct interviews as part of a pilot study in support of psychological warfare activities at the province level. As part of its broad program for interviewing VC captives and defectors, carried out all over South Vietnam, RAND set up a special team in Ding Tuong Province. RAND was asked and agreed to concentrate on Dinh Tuong because an unusual combination of circumstances gave promise that, with cooperation from both GVN and U.S. government agencies, it would be possible to launch a sustained and intensive program of interviewing designed to reveal the mentality of ralliers, as one contribution to improved psychological warfare activities in the province. In addition, the Dinh Tuong program is expected to show how interviewing can be best integrated with psychological operations under the special conditions of this province, and to indicate possible ways of improving the use of interviews for such operations elsewhere. Meanwhile, it seems appropriate to use the material gathered for the more general purposes of exploring the institutional framework within which the VC operates, and developments in cadre recruitment, organization, functional differentiations, and attitudes,

with special attention to frictions and vulnerabilities.

The present study is based mainly on 113 interviews with former VC and persons under VC control, who worked or lived in Dinh Tuong Province and who were interviewed there during the last half of 1965 and early 1966. Of the interviewees, all but 9 were ralliers; 31 were cadres. These sources were supplemented by reports of other interviews in the RAND study of VC motivation and morale, as well as captured VC documents. Some of these captured documents were made available directly by GVN agencies in Dinh Tuong. Others were translated and reproduced at MACV Headquarters.

The content of this study is closely related to work reported in Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: The Special Case of Chieu Hoi, by J. M. Carrier and C. A. H. Thomson, RM-4830-1-ISA/ARPA, May 1966; and A Profile of Viet Cong Cadres, by W. P. Davison and J. J. Zasloff, RM-4983-1-ISA/ARPA, June 1966.

## SUMMARY

Developments in South Vietnam's Dinh Tuong Province in 1965, according to the authors' analysis of interviews with personnel formerly in the VC or under its control, reveal important vulnerabilities in the structure and functioning of the VC cadre system.* The VC movement has raised its demands on the population for manpower and → next page

*It should be pointed out that this study is primarily oriented toward psychological warfare programs and as a result focuses on vulnerabilities in the Dinh Tuong cadre structure. It does not treat in any detail the many elements of cohesion within the VC organization in Dinh Tuong and does not purport to give a balanced assessment of VC strengths and weaknesses in the province. Because of the composition of our group of interviewees, consisting for the most part of ralliers and persons occupying low-cadre positions or in the rank and file, generalizations are dangerous and we make no claims that our findings are necessarily characteristic of the VC cadre structure in Dinh Tuong Province as a whole, or, a fortiori, of conditions elsewhere in South Vietnam. We have given careful attention, however, in the assessment and analysis of our data to the possible biases that may result from the relatively small number of subjects, the mode in which they were selected, and the high proportion of ralliers among them. We have compared their testimony with that available from captured documents, and from qualified observers on the scene, and have found a considerable measure of agreement. We therefore feel that there is considerable reason to be satisfied that the vulnerabilities discussed in this report did in fact plague the VC structure in Dinh Tuong during the period under review. We have tried to discern those strengths as well as weaknesses in VC cadres that may be operationally important, and that may throw light on the current and future capabilities of the VC in this area. Our findings may also be useful for improving other appeals to cadres to desert, surrender, or rally, and for psychological operations designed to lower the VC cadres' operational effectiveness.

cont.

economic resources; the GVN has maintained military pressure on its opponent and has held control of the centers of population. It has deprived the VC of important manpower and economic resources through its programs for refugees and defectors. At the same time, the village VC cadre finds himself confronted with (a) a conflict of loyalty to the VC with loyalty to his fellow villagers; (b) increased isolation from the villagers, who in many places throughout the province are withholding cooperation and in some instances manifesting overt hostility toward the VC cadres as representatives of a system that makes increased demands of them while postponing the promised time of victory; and (c) instances of favoritism, factionalism, and occasionally corruption among the cadres themselves.

So far, however, our data show that the cadre structure has remained effective. But there are indications of strain as well as vulnerabilities. As the movement has grown, its hierarchical structure has developed and hardened, and the earlier capacity of camaraderie among the various ranks to balance burdens, to aid performance of the more difficult tasks, and to bolster morale, appears significantly less. As the cadres in the movement compete for the rewards of prestige and material gain, interpersonal tensions appear that create severe, although not insoluble problems for the movement.

The VC still seem able to recruit a sufficient number of cadres to man their movement at the lower levels -- and are still able to get civilian cadres from the localities where they will serve. Now, however, they are relying more heavily than before on peasants and on youth. As their goals and tasks become more clearly Communist, they

are less able to tap the training and expertise of personnel who are chiefly nationalist, or are from the better educated and richer classes.

Despite difficulties, hardships, defections and desertions, the VC cadre structure has remained strong and largely impervious to evidence of declining strength and prospects, by reason of the cadre's "clean break" with his previous environment outside the Front, and by his belief that the VC will win because "the people" are supporting it. Yet our data provide evidence that cadres who are either disgruntled or threatened by events happening within the Front do reassess their personal positions and start to open their minds to evidence that all is not well with the Front, and that at least some aspects of the GVN are acceptable. Moreover, when confronted with evidence that "the people" do not always support the Front as willingly or to the same extent as before, they can be shaken in a cardinal point of belief.

Such reassessments commenced by the VC cadre himself provide a vital point of entry into his protective psychological armor. The GVN/U.S. can take advantage of it to give the cadre information about the course of the war, how to come over to the Government, and reinforcing data about how "the people" are withdrawing their support in intelligence, manpower, resources or sanctuary. Loss of such support may be particularly damaging to VC cadre morale, simply because their indoctrination has dwelt so long on the theme that the VC will win because "the people" support them.

Another point of entry provided by VC practices is awareness of the Chieu Hoi program, enhanced for all VC

cadres because of the strenuous efforts made by the VC to counter it. This awareness needs to be expanded for cadres in one important respect: they need to be convinced that the program is available even to those who have served the Front for a long time. And they need to be reassured, insofar as the facts permit, that there is some opportunity to gain some status and prestige even after rallying to the Government.

The foregoing comments apply generally to VC cadres, both military and civilian. It is worth while in addition to take a closer look at the VC civilian cadres. Their psychology and their susceptibilities to GVN/U.S. propaganda vary somewhat with their differing roles and positions within the VC movement.

VC civilian cadres can be classed as "movers," "enforcers," and "little brothers." Movers carry out important functions at district level or above; enforcers operate at the village level as village Party Chapter Secretaries or their deputies, or as heads of the more important functional offices (for tax collection, current affairs, military affairs, etc.). Little brothers (so called in the VC) operate at the lowest level, in direct contact with the population, carrying out the Front's orders.

Of the three types, the enforcers play the key role at the village level. They shoulder the responsibility for coping with problems arising from the increased tempo, scope, and protraction of the war. They must do their jobs and meet their quotas despite the VC draft, casualties from GVN sweep operations, desertions, and reassignments.

They must refine basic party decisions for application at the village level and adjust them to local conditions. They accept Front policies and goals. They tend to explain shortcomings by finding fault with other cadres. They resent being held accountable for failures they regard as arising from the facts of the local situation and from their superiors' failure to understand it. Sometimes the party, instead of disciplining higher cadres guilty of administrative shortcomings or moral lapses, supports them and punishes lower cadres who have pointed out such mistakes or weaknesses. As a result enforcers may be induced to rally.

Little brothers are less committed to Front goals, more easily discouraged, and more open to information and persuasion from outside than enforcers. They are more sensitive to their personal positions, and more opportunistic. They present attractive targets for GVN/U.S. propaganda.

Our data point to several kinds of VC vulnerability to U.S./GVN initiatives. Areas of weakness include relations between military and civilian cadres; tensions among cadres of different origin, status, and function; and problems created by harsh or incompetent leadership, corruption and favoritism, and cliques.

The VC continue to face manpower problems. At one time they forbade military units to recruit men and cadres directly from the villages; more recently they have had to grant limited authorization for this because of the priority they place on enlarging higher military formations. In 1965 they instituted a plan for the reduction of administrative personnel by transferring incompetent or

redundant civilian cadres to military service. The program reduced the morale and effectiveness of some administrative officials, and opened up opportunities for favoritism and discrimination against personnel who had come from the bourgeoisie or from the middle farmers, rich farmers, or landlords. Some administrative personnel rallied rather than risk the dangers or face the reduction of prestige that would follow assignment to the military. Others, however, who came from the lower socio-economic classes and hence were less vulnerable to assignment to the military, regarded this policy as a gain for the Front and a victory for their classes.

Both movers and enforcers may be responsive to U.S./GVN information about the course of the war and the availability of a route to safety, or even to employment as cadres with the GVN. There need be no ideological argument and few ideological references in GVN propaganda addressed to these cadres. Most stress should be laid on evidence that the VC are losing and that their defeat will follow, despite the Party's determination to wage protracted war. Enforcers may be interested in information about GVN programs of social justice and economic development as they apply to particular localities. As careerists, they will be interested in what former enforcers who have rallied are actually doing under the GVN -- especially stories about those who have become minor GVN cadres in armed propaganda units, rallier camps, or other organizations. Little brothers will be susceptible to appeals, based on precise local intelligence, that take account of their immediate interests, show why they will be better

off under the GVN, and offer specific advice on how to escape from the Front's control. As to military events, the little brother wants precise information of developments near his hamlet or village that may affect his personal safety and position. He is already suspicious of Front propaganda about old or far away victories that glosses over losses or defeats close to home.

It may be wise for the GVN propagandist to ignore the national unification theme at this time. He should tell the enforcers and little brothers about their immediate situation and urge them to help the GVN to bring peace to their villages.

If a leader or prominent member of a VC clique rallies, his former colleagues or immediate superiors will come under suspicion and become the target for various pressures and attacks from opposing cliques. Those threatened are more likely than before to be susceptible to information about how to rally, and about good treatment under the GVN.

Indicating prospects of a position or a career for former VC with the GVN requires care in avoiding the creation of excessive expectations. Messages could be conveyed from former VC cadres who are now leaders of armed propaganda units or in Chieu Hoi tasks, and who identify themselves as such to their audiences.

Although this study is focused primarily on the search for VC weaknesses and vulnerabilities, it is clear from our data that the cadre structure overall has remained strong, especially in its upper echelons. It is still able to recruit new talent, and to maintain supervision and control over the cadre structure in VC-controlled

areas, and in most contested areas as well. It has shown resilience in the face of new difficulties and threats, and has announced clearly its determination to wage protracted war, whatever the costs.

Nevertheless, the cadre structure has demonstrated important points of friction and weaknesses. Opportunities exist for the GVN to dishearten and win over some of the middle and lower VC cadres by a combination of military, economic, and political pressures, guided by detailed intelligence and closely adjusted to the requirements of particular localities. Whether these opportunities are seized, and whether these weaknesses can be exploited, depends directly on the kinds of alternatives to continued struggle that are offered to such VC by the GVN and its allies in their efforts to promote national reconciliation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to express their appreciation for helpful criticism and comments to W. Phillips Davison, John Donnell, Leon Gouré, Konrad Kellen, and Nathan Leites.

D. W. P. Elliott has devoted major attention to Dinh Tuong since June 1965. He has supervised the interviewing of all but a few in the Dinh Tuong series, and these few he conducted himself. He has had the advantage of numerous intensive discussions with well-placed Vietnamese and American participants and observers. Their insights have provided invaluable assistance in directing the data gathering and interpreting the results.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This Memorandum is a study of vulnerabilities in the VC cadre structure revealed by interviews conducted in Dinh Tuong Province in the last half of 1965 and early in 1966. It gives an overview of the changing position of cadres chiefly at the village and hamlet level in a province that plays a key role in the VC movement in the Southern Delta. It is based mainly on 113 interviews with persons formerly active with the VC or under its control in Dinh Tuong.* All but nine of these interviews (i.e., 104) were with ralliers. Four were with civilian prisoners; 4 with military prisoners; 1 with a suspect who had formerly served as squad leader of village guards. Thirty-one of the interviewees were cadres, from the level of assistant squad leader or hamlet propaganda cadre to that of platoon leader or district financial section

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* While we have concentrated on interview data from Din Dinh Tuong, as convenient and often mutually reinforcing, we have found evidence of similar cadre problems in interviews with persons operating in other areas, and also in captured documents. For example, one such document referring to the area north of Saigon, admits the VC's "failure to insure effective control over the ideological outlook and indoctrination, to make cadres and men and the public stand firm in their conviction and break with the enemy..." Another document, admits shortcomings in the quality of current cadres, but takes the view, "rather a poor cadre than no cadre."

cadre;* 18 were party members; and 6 were members of the Liberation Youth or Labor Youth; 56 were from the military; another 17 came directly from some military formation, but had served for so short a time that they were no more than new recruits, with a good deal more to say about civilian than about military affairs; 40 were civilians. Among the military interviewees, 28 had served with regular units:

| Battalion | No. of Subjects |
|---|---|
| 261 | 9 |
| 263 | 3 |
| 265 | 1 |
| 514 | 13 |
| 709 | 1 |
| 860 | 2 |
| Total | 29[a] |

[a]One served partly with the 514th, and partly with the 263rd.

Nine others served in other local forces. Nineteen had served at the hamlet or village level as guerrillas.

Our interviewees included persons who had either lived or served with the VC in all seven of the districts into which Dinh Tuong Province is divided, and represent

*The definition of "cadre" is that used by the VC. While it seems odd that a person of as low a rank as assistant squad leader is regarded as a person of special status, we have accepted their practice for our purposes of classification. Assistant squad leaders refer to themselves as cadres, and are so designated by their subordinates and superiors. Within the cadre system, however, are informal gradations that recognize functions as conferring status in a broad fashion.

experience in 59 of the province's 93 villages.* Ten of our informants worked throughout the province; another 2 worked generally in the Plain of Reeds; 10 more served generally in the province, and also served in one or more neighboring provinces as well; 12 of our group only rallied in Dinh Tuong Province, as their major area of service lay outside it in one or more of the following provinces: Go Cong, Kien Hoa, Kien Phong, or Kien Tuong, or in what the VC term the Central Delta. Several who had lived in Dinh Tuong Province were drafted and marched off to Tay Ninh, but were able to escape and to rally there, or return to their home province within a few days or weeks of being drafted.

Of the 59 villages represented among our interviews, 12 were under complete VC control, 45 were contested, and 2 were under GVN control. The breakdown of districts, villages, and state of control is as follows:

| District | Village | VC | Contested | GVN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ben Tranh | Hoa Tinh | x | | | |
| | My Tinh An | | x | | |
| | Phu Kiet | | x | | |
| | Tan Binh Thanh | | x | | |
| | Thanh Binh | x | | | |
| | Thanh Cuu Nghia | | | x | |
| | Trung Hoa | x | | | |
| | | 3 | 3 | 1 | 7 |

*When an informant's service extended beyond his home village, we counted service in each village where the informant had lived long enough to be knowledgeable about conditions there, and to be affected by them.

| District | Village | VC | Contested | GVN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cai Be | Dong Hoa Hiep | | x | | |
| | Hau My | x | | | |
| | Hau Thanh | | x | | |
| | Hiep Duc | | x | | |
| | Hoi Cu | | x | | |
| | My Duc Dong | | x | | |
| | My Long | | x | | |
| | My Thanh | | x | | |
| | Phu An | x | | | |
| | Xuan Son | | x | | |
| | | 2 | 8 | | 10 |
| Cai Lay | Cam Son | | x | | |
| | Long Khanh | | x | | |
| | Long Tien | | x | | |
| | Long Trung | | x | | |
| | My Hanh Trung | | x | | |
| | My Phuoc Tay | | x | | |
| | Nhi Qui | | x | | |
| | Ngu Hiep | | x | | |
| | Phu Nhuan Dong | x | | | |
| | Phu Qui | | x | | |
| | Tam Binh | | x | | |
| | Thanh Hoa | | x | | |
| | Thanh Phu | | x | | |
| | | 1 | 12 | | 13 |
| Chau Thanh | Binh Duc | | x | | |
| | Dao Thanh | | x | | |
| | Duong Diem | | x | | |
| | My Phong | | x | | |
| | Tam Hiep | x | | | |
| | Tanh Phu | | x | | |
| | Trung An | | x | | |
| | | 1 | 6 | | 7 |

| District | Village | VC | Contested | GVN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cho Gao | An Thanh Thuy | | x | | |
| | Binh Ninh | x | | | |
| | Binh Phan | | x | | |
| | Binh Phuc Nhut | | x | | |
| | Dang Huong Phuoc | | x | | |
| | Hoa Dinh | | x | | |
| | Long Binh Dien | | x | | |
| | Quon Long | | x | | |
| | Tan My Chanh | | x | | |
| | Xuan Dong | | x | | |
| | | 1 | 9 | | 10 |
| Giao Duc | An Huu | | x | | |
| | An Thai Dong | | x | | |
| | My Duc Tay | | x | | |
| | | | 3 | | 3 |
| Long Dinh | Binh Trung | x | | | |
| | Dao Thanh | | | x | |
| | Dong Hoa | | x | | |
| | Hung Thanh My | x | | | |
| | Huu Dao | | x | | |
| | Nai Binh | x | | | |
| | Phu Phong | | x | | |
| | Song Thuan | x | | | |
| | Vinh Kim | | x | | |
| | | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| TOTALS | | 12 | 45 | 2 | 59 |

This classification depends on what the interviewee said the situation was in his home village. In several cases, different informants disagree about the situation in the same village. One might say a village was VC-controlled; another that it was contested. All such cases are resolved by classifying them as contested, on the ground that if one qualified informant perceives a contest, this is the correct judgment even if another says the village is completely controlled by the VC.

It should be pointed out that this study is primarily oriented toward psychological warfare programs and as a result focuses on vulnerabilities in the Dinh Tuong cadre structure. It does not treat in any detail the many elements of cohesion within the VC organization in Dinh Tuong and does not purport to give a balanced assessment of VC strengths and weaknesses in the province. Because of the composition of our group of interviewees, consisting for the most part of ralliers and persons occupying low-cadre positions or in the rank and file, generalizations are dangerous and we make no claims that our findings are necessarily characteristic of the VC cadre structure in Dinh Tuong Province as a whole, or, *a fortiori*, of conditions elsewhere in South Vietnam. We have given careful attention, however, in the assessment and analysis of our data to the possible biases that may result from the relatively small number of subjects, the mode in which they were selected, and the high proportion of ralliers among them. We have compared their testimony with that available from captured documents, and from qualified observers on the scene, and have found a considerable

measure of agreement. We therefore feel that there is considerable reason to be satisfied that the vulnerabilities discussed in this report did in fact plague the VC structure in Dinh Tuong during the period under review. We have tried to discern those strengths as well as weaknesses in VC cadres that may be operationally important, and that may throw light on the current and future capabilities of the VC in this area. Our findings may also be useful for improving appeals to cadres to desert, surrender, or rally, and for other psychological operations designed to lower the VC cadres' operational effectiveness.

## II. THE SETTING

Dinh Tuong Province, some 100 km. long and 40 km. wide, lies in the Delta of the Mekong River southwest of Saigon, across two major communication routes: the first leads by land and water from the sea up to the Plain of Reeds, a major VC sanctuary area; the second is National Route No. 4, leading up from the rich rice areas of the South to Saigon, and bisecting the province from west to east. Its population of some 530,000 is concentrated in its agriculturally rich southern half, at a density of some 500 persons per square kilometer. The northern half is relatively infertile, relatively sparsely populated, low and marshy, crisscrossed with canals, and covered with reeds and other vegetation that grow to a height of as much as six feet.

The province has a long history of resistance activities -- resistance against Northern invaders (it was once part of Cambodia); resistance against the French; and now, resistance against the Government of Vietnam. In mid-1965, the Communists completely controlled 24 out of the province's 93 villages, and thus dominated some 214,000 people, or 40 per cent of the population. Contested areas accounted for another 197,000, or 37 per cent. The remaining 23 per cent lived in secure areas: in the cities, district towns, and areas protected by New Life Hamlets.

Yet the province is the seat of one of the best ARVN divisions, and the GVN governmental structure has been adequate, if not outstanding. There is an active if

small-scale pacification program; New Life Hamlets are being built; and there are arrangements to care for and resettle the some 32,000 refugees. There is a good Chieu Hoi (defector) program. The government has an active program of help for agriculture and fisheries. Though it faces many difficulties, some of its own making, the government is vigorously trying to cope with them. The VC by no means have a free field, and there is much to suggest that during 1965 their expansion leveled off.

Dinh Tuong lies in an area of relatively limited military activity, since the VC in the Delta subordinate military operations to political and economic tasks, chiefly the quest for manpower and supplies. They pursue military activities mainly in the central provinces of South Vietnam and balance political with military activities in War Zones C and D and along the coastal lowlands to the north.

The VC must secure their lines of communication through Dinh Tuong, to assure freedom of access to the rice and manpower of the Delta for use in areas to the north; to tax, harass, or deny supplies to Saigon and other large cities; and to assure freedom of passage for arms and munitions from the seacoast to the Plain of Reeds sanctuary areas bordering on Cambodia. The VC must recruit and train replacements for higher echelon units. They must assure economic support, both in money and in kind, for pursuit of the struggle in the province and elsewhere. They must harry and tie down ARVN forces, erode the prestige and administration of the GVN, and block GVN efforts at pacification and resettlement. They must prevent movement of refugees out of areas they control and maintain

their authority and administration within them. They must conduct propaganda and indoctrination in support of all these tasks, while they try to extend the area of their control and tighten their grasp on currently contested places.

In Dinh Tuong Province as elsewhere, the VC must shoulder these tasks under changing conditions -- and conditions that are not always changing to their advantage. While they no longer suffer so much from the weaknesses of a guerrilla movement in its early stages, they do have to maintain control and to extract increasing amounts of manpower, labor, money, supplies, and collaboration from a population that is increasingly disillusioned, and disheartened by hardships and suffering, unrelieved by any early prospect of peace or a VC triumph. Earlier promises and "sweet talk," made at a time when the movement's requirements were small and its hopes great, have now been belied by events. Victory, believed imminent in 1962 or 1963, now looks far off, and the cadres have admitted this as they prepare their people for protracted war. The people put less trust in the cadres' predictions of victory; popular support is obtained more by force than by consent; and the continuing experience of air attacks, artillery strikes, and periodic ground sweeps proves to the people that the VC cannot protect them, though they take their men, their labor, and their goods.

The cadres' tasks and difficulties, therefore, have grown despite the relatively limited objectives of the VC in the province. So far, the cadre structure, when viewed as a whole, has remained effective, though there

are signs of strain within it, and the growth of the movement has brought new difficulties. As the movement has grown, its hierarchical structure has developed and hardened, and hierarchical aspects of inter-cadre relations have appeared. Earlier the cadres regarded themselves as brothers engaged in a common cause, concerned for each other's condition and welfare as servants of a movement; today we find a bureaucratized structure where there may be camaraderie and good fellowship among cadres of the same position and rank, but where there must be special respect from below in dealings with superiors. (One respondent reported that he could joke and make remarks about girls to his peers in the movement, but could not do so with his superiors.) In the early days there was considerable "democratic" interaction between cadres of all ranks and the population of the areas where they worked (subject, of course, to the requirements of security). But today the awareness of hierarchical distinctions has grown, although the requirements of secrecy often prevent the lower cadre from knowing the identity of cadres one or two echelons above him.

Some of our interviewees noted that the higher cadres had developed a "mandarin" attitude, as a function of their position and their service. For this reason as well as secrecy, it is rare for a hamlet cadre to have anything to do with a district cadre, and similarly rare for a village cadre to have anything to do with a province cadre.*

*This awareness of distance between cadres is dramatically illustrated by the fact that out of 113 persons interviewed in the Dinh Tuong series, at least 6 of whom were district-level cadres, not one had actually seen the

The individual cadre's relationships now usually extend only one level up or down. If there is occasion for a cadre to go to a higher level on business or for training, he is usually kept to his specific mission. Although village or district cadres may be sent for a training session at COSVN (Central Office for South Vietnam; the highest VC echelon), there is no opportunity for them to fraternize with cadres at that level who are not involved directly in the course.

Cadres from a higher echelon may come to a lower echelon to investigate difficulties, mete out justice, or settle personal or functional conflicts. Such visits are obviously fraught with threat and tension for the position-conscious and career-conscious lower cadres; and the tensions are not always fully released by the VC devices of self-examination and group criticism.

The VC insists that the higher echelon shall control the lower echelon, and that political functions shall control military or economic functions. These priorities, plus the existence of an unbroken and active chain of command reaching from COSVN to the hamlet level, contribute

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Province Party Secretary, and few even knew his name. Moreover, the idea that the ranking cadre does not have his distinctive trappings and regalia is outmoded today if it ever was valid. One of our subjects, in discussing life in the National Liberation Front and relations with his company commander, said:

> I called him "comrade" (Dong chi) or "pal" (anh).... Life in the Front was very democratic. But it was a strange kind of democracy, because the Company Commander had a Colt and was proud of it, [and] because the women went crazy about his Colt, which was dangling on his hips and was the sign of a high position.

to the creation of a differentiated social system in which power and authority are concentrated at the next higher echelon, although the lower echelons must exercise initiative and solve in detail the problems of dealing with the enemy or a recalcitrant population. Party-Front relationships complicate the system, although they do not usually create problems of power, prestige, or status for party members. Evidence is appearing that the party is de-emphasizing the Front as an essential agent of organization and political image-making. The party member, especially at the intermediate levels, plays, and expects to play, a controlling role over Front organizations and over non-party military formations, especially insofar as political functions are concerned.

Throughout the structure there is a fusion of prestige values with material values; and it appears that in Dinh Tuong, as well as elsewhere, merit, position, promotion, and achievement in the VC structure dominate other values. Material conditions in the Front are not good. Life is hard, and even the living conditions of the most favored are likely to be poor in contrast with those enjoyed by higher GVN officials. Higher cadres usually enjoy more of what is available; they take their larger gratifications as the normal and proper accompaniment of position, though not as something to be sought after, at least during the current phase of the revolutionary struggle. Our data indicate that the creature comforts of the higher cadres (for example, duck dinners provided by wealthy villagers asking protection or favor) are sometimes resented by the lower cadres; but complaints

seem to be infrequent. When they do appear, they sound strained and at times implausible.

Most cadres find their main gratification in the advancement of their careers. Occasionally we run across references to the use of position in the movement to assure security to person or to family; such abuses occasion friction and disapproval. In a structure where the major rewards are personal status and prestige won in sharp competition, interpersonal tensions can create severe problems, although not insoluble ones.

As the movement has grown and increased its demands on the population, and as the GVN has stood firm (with support from its allies) over the past twelve to eighteen months, the Dinh Tuong villager has found himself increasingly caught between two powerful forces. In addition, especially at the village and hamlet level, the local VC cadre is confronted with (a) a conflict of loyalty to the VC with loyalty to his fellow villagers; (b) increased isolation from the villagers, who in many places throughout the province are withholding cooperation and in some instances manifesting overt hostility to the cadres as representatives of a system that places larger demands on them while postponing prospects of victory; and (c) instances of favoritism, factionalism, and occasionally corruption on the part of the cadres with whom he must deal.

## III. WHO ARE THE CADRES? AN OVERVIEW

Cadres as defined by the VC commence at a very low organizational level -- the level of assistant squad leader for the military, or an equivalent civilian status such as hamlet propaganda cadre for the civilian side. Such persons are part of the organizational framework, to be differentiated from the rank and file or the very lowest of functionaries, such as the cell leader (in a cell of three or four men), in a military squad. They refer to themselves and their superiors as cadres.

### SOURCES OF CADRES

Cadres normally enter the Front or the VC at the bottom. They do not come in as cadres; they become cadres. They do not need formal education: Some* at the lower echelons are illiterate, but not necessarily incompetent. They must possess some skill, and have a "good standpoint" (unquestioned loyalty and political reliability). They must have a "spotless background" -- i.e., come from very poor, poor, or middle-farmer families** and have no

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*Our impression is that the number of illiterates, though small, is not negligible. Most of the cadres interviewed claimed at least one or two years of elementary schooling.

**These are by no means "middle class" in the Western sense. As used by the VC, the term "middle farmer" represents a median group between poor peasants and rich farmers or landlords. A middle farmer will own one or at most two "mau" (1 mau = 1 hectare = 2.47 acres) of paddy land, or its income-producing equivalent in orchards, enough to support himself and his family in relative comfort if the

previous record of service or compromising contact with the GVN, the French, or the Americans. Lack of a "spotless background" will postpone selection as a cadre, and also will slow down or prevent promotion. Cadres are usually chosen for good or outstanding performance. Their immediate superiors must recommend them to the next higher echelon (hamlet to village, village to district, etc.) for appointment. All promotions also require higher approval. Some of the hamlet and village cadres are elected.

When faced with a choice between loyalty and competence, the VC seem to prefer the former. They seem to favor the young, for their energy, dedication, and impressionability. Linked with this preference is a high attrition rate among the older cadres. They clearly prefer to choose cadres from the lowest socio-economic classes, in particular the lower peasantry. This disposition is not merely a manifestation of sympathy for members of a previously exploited class. The VC turn to the peasantry precisely because the peasant needs training. The VC are happy to provide the training -- with a party slant. VC indoctrination is achieved by endless repetition of the few basic points that are necessary to get the peasant to understand the party line and the minimum information required for him to do his job. (One of our subjects was exposed to GVN materials for indoctrinating ralliers. His strong and prompt reaction was that far too much material

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land is normally fertile. A "rich farmer" is one who owns more land, but who works all of it. A "landlord" may own less, but he rents out all or part of it. A landlord of modest income may be classed with the middle farmers.

was presented and that the ralliers would be hopelessly confused by a rapid and superficial presentation of it.) The peasant usually learns slowly, but what he learns he retains and abides by. The VC type of education, therefore, is very effective in promoting their aims.*

The disposition to choose youth has its drawbacks. Youth may not have good judgment and may tend to act rashly. Inexperienced younger men may not be able to cope with the increasingly complex tasks of village administration under stress. One interviewee, appointed in November 1965 to the position of Village Secretary in a locality where the VC infrastructure was deteriorating, found his position difficult if not impossible. As he put it:

> I was very pleased to work for the Front at the beginning when I first joined the party and when I became Village Secretary. But later I lost my initial pleasure because I felt my talents were limited, my work was heavy, and while I did not get any personal benefits, I had to make myself a living example for other people which would sooner or later lead to my death.
>
> I thought the function of a Village Secretary was beyond my capacity because a Village Secretary should know everything about the Village Chapter and should know how to organize. But I was only a new party member, fresh from the training courses, and therefore I was still confused, did not know my job well, and could not do my work.

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*One of our Vietnamese interviewers, who was in a Viet Minh "thought reform" camp from 1950 to 1953, recalled that the Viet Minh were very contemptuous of bourgeois training and said that "The bourgeois know a little bit about everything, but do not know any subject in detail."

His difficulties may have been compounded by the views expressed by some old villagers about some younger cadres who had said the Americans would be impoverished by the war. As reported by a village guerrilla who rallied:

> Upon hearing that, some old villagers ridiculed the cadres among themselves, and argued that the American weapons used in Vietnam were only excess material and that [the loss of] it would never impoverish this wealthy country. These mature villagers did not think much of the cadres who were, according to them, too young to understand how things really are. In Long Binh Dien village, only Sau Duong, the Village Secretary, is mature, whereas all the other cadres are young. All the former mature cadres were already killed.

The current preference for youth leads to frictions which arise from the arrogance of some of the young men selected. One, who had been a District Youth Group cadre, said:

> The new cadres are young and are very arrogant toward the older cadres. The old cadres mumbled that the party preferred the young cadres to themselves. Even though they had fought in the Resistance, the party considered them as useless .... Right now the Front relies more on the young, because the old cadres are no longer strong enough to operate effectively. [They] are cast aside even though they have talent and experience.... They are still too much influenced by conditions in the Resistance.... In the Front, there are still old cadres who have operated ... without interruption since the Resistance.... They are the elite and they assume positions of leadership. But their numbers are small.

The principle of putting security and loyalty before competence and the practice of sending trustworthy

specialists from higher echelons to execute general tasks at lower echelons may further strain the supply of cadres. In Vinh Kim village, where the Village Secretary and the leader of the guerrilla unit both rallied, all the former members of this party chapter were "put on the shelf" because of their associations with the two ralliers, now both leaders of GVN armed propaganda teams in the area. To ensure loyalty, the VC installed a district area specialist as party chapter secretary. Moreover, in installing a man from the district as party secretary, the VC also shunted aside the former deputy party secretary, who appears in our data as a cadre of unwavering loyalty. It should be noted, however, that the VC practice of sending trusted district specialists to lower echelons has this advantage for them: The district cadre can look over talent available at the lower echelon and thus protect higher echelons against any tendency of lower echelons to keep their better people and send up only misfits or more difficult persons in response to calls from above for manpower.

The range of persons from which the VC now feel free to draw their talent is limited by the increasingly Communist focus of the movement's objectives. Whereas the Viet Minh felt able to draw cadres from those interested in national liberation from colonial oppression, with few or no socialist or Communist attachments, the VC in practice restrict themselves to elements they feel they can trust, and whose interests are compatible with their own.

A District Youth Group cadre put it this way:

> Previously, during the nine years of the Resistance, the main classes were the farmers and the workers, but landlords were still allowed to participate. Intellectuals, bourgeois, and students could join the party, as well as landlords. The organizational form was that of a government, so that they could act in a technical administrative capacity to help the people, and the lower echelons could freely contact the higher echelons. In sum, the old [Resistance] form of organization allowed bourgeois and landlords etc. to join the party on the condition that they renounced their class. Anyone who served zealously could join the party. Now it is different. One of these differences is that they are not putting the emphasis on the young. The second difference is that now you have to come from the middle farmer, poor farmer, or very poor farmer class.

Although candidates for VC offices run risks if they attain office, the VC seem still to be able to fill most of their needs for personnel in villages and hamlets from the localities served. This is not always true of the recruitment of GVN village councillors.

There is some evidence that older cadres are losing stomach for the struggle. As mentioned above, the party seems to be willing to let some of its older personnel relinquish their duties because they are no longer strong enough or flexible enough to perform them. According to one of our informants, "some of the older boys just shut up shop and go back to the farm." Having passed the draft age for both sides, they do not feel any urgency about coming into the GVN areas to get legal papers or to join the ARVN (even though it rides rather than walks). It seems that so long as they stay on their farms in VC-controlled areas, they are valued for their productive

potential, and not considered enough of a threat to require surveillance.

WHY DO THEY JOIN?

Most cadres have several years of experience in the Front. In our group, only 2 out of 31 had less than a year's experience; 10 had 4 years or more; 9 had 5 or more. One man had 15 years of service reaching back into the Viet Minh period. Many of today's cadres entered at a time when the VC were very careful about persuading men to join. If force was used, it was always balanced with intensive efforts to get the subject to "volunteer." Those who joined the Front seeking position and advancement usually were highly motivated and thus achieved cadre status earlier than others. Some persons who joined the VC in hopes of protecting their position in the village, or their property, soon learned that cadre status (if not party status) might help protect or enhance their prestige; but they also discovered that the cadre or the party member must set a good example by paying contributions and taxes more heavily and promptly than ordinary people. Today, personal values (the achievement of merit, personal safety, and advancement) are more important than cause values (national liberation and unification, or the Front achievement of socialism) as reasons for joining the VC or trying to rise in their organization. Few of our informants, in or out of Ding Tuong, told us they joined the movement chiefly to liberate the country from colonial oppression and American imperialism, or to reunify it. More often they asserted a desire to liberate themselves and their

fellow villagers from the particular tyranny of corrupt or oppressive landlords or government officials. But even more frequently they said they joined the movement to escape the ARVN draft, or because they were in a VC-controlled area and were urged to serve the Front as a matter of duty, or because they were tricked into joining the movement either by skillful persuasion or by blackmail.*

Cause values, however, reinforce other motives for joining the Front. National unification, a rather hazy concept in the rural villages, was nevertheless often mentioned by our subjects. This awareness may arise in part because some of our subjects look on a divided country as somehow diseased, a bearer of problems even for the isolated villager. They comment that "two kings" cannot both rule, and in order to eliminate the division as a source of potential danger, they will support the side that appears to be the stronger. This observation is made both by lower cadres and rank and file, and they also attribute similar views to other villagers.

The choice of whom to support is usually most open in areas where control is a matter of dispute. This does not mean that the peasant who must cope with the VC presence in his village thinks the GVN, overall, is weak. He thinks it is not strong enough to dominate the situation in his village to the point where he can put full trust

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*We are quite aware that reasons for joining the Front given by our subjects may be especially subject to bias arising from the probable desire of the informant to give answers that will be compatible with the preferences and interests of the GVN. Hence, except in the case of thoroughly indoctrinated and unreconstructed adherents of the

in it as a defense against VC threats and demands. The pace of the extension of VC control in former years has persuaded many peasants that the VC is the stronger and is going to master the GVN soon.

For many of those who came into the movement around 1963-1965, the possibility of provoking or sustaining a long and inconclusive struggle was remote; they expected a quick and easy triumph, calling for only short-term sacrifices and hardships. Having provoked such a struggle, they want to terminate it; "one side must win." The desire for peace, unity, and harmony explains the assumption, often encountered in our data, that a VC victory would automatically entail unification of the country under the Communist-dominated North. To some the VC represent a force that would bind the country's wounds and make it whole, eliminate faction and conflict, and leave the peasant in peace.

Especially for those interested in creating the conditions for just local administration, personal values and cause values coalesce. Such a fusion of motives will ordinarily be local rather than national, supporting the creation of a fair and just local administration, no longer dominated by corrupt tyrants but ruled by good persons. Although we have no explicit references to this

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Party line, we would not expect a high incidence of statements affirming the necessity of achievement of Vietnamese national objectives <u>via the Party</u>, or supporting the more Utopian objectives of the Party of a Communist nature. We do feel, however, that the statements of our informants are useful in indicating the possibilities and the limits of political appeals to those still in the Front, and in showing ways in which appeals to desert or rally can usefully incorporate political content.

in our data, it is quite plausible that such an outlook is shaped by a Confucian insistence on good personal conduct of the official rather than by demands for efficient local institutions. Because of his personal orientation, the VC cadre prefers an ideology that is a guide to style and methods of work to one that offers a set of grandiose politico-economic perspectives. Once he is in the movement, and looks to it for his personal advancement, he takes some comfort from the broad expectation that the revolutionary class is bound to win in the end, but he is more influenced by predictions that the VC itself will win -- predictions reinforced during indoctrination and training by a steady flow of references to VC victories -- since he expects to achieve his personal interests as a member of the VC. As a cadre, he needs the help and the reassurance of the styles of work that are prescribed by the party and its organs, and inculcated by the apparatus up and down the line. This provides him with a guide and support in his ever-pressing day-by-day tasks.

Very few interviewees said that the VC urged them to become cadres. That the VC should have done so is not wholly implausible, especially in recent years when the VC's need for cadres grew with the movement. Usually, however, cadre status is valued and sought, and comes more as reward than bait. From observing the process of upward mobility, the rank and file know that persons of low status can rise. This is an important part of the VC apparatus of incentives.

## THE CADRE'S OUTLOOK AND PERFORMANCE

If career values and personal values are more important than cause values to the Dinh Tuong cadre, it is important to note his view of himself, his position, and his prospects. What are his career aspirations and expectations? Are they being frustrated or fulfilled, and if one or the other, how? What is his loyalty and his performance? Does he desert or defect? What are his expectations of victory, and his thoughts about his position once victory is won? What does he think of the GVN and the Americans? What does he think about the Vietnamese people, and how does he see his position in relation to them? How does he see Russia, China, or other Communist countries? How does he view the Sino-Soviet split and its possible effects on the prospects of the VC? Finally, how does he relate these judgments to his own position and prospects?

In very broad terms, our data suggest that the Dinh Tuong cadre has expected little in the way of career gratification when he entered the movement. He has found career possibilities once he was in. At the outset, his career aspirations were low. But sooner or later, his hopes tended to expand, after he had spent some time in the movement and found out the specific conditions for advancement. Especially if he was in the military, he would tend to judge his own performance and prospects by whether he had kept pace with others who entered the movement at the same time and possessed similar qualifications, strengths, and limitations. If he felt that he

did not show up well in this comparison, he would start to find fault with both the system and the persons in it.*

Most of the cadres had reason to be pleased with their career achievements, and found fulfillment in them. The VC had opened up an avenue of advancement for them, especially for those from the lowest socio-economic classes, and had made it possible for them to acquire power, status, and respect. Partially as a result of this -- and also because of the intensive VC control and morale-building apparatus -- most cadres in our interview group loyally and conscientiously performed their duties even under stress, at least to the point where a consideration of their own prospects and those of the movement as a whole led them to believe that they could not fulfill their long-term aspirations or hold the gains they had made. Because of their knowledge of the effectiveness of VC sanctions and of the workings of the control apparatus, even those who had decided to rally usually kept their performance to a high standard until the moment when they saw their chance to escape.

Desertion among the interviewed cadres was infrequent; rallying was more common. The village or hamlet cadre considering desertion faced the almost insuperable

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*For many of our subjects, the onset of self-appraisal was the beginning of a process that led to a loss of faith in VC goals while the subject was still in the Front. While leaving his faith in those goals unchanged, he might either ignore it as a factor in his decision to rally, or he might admit to himself that his faith was unshaken but that he did not have the personal fortitude to endure the hardships or threats plaguing him while still in the Front. Or he might assert that the Front was not in fact working to achieve its professed goals, or to carry out its promises to the people.

problem of where to go. He would be well known in his village and could easily be picked up by security forces if he tried to hide out in or near his home. He would be similarly vulnerable if he left his home grounds and went elsewhere in VC-controlled or contested territory without proper papers. If he went to GVN-controlled territory without rallying he would be subject to GVN arrest and punishment. Hence his best chance was to risk GVN ill-treatment or other penalties, and rally.

Almost without exception, the rallying cadres from our Dinh Tuong group defected more for personal motives than for ideological reasons. Many of them had lost their faith in VC victory (an ideological matter in a Communist movement), although up to the critical year of 1965 many of them still believed that the VC could overcome the obvious advantage in weapons and manpower enjoyed by the GVN -- because they had the support of "the people."* Some of those who rallied still maintained that in the long run the VC would probably win, but they were convinced that victory would be long in coming and they were discouraged by having to tell themselves and "the people" that victory would come only after a protracted struggle.

Some of the reasons for rallying were intensely personal, for example a wife's infidelity. Others arose directly from the prestige-involvement of the cadres;

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*The VC divide people into three categories. Category A includes those who are active in the Front or who have members or relatives serving in the Front; Category B includes those who are neutral. Category C includes those who do not support the Front, who sympathize with or favor the GVN, or who have important ties to it. For the VC, "the people" means those in Category A.

they could endure neither the criticism of their colleagues and superiors nor the humiliation of being deprived of promotion, prestige, or position for disciplinary reasons. Some simply wanted to escape from continuing danger and hardships. Others were motivated by the GVN's promise of good treatment and ultimate reintegration in society via the Chieu Hoi program. One man, who had deserted to help his family, rallied on finding that the VC were about to arrest him. A few former civilian cadres rallied rather than be drafted into the VC's military service. Only one told us that he rallied because he realized the GVN's cause was really the "just cause," and even he may not have been sincere.

The VC cadre -- especially the village cadre who functions only in those areas where the VC exercise complete or major control -- tends to live in isolation from those outside the movement, and to a considerable degree, from the GVN. His personal position and advancement and the extent to which he is accepted as a person depend largely, if not wholly, on how he is perceived and treated by those in the movement. He approaches the villagers under his control as an official; he is usually preoccupied with all the details and responsibilities of his job as cadre or as Communist; he has little or no time for small talk or informal social contact; he usually wants something from everyone with whom he is in contact. He is often treated with fear or circumspection by his inferiors. He is usually judged by his superiors in terms of his ability to conform to prescribed styles of conduct and to perform the tasks that his job requires.

Most of the ralliers who were questioned had a great need of respect and affection from "the people." Separated from family, often at the cost of rigorous repression of family sentiments, cadres are in general very sensitive to the approval and collaboration they get from "the people," who function as surrogates for absent family or village friends, and for whose sake the cadres presumably left home.

Non-ralliers -- especially cadres -- have more successfully broken their ties with family. Giving up personal ties and sentiments seems to go with a special sensitivity to the rights and sanctity of "the people" as a collective entity. This may well account for the cadres' characteristic unwillingness to apply collective sanctions to a village as a whole, and for their efforts to isolate, convict, and punish individual "tyrants," scapegoats, or political unreliables.

The cadres are not only frustrated when the people deny them shelter or food for themselves or their troops; they also feel isolated and deprived. They are further troubled when tax quotas or orders from above force them to try to extract from the people contributions that once were freely given, but now are given under duress. In addition, they may lose faith in ultimate victory when faced with evidence that "the people" do not support them, all the more so because of the constant repetition of the VC theme that victory is inevitable because "the people" are on their side.

Views reflected in our group indicate that most villagers, both within the movement's hierarchy and

outside it, tend to view the cadres as reasonably responsible and effective. A village cadre said of a district cadre:

> The Chau Thanh District Secretary is a veteran party member. He participated in the Resistance movement against the French and afterwards became an underground cadre during the six-year period of peace. He enjoys great confidence from the party. He behaves very well towards the cadres. Coming from the poor peasant class, he does not fear hardships, and although he received [only] an elementary education during his childhood, his comprehension is great; his arguments in discussion sessions were excellent.

More praise is given for effectiveness than for likeability. As the movement grows older, winning the people's respect and affection is operationally less vital since they have largely come under the party's control and the delivery of labor and services was more vital to the movement when it was trying to increase the scale of its activities. Nevertheless, there are unpopular cadres who arouse resentment among the lower cadres, the rank and file, and of course the population. Officious and haughty cadres are sometimes found among those older ones who have risen from humble origins.

Those higher cadres who continue to treat their inferiors with respect and to take some account of the worsening conditions under which more onerous tasks must be performed are occasionally mentioned with special praise. And there is some nostalgia for the earlier days of the movement, when there was more "democracy," informality, freedom of movement, and respect for human dignity than in 1965.

The cadre's views of the GVN and of foreign countries are very much shaped by his physical and psychological isolation. Even his views of Hanoi are largely fashioned by the information he gets through official channels, including Radio Hanoi. This is modified somewhat by the testimony of the regroupees, who can give firsthand information about some aspects of life in the North prior to their infiltration South. In Dinh Tuong, there were no NVA units in 1965 and the number of North Vietnamese infiltrators was very small. As a result, the Dinh Tuong cadre gets a very official view of conditions in the North.

As for opinions about the GVN, our informants indicate that before rallying or deserting they shared the stylized view of Saigon presented in VC or other Communist propaganda. Occasionally they listened to news broadcasts from Saigon, but more frequently they turned on Saigon to listen to reformed opera programs. They had no clear picture of Saigon's leaders or policies and were content to accept the VC view of them as lackeys of the Americans and servants of a clever neo-imperialism. Those in our group rarely mentioned the GVN officials or soldiers who were their opponents.* Their knowledge of GVN officialdom at the levels from hamlet to province is usually limited to what they learn through family contacts. In their estimates of relative fighting effectiveness, they rarely

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*It should be pointed out that this assessment of the picture of the GVN officials and opposite numbers emerges from the responses of our subjects made without special probing. One notable exception to this rule of anonymity

mention particular GVN officers of opposing units, although they may have some judgment about the quality of GVN military leadership and some assessment of the tactics and operational capabilities of GVN units. The cadres have a highly impersonal image of their GVN opponents. For most of them the GVN and the ARVN are faceless.

What little information we have suggests that the VC cadre regards the rank and file of the ARVN as capable of being proselyted and seduced away from service to the GVN. VC doctrine casts the rank and file of the ARVN in the role of oppressed persons in need of liberation, and VC prisoner-of-war policies are designed accordingly: capture, disarm, and reeducate the prisoner and then either allow him to return to his home (if he is useless and harmless) or bring him into VC service as a laborer, transportation worker, production worker, or soldier. More severe sanctions are reserved for GVN officers. Doctrine demands a death sentence for recaptured ralliers, although this may not always be carried out.

In general, the VC cadre does not pay much attention to GVN propaganda. He may show some interest in GVN-originated news of battles in distant areas, and from time to time he may listen to GVN accounts of battles in which he may have participated, although such listening is actively discouraged by the VC. But the VC cadre must pay much more attention to Chieu Hoi appeals and information.

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**is the frequency of references to an exceptionally competent GVN district policeman who, up to the time he was ambushed and killed in late 1964, had given his VC opponents a very hard time.**

In Dinh Tuong, as in other provinces, the VC cadres are well acquainted with the existence of the Chieu Hoi program and the major GVN appeals to rally. Vigorous policies and counteraction suggest that the VC cadre in Dinh Tuong fears the program, takes intensive measures to prevent his charges from learning about it from non-VC sources, and takes further measures to counter its appeals when the message is thought to have come through. If he is reconsidering his own position in the VC and looking for a way out, however, Chieu Hoi propaganda may help him see that he has an alternative.

The VC cadre's picture of the Americans is also very much limited to the Communist caricature so long as the cadre is in the VC. In Dinh Tuong, there is less opportunity than in many other provinces for the VC cadre to have any personal contact with American officials or troops. But in Dinh Tuong as elsewhere, whenever a rallying VC cadre meets Americans, he usually revises his views of them according to his direct experience. He may similarly revise his estimate of the reasons why the Americans are in Vietnam. Moreover, our observation of VC ralliers who have proved willing to serve the GVN promptly and without reservation suggests that the rallying VC would be equally willing to work with and for Americans.

The VC cadre's image of the Soviet Union seems to be evolving according to the position of Hanoi and the Liberation Front. Most of the younger cadres formed their views after the Sino-Soviet split had become pronounced, and Khrushchev is often mentioned as a divisive force and a shaper of false doctrine ("revisionism"). Meanwhile

Peking and the Chinese Communists have acquired a favorable image. Many of the cadres are willing to express gratitude for help from a Communist power, whatever it may be. Hanoi does not now wish to make a choice between Peking and Moscow, and publicly thanks both for their aid; the VC cadre's attitude reflects this, and the marked preference for the Chinese noted in earlier interviews is now less conspicuous.

The schism between China and Russia is affecting the cadre's confidence in ultimate victory. One cadre -- possibly the only one of our group to defect for almost exclusively ideological reasons -- left the Front, he said, because he had seen increasing failure of its foreign policies.

The VC cadre has to keep up morale in the face of a Communist world that seems at times to be giving him more verbal help than military aid, though in the cadre's eyes it may seem that more weapons and men might have brought success in 1965. Most of the cadres, when faced with the problem of explaining the lack of more tangible help in military manpower from the various Communist powers, repeat the Communist line that after all, the VC and NVA are winning, and the Communist powers will provide additional help whenever Hanoi asks for it. Help from the Communist world is part of the cadre's image of the movement and its ultimate prospects; he will balance off the names of Communist countries that give aid to the Front against those helping the GVN, without much basis for judging how much help is coming or could come from each, and thus shore up his faith in ultimate victory. Occasionally the

cadre allows himself to wonder why more help is not forthcoming, but for most of the lower VC cadres, the world outside is a strange and intangible place whose mysterious ways must be accepted, and they are inclined to accept on faith the explanations of their superiors.

## IV. TYPES OF CADRES: MOVERS, ENFORCERS, AND LITTLE BROTHERS

In the preceding section we noted some characteristics of the Dinh Tuong cadres that apply broadly to VC cadres as a whole. We now have to look at the different types of cadres in more detail. Cadres are not only civilian or military. Some of them are also party cadres who occupy themselves both with party business and with the regulation of the affairs of military or civilian organizations. Moreover, among civilian cadres we can distinguish three types whose functions and outlook, whose problems and vulnerabilities, and whose significance to the movement differ in important ways. We may label the three sub-groups "movers," "enforcers," and "little brothers." (The last category is so called within the VC: can bo dan em.)

In our terms, "movers" are higher leaders, with responsibility for governance at the district level or above; "enforcers" are lesser leaders, with administrative responsibilities at the village level; "little brothers" are the lowest order of cadres, responsible solely for carrying out directives and for doing the most humble (but not the least important) tasks of administration. These categories are flexible: A mover in a district echelon would be an enforcer when viewed from the province level; some village enforcers might be looked on as little brothers from the district level. But at the village level, with which most of our data are concerned, the categories are reasonably stable, and some important psychological and operational differences are discernible among them.

This classification is suggested by our examination of the roles and functions of VC civilian cadres. The terms "mover" and "enforcer" are ours. We give a more specific meaning to the term "little brother" than is usual among the VC, who often employ it as an inclusive term for the rank and file cadres. (For a discussion of emerging VC terminology for their cadres, see Appendix A.)

MOVERS

We apply the term "mover" to an official of the rank of Secretary of a Party committee at district level or above, or a key member in the party structure at these levels such as the Chief of the Military Affairs Committee or of the Security Committee (functions often assumed by the Secretary himself). A mover can also be a cadre holding an important job in an important District Committee staff section. (Three of the four movers in our interview group are of this last rank. They include two District Financial Section cadres and a platoon leader in a Main Force battalion. The fourth is a District Youth Group cadre.)

Movers are party members with long service in the Front. (The platoon leader had served for fifteen years before rallying.) They carry important and pressing operational responsibilities; they set the example for other cadres; they must show themselves to be leaders. It is not surprising to find that they are persons who have made a "clean break" with the lives they led before joining the VC, and have wholly devoted themselves to the

VC cause. The man who has made a "clean break" will go to considerable lengths, consciously or unconsciously, to justify his continuing service to the Front.

While still in the Front, and while still enjoying a tolerable position, movers -- or others with the "clean break" attitude -- reject out of hand all information that comes from sources outside the Front that is not compatible with Front policies, beliefs, and preferences. They may interpret outside information in ways favorable to the Front and to their personal positions. They accept Front policies without question. They regard Front ideology as a functional tool. Although movers tend to know more about formal Marxism-Leninism, owing to their long service in the movement and repeated doses of political indoctrination, Front ideology is still less vital to them as a body of world-historical ideas than as a doctrine specifying ways of doing things that must be done. Movers do not have much time or inclination to engage in speculation about ideas, and generally there has been little reason for them to doubt the effectiveness of the systems of control with which they are familiar. Hence it is not surprising that three of the four movers in our group rallied, not for ideological reasons, but because of personal conflicts and threats to their positions within the Front. Such conflicts and threats caused them to open their minds to evidence previously rejected or ignored, such as that pointing to a GVN victory. They could not accept their current or prospective roles (one was about to be transferred from civilian to military service).

Their major revaluation of their positions, however, took place after they had rallied, when they took a fresh look at the Front's contributions to Vietnamese society and at their record in achieving the goals they professed. Thus two steps were needed to break the barriers to a broader outlook. First, while still in the Front, the mover had to arrive at a new view of his personal position; second, after deserting or rallying for personal reasons, he had to discover that the GVN was something other than a jail where he could escape VC punishment for his desertion and other delinquencies. Having defected from the VC, the cadre would open his mind to a wide variety of new ideas. He might change his views on American behavior in Vietnam (after personal observation and experience), on the treatment of VC defectors, on the policies and programs of the GVN, and on many other matters about which he had formerly had fixed opinions.

ENFORCERS

Enforcers are found as key village officials: Secretaries of Village Party Chapter Committees, key members of these committees, or lesser staff members of important district committees. They are the linchpins in the Front's mobilization of the mass of the villagers, and the VC regard the village as the key to successful provincial government. On the enforcers falls the chief responsibility for coping with problems arising from the increased tempo, scope, and length of the war. They must carry out their tasks and meet their quotas despite the toll levied by the draft, casualties from GVN sweep

operations, desertions, and reassignments. They must refine and adapt basic party decisions for application at the village level.

Enforcers at the village level are generally competent and devoted to the general program of the VC -- particularly with respect to "social justice" -- but they are forced to take into account the human costs of achieving VC goals. Like the movers, they are more concerned with elaborating means than with reconsidering ends, though their tasks may be more localized and detailed than those of the movers. They tend to accept policies prescribed by their superiors, and to criticize the shortcomings of the implementers. One prisoner, a former member of a Village Chapter Committee, was very enthusiastic about the classless society and said he didn't see that "the Front" was doing anything wrong: "It was only those who carried out [Front policy] that did things wrong."*

Some enforcers are critical of the demands made on them; they resent being caught between the people and the upper cadres, and then being held accountable for failures they do not regard as wholly their own fault.

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*A civilian prisoner, formerly Secretary of a Village Party Chapter, said:

> As far as Front treatment was concerned, the Front neither favored me nor helped me materially but I found that its line was in accord with my aspirations and with that of the people, and its words were suitable to my conditions and my thought. The Front said what it thought; it has not said anything

A Deputy Village Party Secretary complained:

> The cadres were correct in their behavior toward the people, but they were compelled to execute to the letter the orders given by the District Committee without having the right to judge whether these orders were good or bad for the people.... At first the cadres enjoyed a certain consideration from the people, but little by little the villagers became colder and colder toward them.

A Village Military Proselyting Section cadre revealed the difficulties of his middle position:

> Even though I used the methods I had learned in the training course, I was not able to gain positive results. I could not use the youths in spying missions because there were no more youths left in my village. I succeeded in gathering the GVN soldiers' families for some training courses, but they kept quiet and did not show any eagerness to cooperate with me. The only result that I was able to obtain was that some of them submitted taxes to me begging me to send them to the tax collector.... [My superior] complained a lot about the failure of my military proselyting activities. He criticized me for lack of ardor. Outwardly I had to agree with him, but I believed that I had done my utmost. I thought that military proselyting was very hard this year because I had to live far from my village and also because the villagers themselves did not like the Front any longer.

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> wrong. Generally speaking there was nothing bad about the Front but the cadres personally might be wrong about one thing or another.

Nevertheless, he said he would accept the victory of the GVN, if it would bring peace and independence. This man was one of very few with long experience at the village level who had neither moved up in the VC nor left the movement.

A similar complaint came from a Deputy Village Party Secretary:

> All of us were shaken [by the widespread defection of new recruits] and furthermore we were strongly criticized by our superiors for not having trained the villagers and youths sufficiently to make them understand the Front's policy and also for not sufficiently motivating the youths before they were drafted. At present the Dong Hoa Hiep Village Chapter Committee members are afraid of being unable to cope with the situation.... The Front's draft badly affected the mission of the Military Proselyting Sections. [The VC] cadres can never again succeed in making the GVN soldiers defect because they know that if they defect and come back to their villages they will be drafted by the Front.

The enforcers sometimes go so far as to charge that the upper party cadres are themselves incompetent. One dedicated Deputy Village Party Secretary, given a new and incompetent boss, said that his incompetence eroded the discipline in the Front organizations to the point where "no ties, trust, or sympathy bound them together and ... fuel was added to the existing dissension. [The cadres] formed cliques and everyone sought to gain personal influence."

Another enforcer pointed to a situation symptomatic of the party's declining ability to deal with dissension and reconcile differences. In some difficulties, the party seems to have chosen to support the existing apparatus and to maintain the status quo, rather than to discipline or reassign middle cadres, who are hard to replace with adequately trained men. On being told of

wrong behavior by superior cadres, the party has shipped off the informants to military duty, in line with its policy of "reduction of administrative personnel." The short-run effects of these practices may include shutting off criticism and making the enforcers try even harder, so as to avoid military service. The longer-run effects may include frightening opportunists who may be trying to better their positions by denouncing co-workers. But the idealists among the enforcers are bound to be disillusioned by the growth of tension and suspicion.

Enforcers, if to a lesser extent than movers, have a "clean break" attitude, and do not seem to be particularly sensitive to appeals or information coming from outside the Front. But like ralliers who were movers, they open their minds and consider their personal situation when they are faced with difficulties in performing their tasks for the Front, or with disapproval for their shortcomings. They are sensitive to the suspicion and criticism that are bound to follow shortcomings. Experience of the Front's practices fosters disillusion even in those who retain their faith in goals like social justice. When personal advancement and social justice fail to materialize, enforcers become sensitive to GVN offers of opportunities to seek such goals on the side of the government.

## LITTLE BROTHERS

Little brothers are the minor and subordinate cadres. They are mixed in quality, motivation, and outlook. They comprise:

(1) cadres with long service in the Front who lack the qualifications or desire to rise to higher positions;

(2) cadres who have not been in the Front long enough to rise; and

(3) "floaters" who do only what is necessary to get along, and only want to be left alone.

Little brothers are less committed than other cadres to the goals of the Front, and are more easily discouraged than higher cadres. They are generally more naive and impressionable, and have invested less of themselves in VC service. They are the closest to the people, and the most easily appalled at Front pressures on the civilian population. They are not deeply committed to any ideological conceptions. They know little about the world, and very quickly pick up and reflect new points of view. The floaters among them are especially likely to adapt quickly. On being captured by the GVN, or rallying to it, they refer to their former VC colleagues in unflattering language. As a group, the little brothers are most sensitive to their personal positions and are opportunistic. They are constantly reevaluating their positions and looking for the most personally advantageous course of action. They are most susceptible to Front efforts to recruit by persuasion, backed with force. Uncommitted, the little brothers think in terms of choice, and are usually alert to the alternatives open to them. Closest to the people, they see their local situation in greater detail than do the higher cadres, and give more

importance to local conditions and events. They are most receptive to information from all sources that helps them evaluate and respond to their immediate situation.

## V. VC PROBLEMS OF SPECIAL CONCERN

Our interview data point to a number of areas of tension and points of cleavage in the VC organizational structure. While we have no conclusive evidence that these tensions and cleavages are intractable, or even that on the whole they are getting worse, they nevertheless represent weaknesses that may lower the effectiveness of the VC and make them vulnerable to U.S./GVN attack. Tension may arise in the relations between military and civilian cadres, and among cadres of different origins, status, or function. Problems are created by harsh or incompetent leadership, corruption, favoritism, and factiousness.

### RELATIONS BETWEEN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN CADRES

The VC have a long history, going back into the Resistance period, of tensions and difficulties between military and civilian cadres. These are not unknown to Dinh Tuong Province, despite the fact that the party has long recognized this relationship as a source of trouble, and has taken both organizational and propaganda steps to deal with it. While all cadres are systematically taught the superiority of political over military considerations, and accept it as a principle of action, frictions arise over delays imposed by political authorities and over difficulties caused by ineffective administrative personnel. Military cadres have low respect for administrative personnel. As one platoon leader told us, most

military cadres have felt contempt for civilian cadres since the Resistance began in 1945. But, he said,

> we have drawn a lesson from the earlier experience. The Front has gone all out to reduce the opposition to and contempt for the administrative cadres. Before we returned from regroupment we were repeatedly taught that we should not look down on the Village Party Chapters and the security organs.

Functional tensions arise because military cadres often are not fully aware of the complexity of the tasks that their political superiors must face; the military tend to resolve complexity by action, and thus to settle problems by the use of force. Moreover, the military cadres are conscious of suffering greater hardships and dangers. There are sometimes personal conflicts between local political and military cadres, especially if the military personnel feel that the political cadres are using their position for their own gain, or to favor or protect their families. We sometimes find evidence of strain because such cadres lack mutual respect. Conflict can easily arise if military operations are hampered or postponed because civilian cadres are unable to provide supplies in time or shelter after a battle; or if quartering of troops in villages is prevented because the political cadres do not want or cannot persuade the villagers to accept the burdens and risks.

We did not find evidence of politico-military cleavages of the "red" versus "expert" variety, in which the political cadres (the "reds") insisted on decisions in military matters that were not acceptable to the

soldiers (the "experts"). The principle of the dominance of political over purely military interests seems to have been widely understood and accepted. Moreover, the frequent fusion of roles, in which political and military responsibilities were vested in the same person or group, tended to prevent such conflicts from arising in the form of interpersonal rivalry or disagreement. The party, quite probably anticipating troubles that might arise if militarily inexperienced political cadres were to make unsound military decisions and then insist on them despite contrary advice from better-qualified military personnel, has consistently taken organizational measures to ensure that political and military problems will be jointly considered, and that command as well as decision-making is sufficiently centralized to ensure precedence for political questions. Moreover, in the selection of political personnel, military experience is specified as a prerequisite. As one platoon leader told us:

> The Military Affairs Section of the District Party Committee was a separate organization. The commander of the Local Force company was not the head of this section. The District Party Committee Secretary assumed the function of head of the District Military Affairs Section. The head of this section must have a higher rank than a company commander and he himself has to have been a company commander once.
>
> The relationship between the civilian and military organizations in the district was very tight because there was only one District Party Committee in charge of both civilian and military affairs. The District Party Committee Secretary assumed the function of head of the Military Affairs Section, and the Deputy Secretary of the

> District Party Committee assumed the function of Deputy Head of the Military Affairs Section. Because of this there could be no conflict between the local administrative and military machineries.

He added:

> The Party Chapter Committee commanded the unit in all respects. All missions must have the approval of the Party Chapter Committee. The military commanders (thu truong) applied its decisions.... The Party Chapter Committee had a direct chain of command. There was a Party Chapter Committee in the Local Force company. Within this party organization, there was a party cell in each platoon. The platoon leader was the cell leader [this was compulsory].

Sometimes the procedure or organization used to handle such problems is simple: at the district and village levels, the Military Affairs Committee may be nothing more than a label for periodic meetings between the Party Secretary and the commander of the district or village military unit, held to coordinate military and political objectives. Although the details may vary, the principle of political dominance and the chain of party control are found throughout. On balance, the party's treatment of this field can be adjudged a point of strength to date.

Within this system of political control, however, other tensions may arise, such as those between "Autumn Cadres" (those who were regrouped in the North and returned) and "Winter Cadres" (those who stayed in the South). Although we do not have evidence of critical friction when Southern cadres were put in command over

regroupees, the North Vietnamese considered it enough of a problem to take account of it in their training of the regroupees. One of the latter reported:

> The instructor [in the North] told us in advance that the movement in the South had already become strong, and that many cadres had advanced very fast -- sometimes even up to battalion level. They told us not to look down on these people, because they had many revolutionary achievements and had been zealous participants in the movement.

More serious than the conflicts among cadres of different origins, however, are those which arise from inbuilt conflicts between military and civilian missions. Military cadres from time to time provoke GVN forces into operations that may create opportunities for VC harassment or ambush of those forces. But the GVN response may also endanger the lives and property of the villagers who, in turn, complain to civilian cadres and make it more difficult for them to carry out their normal tasks of tax collection, propaganda, and control.

Difficulties have also appeared among the military cadres themselves. One platoon leader told us that the main shortcomings during combat were that the cadres were not sufficiently determined to carry out their missions and were still afraid of the enemy. The first cure adopted was to make these cadres swear before their peers that they were no longer afraid of the enemy; but when they returned to their units and came "face to face with reality, their morale began to slip."

> About one-third of the cadres dutifully carried out their missions but their ardor was gone. The remaining two-thirds were shirkers -- they did just enough to avoid being criticized. As for the fighters, one-fourth were denounced for being unenthusiastic, for malingering, and for constantly thinking of defection. One-half of the fighters were forced to fight; only about a quarter were determined to score military achievements.

The same informant reported quarrels among military cadres, because many still had a "feudalist mentality," or because their platoon leader was hot-tempered and the squad leaders "didn't act in accordance with the plan." In such cases:

> There was no other way but to hold indoctrination sessions and criticism sessions to correct errors.... It was very difficult for the cadres with a feudalist mentality to get promoted.

The quantity of military cadres he adjudged generally satisfactory, "because the training of prospective cadres goes on continuously and the development starts from the low echelon upward"; but "the technical and strategic aspects have certainly weakened. They [the new cadres] have to be battle tested for a while before they are fit for their job." And, in his view, "the newcomers are more enthusiastic than the old ones because they have not come face to face with reality."

## TREATMENT OF FORMER VIET MINH

Contrary to what might be expected in a revolutionary movement, which ordinarily rewards early, faithful, and

arduous service, former experience in the Viet Minh has not automatically opened a path to honor and high rank in the VC. Our data reveal instances in which former Viet Minh were objects of distrust, and this distrust in turn created dissatisfaction among former VM who were not fully accepted or used by the party. The problem has been serious enough to call for official VC action. In 1962 the VC issued a directive to their forces requiring them to correct their previous "wrong behavior," of which the following example was reported by a former District Financial Section cadre:

> All the former resisters who had been arrested by the GVN and who were suspected of having surrendered to it were kicked out of the Village Committee. These were men who had agreed to work for the GVN as trusties in jails or who had sought to gain wealth in trading.

In 1964, the same cadre reported, the VC set up a course designed to investigate the former resisters' activities during the period between 1954 and 1960, to review the evolution of their thoughts, and to dismiss those who had disclosed to the GVN police the presence of Party Chapters. Efforts were made to select the "best elements" from the former resisters, and to put them to service in the Front. This was done, not out of remorse or a sense of obligation to redress justice, but out of concern that if the VM were not used,

> they would be dissatisfied and might create difficulties for the new cadres who did not have enough experience to deal with them in public, thus provoking turmoil among the people. But the majority of the veteran

> fighters ... were entrusted with minor missions, mostly social tasks. That was why these veteran fighters often bitterly expressed their dissatisfaction, saying they belonged to the "ugly" class [i.e., in Vietnamese slang, they were fruit neither good enough to eat nor bad enough to throw away].

However, a recent VC attempt to reclassify cadres seems to give weight to former service in the Viet Minh. (See Appendix A.)

## LEADERSHIP SHORTCOMINGS

In our interview data there appears a strain of comment and complaint about shortcomings among VC leaders. These include shortcomings of competence, style of work, and morality. Some cadres, it is said, have risen by reason of loyalty and diligence to positions in which they can cope with some but not all of their major responsibilities. Some are competent but harsh persons, who try to drive for their objectives without adequate attention to the political consequences of roughly enforced demands, and who justify their methods by referring to the needs of the party and the correctness of its doctrine and decisions. Favoritism, factiousness, and opportunism are said to degrade the quality and justice of the Front's decisions and actions. Finally, there are complaints of corruption, dalliance, and comparatively easy living -- faults that are all the more galling when the cadres who commit them enforce prohibitions against such lapses or indulgence by the lower cadres or the rank and file on grounds of party morality or the political requirements for dealing with the people.

Charges of shortcomings seem to be most frequently directed toward civilian cadres, often toward those of the humblest origins. One of our informants, a private, thought the Village Secretary of Hoa Dinh was a good man, but:

> Many of the villagers did not like him because he asked them to pay very heavy taxes, and urged the guerrillas to shoot at the [GVN] village military post, and that made the latter shell the village.... [The Secretary said that] the villagers had to endure the shellings because we were in a wartime situation.

Incompetence takes a toll in more serious and widespread ways. One informant attributed the fact that his district was behind in its tax collections to lack of capable village cadres:

> They did not know how to explain the Front's tax policy to the villagers, and threatened the people to force them to pay.

Under pressure from the upper echelons for better tax collections,

> the village cadres kept threatening rather than explaining. Village cadres asked for instructions how to persuade villagers to pay up despite bad crops [e.g., in 1964], but the district cadres just told them to "give the villagers the necessary training." So the village cadres threatened the villagers, and many moved from their hamlets into town.

There are frequent references to corruption and favoritism, especially among cadres responsible for agricultural land reform, who allegedly took care of

their own families first, with more of the better land, and who sometimes denied land to other cadres on the grounds that "the people" were supposed to come first, and that the cadres would get their full reward after victory. Others reported that villagers resented being told they would get land only when the country was again independent and reunified. "But the villagers," said one informant, "wondered why the cadres' relatives had been given land even before independence and reunification." The cadres did not seem to be especially skillful in explaining some of the more devious aspects of their land reform and redistribution policies for the war period. For example:

> In 1963, the Front once more took the land belonging to those who had left the village ... and gave it to the Front's followers who did not yet have land to till. The villagers did not like these land distributions, because the cadres were given more land than the people.... Moreover, the villagers often said that they did not like to see the Front seize the land belonging to the poor who lived in the same village with them. Therefore some of them refused to receive land. The Front did not seize the 100 mau of ricefields belonging to the Bien Hoa province chief's father, but it forced those who tilled this land to give it the landlord's share of the crops. The Front called this measure the policy of isolating landowners. It also forbade the villagers to work for landowners.

Some stories circulated concerning financial corruption in the Front. We asked a member of a District Finance-Economy Section whether it was true, as reported by other informants, that the Front might as well get rid

of a Village Secretary after he had worked for three years, because all of them stole money from tax collections. He replied:

> It is true, because most of the Village Secretaries are poor peasants, and they began to buy wrist watches and transistor radio sets after having served the Front for a time. Their behavior created much suspicion among the villagers, and that was why in 1963 the Front sent its district cadres to the villages to nominate new Chiefs of Finance Sections from among the village cadres. In general, the task of collecting taxes was handed over to the chiefs of the Security Sections.

This same informant reported he had thought it a great honor when he was invited, though the son of a rich family, to be a probationary party member and Assistant Chief of the Finance Section. But later on, he said:

> I realized that they had chosen me because my family was rich, and ... the Front did not have to worry about whether I would flee with the cash!

A private pointed out that it was easy for Village Secretaries to steal from tax collections, because they could conceal the amounts actually collected. He reported that the Front had changed its system of collecting taxes in 1965:

> Taxes are now collected by a committee composed of three persons: the Village Secretary, the Chief of the Financial Section, and the Deputy Chief of the Village Security Section.

The favoritism mentioned by our informants often took the form of protecting the cadre's family members

against being drafted for military or labor service. While favoritism might be expected in personnel appointments, most of those responding to questions about it indicated that the qualifications for VC cadre positions, whether military or civilian, were stringent, and would be met before the influence of family connections or friendship would affect the choice of qualified persons. One informant, however, remarked:

> Cliques were formed everywhere; the cadres openly kept their kinsmen and their friends in advantageous positions and tried to defend each other from being punished by the Front.

Rich cadres were especially vulnerable to the military draft, under the program for reduction of administrative personnel. One Finance Section cadre reported:

> I noticed that during the Kiem Thao sessions, the formation of cliques inside of the Finance Section was clear: rich farmers got on with rich farmers and poor peasants with poor peasants. But we, the rich farmers, were always oppressed by the poor peasants.... They always kept an eye on our activities.

Cadres rarely charge other cadres with loose living, but the rank and file report from time to time that cadres seduced the villagers' wives, drank, and had a good time while they forbade the privates to do so. One private said:

> Even my wife had to resist a village cadre's attempted assault one night after I had been drafted.... When I learned of [the cadre's] misbehavior, I asked to go back to my village. I then wrote a denunciation and sent it to the Chief of the Village Security Section, but since [the cadre] was a security agent, he was protected by his chief who ignored my protest.

## MANPOWER PROBLEMS

The cadres in Dinh Tuong Province have had to cope with problems of two sorts in their efforts to tap available manpower: one is the recruitment and training of personnel to be sent to units elsewhere, and the other is the maintenance of forces in the province at an adequate level. The problem of cadres presents special difficulties at a time when both the VC and the GVN are encountering fresh difficulties in tapping available manpower, and the VC's requirements call not only for rank and file, but for seasoned leadership as well. Despite their concern for security and loyalty, the VC's need for larger forces is forcing them to call on persons who formerly served under the GVN, or who had relatives working for it. Prior to 1965, according to our interviews, the cadres were allowed to take such personnel only if they were volunteers and had a "clear record." Since then, however, uncompromising concern for security has had to be relaxed in view of the demand for men. The Front has been forced to rely more than ever on its control apparatus for keeping potential subversives under surveillance, and on its indoctrination and leadership apparatus for turning them into effective fighters. There is fragmentary evidence that personnel with GVN connections were more liable than others to be sent far away from home; the operational implications of this policy are not mentioned in our data, although it seems plausible that such personnel might be more likely than others to desert or to rally.

For at least two years the cadres have had to pay special attention to balancing military with civilian requirements, in the face of an ever increasing demand for military manpower. One captured directive (issued in 1964) authorized Main Force battalions to recruit personnel from villages under certain conditions. Battalion cadres, on arriving in a village,

> must confer with the Village Party Chapter to [arrive at] a plan of mobilization and recruitment. Units are not authorized to recruit all the key comrades serving in guerrilla units, the Party Chapter Committee, and the Party Youth Group, or party members.

This directive was apparently modified in 1965 to forbid units to recruit men directly in the villages. The VC insisted that recruits must be sent to higher echelons from lower ones, before assignment to units. One of our informants told us:

> The village sent fighters to the district, the district sent them to the province, and the province sent them to the region, which in turn assigned them to different units. This was done to avoid confusion in the recruitment of soldiers, which might attract the attention of GVN security agents and spies.

But this logical and systematic approach apparently broke down. Our informant went on:

> But this year, 1966, the units once again are being granted authorization by the region to go and recruit fighters in the areas they pass through. I think that this

> is due to the fact that it is getting more and more difficult to draft youths, and the Front has been compelled to revert to the method of direct recruitment by the units.

The struggle for manpower has sometimes forced the cadres into actions quite out of keeping with the early tactics of careful persuasion to obtain "volunteered" service on the basis of "enlightenment." Our interviews are replete with references to the difficulties met by the cadres in fulfilling their manpower quotas whether by persuasion or by draft. It appears that in 1965 the use of persuasion prior to drafting was diminishing and that the VC were placing increasing reliance on post-entry indoctrination to ensure that recruits were politically acceptable. Faced with rigid requirements from above, the lower cadres must somehow cope with draft resistance and evasion, as well as with the defection of unconvinced draftees. One of our informants noted that the villagers recalled the earlier arguments used by the Front against the GVN draft and applied them to the VC draft; families no longer urged their sons to do their duty, but tried to prevent them from joining. As a result, some cadres resorted to terror. One private told us that in 1965 the villagers could no longer successfully protest,

> because the cadres asserted that the higher-ups had decided that the youths had the duty to fight the enemy.... They also threatened that those who refused to be drafted would be punished and killed. In my hamlet, two brothers refused to join the Front units and said to the cadres: "We don't dare

> fight on the battlefield. You would do better to kill us than to draft us." The cadres tied them up and shot them dead right there. After this execution, nobody dared protest any longer.

This informant also indicated why pre-draft persuasion was no longer effective. It gave warning to the prospective draftee, who would flee. Hence:

> The guerrillas called on the draftees all of a sudden and forced them to go. Many did not even know they were being drafted because the guerrillas told them they had ... to [help] carry out some missions in the village. Some parents did not know their children had been drafted, and could not even bid them farewell. They have not received any news from them since then.

In one village of 12,000 population, some 180 youths were drafted in the first half of 1965. Eighty per cent of them, according to the village cadre, promptly defected. This prompted their superiors to criticize the lower cadres

> for not having trained the villagers and the youths sufficiently to make them understand the Front's policy, and also for not sufficiently motivating the youths before they were drafted. At present, the Village Chapter Committee members and afraid of being unable to cope with the situation.... We discussed the criticisms sent down to us, but we had to admit that if the draft policy was unsuccessful in the village, it was simply due to the youths' state of mind.... That situation was beyond our control.... I thought that the Front draft policy failed everywhere and not only in my village.

> Almost all youths were reluctant to be drafted and to go into battle, and that had made them defect. Their opinion was that if they had to join a combat unit, they would rather join a GVN unit. They thought they might die if they had to fight ... and they had better serve the GVN which at least gave them more material benefits than the Front.
>
> As for the youths' families, they were very angry at the Front draft. I witnessed the mothers and wives carrying out a face-to-face struggle against us by crying, weeping, and demanding that we let their sons or husbands alone.

Further insight into the position of the village cadre can be gained from the requirements imposed from above: that 10 per cent of the draftees must be party members, and 30 per cent Liberation Youth Association members. In the village we have been discussing, there were few party members and not many more Liberation Youth. No party members could be drafted and only 10 Liberation Youth could be found.

In this case the Village Committee concluded that, despite difficulties and sympathy with the position of the villagers, they must at least try to carry out the Front's orders. In other cases, however, the enforcers were able to find a way out. The secretary of one contested village said that, in spite of violence elsewhere, he did not want to resort to such methods:

> The district cadres urged me to use violence but I refused to follow their advice. I argued that the political situation in my village was quite different from that of the "liberated" villages, and that if such a measure was used there, the youths would escape and would follow the GVN. Although

> the district cadres did not agree ... they did not force me to use violence and the youths were then left alone. They only criticized me for being too soft and pointed out that I was too eager to comply with the desires of the people.

There is also evidence that village cadres on occasion have sided with villagers and youth who disobeyed District Committee orders forbidding the youth to go to the towns, and the villagers to return who had left the hamlet to seek security. (The District Committee reasoned that such villagers must be assumed to have denounced Communists to the GVN, and were therefore false to their families and to the Front.) The village cadres, however, recognized that all the villagers were doing was trying to escape the shellings. They understood why these villagers thought the Front was cruel because it insisted that the people must stay in their hamlets, endure shelling and risk death. They were also sensitive to the political damage the Front suffered by reason of this policy. As one village cadre put it:

> In general, the Front's threats made the villagers dissatisfied because they felt that forbidding them to leave their hamlets and forcing them to suffer the bombings and shellings amounted to letting them die. In fact, the Front cadres themselves thought this policy not only ineffective but incorrect, because most of them had some relatives who had taken refuge in the GVN-controlled areas. The villagers' security problem is, for the time being, an unsolved question for the Front.

Some time in the first half of 1965, the VC introduced a "reduction of administrative personnel policy"

whereby party members and civilian administrative cadres were (and still are) subject to be drafted into service with VC military units. This plan for reduction of administrative personnel may have produced manpower and cadres for military formations, but at the price of considerable tension in the civilian cadre ranks. Three of the 21 civilian cadres in our Dinh Tuong group rallied rather than risk such reassignment, with its greater danger and probable loss of prestige. We have not interviewed any Dinh Tuong person who rallied after being reassigned in this fashion. Our informants told us, however, that some men have deserted to their homes because of this program. There was an occasional allegation that factionalism and favoritism played their part in the selection of administrative personnel for the military draft. One informant, however, said that the self-reliant and proud among administrative cadres (including those with approved social origins, who were not so vulnerable) regarded this program as a "victory" for their class and a real gain for those administrative cadres who emerged unscathed.

Reduction of administrative personnel and transfer to the military may not unduly "civilianize" military leadership, because the men transferred are given political responsibilities. It is more than likely, however, that administrative personnel so reassigned are low in morale and efficiency, and at the least require a period for training and indoctrination before becoming effective in their new roles. One veteran district level cadre, an early victim of the policy, said:

> I would not accept my new assignment in a [Local Force] military unit. I told [my superior] bluntly that I could not fight, that I would never be willing to fight on the battlefield, and that I only agreed, before I joined the party, to fight in the political field. I said, "I would rather stay home and tend buffaloes than join a military unit."

An added strain on morale is the cadres' unhappy recollection that in 1953, during the war against the French, a similar campaign was launched to comb out ineffecient administrators and send them off to fight.

Men pulled out from administrative duties are apt to be better educated but less inured to physical hardships than soldiers. They are more sensitive to criticism and to prestige considerations. The occasions for criticism may be the greater because they are less competent in their new tasks. Transfer tends to interrupt the individual's career. Loss of prestige seems inevitable in the first instance, because reassignment rested on a judgment that the cadre's tasks were not vital, or his performance poor, or both. As we noted above, this program may have been useful to discriminate further against persons of doubtful social origins or connections. It has also offered a convenient means for some individuals to pursue vendettas against competitors or enemies within the movement.

## RELATIONS WITH VILLAGERS

In Dinh Tuong, as elsewhere, many cases have appeared of villagers showing signs of alienation from the Viet Cong.

Beset by taxes, contributions, and the draft, they are disillusioned because the Front has not moved rapidly to the victory promised in 1964, and again in 1965. They are now being asked to undergo a protracted war of uncertain duration. Many villagers now perceive the deceptions of VC propaganda and harbor resentment against them. Both cadres and rank and file report cases where villagers try to keep the cadres and the Front soldiers out of their villages, so as not to draw artillery fire or air strikes from the GVN.

Indications appear in our interviews that the cadres are taking steps to repair their relations with the villagers. But they have a lot to live down. One Chief of a Village Military Affairs Section said:

> This year, the cadres began to soften the people's discontentment by often saying that they would be very pleased if the villagers would point out what they had done wrong in order to help them to correct their behavior. But ... nobody felt like criticizing them.
>
> As for the bad actions of the Front, there were many of them. Most of the village cadres seduced the villagers' wives. The villagers knew about these wanton love affairs but they were too afraid of the cadres to denounce them.... The people also knew that the village secretary put money in his pocket when he collected taxes....
>
> At present, in the large "liberated area," the Front has had to forbid the villagers to gather together in groups of more than three, and to prohibit the villagers from organizing any kind of banquets or festivities.

The cadres have been encountering increasing difficulties in getting villagers to engage in face-to-face struggle with GVN officials, or otherwise to expose

themselves. According to one village cadre, in 1964 it was easy to get village women to go to the district town and demonstrate against GVN bombing or shelling of their village; but in 1965, it became very difficult to do this. Even in 1964 difficulties had begun to appear: Women would agree to go on demonstrations but would leave the column on the sly, if they could, en route to the district town, and those who arrived did not dare to face the district officials. The same cadre pointed out that there were two kinds of women among the demonstrators:

> Some of them were willing to struggle after they had been taught, but most of them demonstrated only out of fear of being punished by the Front. We had to put them in different squads; each squad had a squad leader, who was a woman eager to struggle.... Thanks to this control, the column was not disbanded halfway to the district town. The last demonstration occurred in January 1965, and it was a failure. Since then, we have been unable to carry out any more face-to-face struggles.

There is evidence that the party hand is getting heavier in the matter of getting villagers to engage in "face-to-face struggles." Overt party intervention tends to reduce the efficacy of the "popular associations" (i.e., the Women's, Youths', and Farmers' Associations) in mobilizing people to go on demonstrations and engage in other group acts. The burden of organizing these demonstrations is falling increasingly on the Village Party Secretary, at a time when his other responsibilities are also increasing. The village organizations, too, are suffering not only from having to motivate their members

to do difficult or unpleasant things, but also from a shortage of competent leaders. A member of a District People's Revolutionary Youth Group Committee, who specialized in revamping the Youth Group organization in the villages, said:

> The villages are weak since the village organizations did not have enough people. For example, the Executive Committee of the Youth Group has five people, but ... one person may have two or three functions, and they can't take care of everything.

The VC are also facing reduction in the effectiveness of their covert control mechanisms -- the anonymous informers who are the eyes and ears of the party. These are the nong cot (civilian activist sympathizers, literally, "backbone elements") who are typically in this context not party members; they are relatives of the VC cadres, and keep them informed about what the villagers are saying and doing. They often take a role in influencing village opinion to create a favorable climate for Front policies and decisions. At present, however, according to a former chief of a village military affairs section, "of every ten villagers, only one is willing to become a Front nong cot, whereas the rest complain a great deal about the Front's behavior."

The cadres are increasingly facing resistance based on growing attentisme and the desire of the villager to be left alone. A cell leader of a Main Force unit reported that villagers, once willing to volunteer good information, would now only give what they had to; but they did tell the truth. One recalcitrant villager told a squad leader:

> Do whatever you like. I am neutral and do not like to take sides. Your fighting only hurts the people, who do not have any interest in this war. I only worry about earning a living for my family. I do not care which side wins.

Other villagers showed considerable mettle in opposing the cadres, and thus set off disagreement and tension among them. One such villager was dissatisfied because she got no land from a land distribution, and her daughter had been unjustly arrested; the villager squabbled in public with the deputy village secretary, pointing to the sacrifices her husband had made for the Front, and to the fact that she had had no tangible reward. As the Front cadre recounted:

> While we were talking in the presence of some other village committee members, she lost her temper and said: "I couldn't care less if you don't give me any land! This would not make me starve because I could beg the Americans to give me something to eat!" Because of this last sentence, the deputy village secretary suggested that she should be forced to attend a reeducational course, and that the villagers be assembled to shame the woman. This suggestion met the other committee members' approval, but even in front of the villagers the woman continued to defy us by repeating that she would go and beg the Americans to give her something to eat, because the village cadres had only given land to themselves and to their own relatives. The villagers who attended did not say anything. That made me think that they agreed with the irate woman. I myself thought that her criticisms against us were right, and, to put an end to this affair, I had to stand up before all the villagers and apologize to the woman for not having given any land to her. I also

> added that I personally thought her statement about the Americans was only due to her anger and that it did not represent her true feelings.
>
> My apologies made the deputy village secretary very angry and I had to gather the whole village chapter for a special Kiem Thao session. All the members were against me at the beginning of the session but when I brought up the question of distributing land and criticized them for being too selfish, they kept quiet, and the affair was closed.

There is also evidence that more villagers are reluctant to carry out their roles as accusers, and as validators of Front sentences, in so-called People's Court Proceedings. One former Village Party Chapter Secretary said:

> Experience gained at higher echelons indicates a danger that there will be a strong reaction from the relatives of the accused [at the People's Court]. The people are also afraid that if they don't pass the death sentence the VC will cause trouble for them later on. If they do agree to the death sentence they are afraid the GVN will create difficulties for them, because it is inconceivable that there will not be somebody going to market and informing the GVN. For these reasons, we don't take [these cases] to a People's Court any more.

The position and prospects of a lower cadre are dramatically indicated in the following words of a young Labor Youth Group cadre:

> In 1960, when the Front destroyed the GVN grip on the village, the VC cadres came to the village and broadcast through megaphones that the people should arise to carry out the Revolution, take over the government, and reunify the country. At that time everyone believed that the Revolution would achieve success the following year and that those who were serving the Revolution would be the first to enjoy benefits -- such as going to the North to visit Hanoi, traveling to socialist countries such as Russia and China, and so on.

But in 1965 this cadre's world looked much different to him. The best he could say of the situation facing the Village Party Chapter was as follows: (1) Relative to other VC controlled areas, this village was a secure place. Although the GVN conducted operations there, it hadn't been able to destroy the local VC agencies. (2) At present, province and district cadres were concentrating on the village in order to give additional impetus to the Front movement there. The number of cadres operating in the village was very large. They were scattered in many places to carry out their tasks and, he thought, must be obtaining <u>some</u> results. (3) The farmers relied on their land to earn their living. Therefore they would have to cling to their land in spite of the hardships and the risk of getting killed. They could not go to the GVN-controlled areas to live.

In contrast to these positive views, however, this same Youth Group cadre went on to discuss some of the difficulties facing his party chapter:

> 1. The cadres are dissatisfied with the prolongation of the war and are fighting each other for positions. They are pretentious, self-satisfied, and vainglorious.

2. The worst disadvantage that the Party Chapter is facing is the fact that not all the cadres attend its meetings. Those who are absent don't know anything about the goals of the Front and this makes it impossible for the Party Chapter to carry out fully the orders of higher ranking cadres.

3. The cadres failed to overcome the difficulties they met in their mission. For example, if they met with any difficulties in their recruitment of new fighters or in the collection of taxes, instead of looking for ways to solve them in order to carry out the Front policy, the cadres just sat around and waited until the Party Chapter met to report on these difficulties. This is why, each time the Party Chapter met, a lot of difficulties and troubles came up, because the cadres clashed with one another on what was to be done.

4. The cadres have become independent and are worried about the way the war is going. They have decreased their vigilance. If they met with [more] difficulties they would quit.

## VI. VULNERABILITIES AND EXPLOITATION

Our account of the VC cadre in Dinh Tuong suggests a number of points of friction and vulnerability that might be exploited in GVN/U.S. propaganda and operations. Because the psychology of "movers," "enforcers," and "little brothers" varies in important respects, the vulnerabilities are somewhat different for each group, although they share a certain dissatisfaction with life, position, and personal prospects in the Front.

Our data strongly suggests that "movers" are invulnerable to propaganda so long as they retain the "clean break" attitude and consistently reject information and appeals coming from "out there," or reinterpret them to buttress their VC-shaped outlook. Yet our data show that the stresses and strains of life in the Front -- the existence of cliques, resentment against unfairness, and in particular the response to threats -- start a process of reevaluation that may be shaped in part by external information. For the "movers," the most important items are (1) information about the general course of the war, particularly about VC and NVA defeats coupled with GVN/U.S. victories, and (2) the fact that there is a way to escape. However dangerous the road and however dim the prospects for a tolerable position or career with the GVN, the very existence of a rallier program provides an alternative to continued suffering and risk within the Front. The exclusion of ideological argument from rallier appeals probably adds to their effectiveness with those who are considering desertion or defection because of

threats to their persons or positions, but who continue to put faith in the Front's goals and regard its doctrines as gospel. It may be worth while, however, to include in the output for movers some short statements about the GVN's political position and purpose, and about the long-run objectives of the United States in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. One reason for precise and brief statements of this kind is to reassure the higher cadre that he is not giving up his ideology -- that has always provided him an answer for his questions about the current struggle and its outcome -- for a political vacuum.

Having suppressed family feelings and ties to his home village, often many years before, the mover is probably less sensitive to appeals based on such sentiments than others who have not broken so completely with their pre-VC past. Yet such appeals may have latent value, and for those VC whose personal situation makes rallying compatible with a family reunion they may exercise marginal but possibly critical pressure.

Enforcers, as much as or more than the movers, are interested in the existence of an avenue of escape. As minor careerists, they too are interested in the possibility of position as well as material comfort after defecting to the GVN. They will therefore be interested to learn what former "enforcers" who have rallied are actually doing for the GVN. Those that have become minor GVN cadres, in armed propaganda units, rallier camps, or elsewhere, will be especially persuasive examples of persons who, after a time, have recovered some status and are now on the safer and more comfortable side.

Again like the movers, the enforcers will not be much interested in grandiose ideological perspectives. However, because of their concern for the villagers and their involvement in the villagers' social and economic position as well as protection of their own positions, enforcers may be doubly concerned over the rigor and at times callous indifferent with which the higher cadres demand fulfillment of quotas and requirements from those below them. Hence enforcers may be receptive to GVN/U.S. output based on the theme of Communist betrayal of the Revolution, preferably exploiting facts known to the audience about how the Front sacrifices the interests and well-being of "the people" to the interests of the apparatus. Such output should be coupled with detailed and localized information about programs of social justice and economic development planned and executed by the GVN with or without American help.

Some elements of the psychology of enforcers and movers who are questioning their position in the VC explain in part the apparent ease with which these cadres switch their allegiance. On concluding that the Front cannot win or that their personal sacrifices for the Front have been insufficiently rewarded, they are quite likely to reject their immediate leaders as betrayers and to abandon the VC cause.* Just as the cadre made

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*In our data, we have little evidence that rallying cadres reject the top leadership of the Front. They are much more likely to turn on their former immediate superiors, who may serve also as surrogates for the top leadership.

a clean break with his life prior to joining the VC, he expects he must make an equivalent clean break with his life in the Front. Hence, when he rallies, his initial view of the GVN is likely to mirror his view of the operational requirements of the Front. He believes that to survive under the GVN, if not to succeed, he must make a clean break again.

Since both movers and enforcers prefer action to ideological speculation, they expect that they must prove their new allegiance by deeds. This may explain the fact that some of them are quite willing to give intelligence about their former comrades-in-arms, and to lead ARVN units on raids to capture them or try to persuade them to rally.

Many former Front cadres feel that being a professional cadre is the only kind of work they can do. This is particularly the case among those who entered the Front from the lower classes, without previous professional or specialized training. Many of them seem to reason or hope that they can ply the trade of professional cadre equally well for one side or the other. They treat as a professional tool their ability to block out information coming from the other side that is not useful to them, or that runs counter to their interests or to the interests of the side they support. Moreover, they regard it as their business to be single-minded, and once on the GVN side, they consider it necessary to establish and uphold the justness of the GVN cause by disparaging the VC. Nevertheless, we have noticed that VC professional propagandists are often quite objective and candid during the

interviews. Indeed, this objectivity in assessing an overall situation and in weighing strengths and weaknesses is often found among sophisticated professional propagandists. However, they are at the same time able to dissociate these assessment functions from those of partisan public communications. Our data suggest that many former VC can do this very well without losing effectiveness as propagandists because by instinct or by training they feel the value of genuine commitment to a cause is a necessary element in persuasiveness. The psychological incentives to rationalize the break with the Front, to accommodate to life in the GVN, and to strive hard to succeed mean that defecting cadres are potentially useful servants of the GVN cause. The dangerous or distasteful actions they have taken on behalf of the GVN indicate that the accommodation is something more than verbal.

Little brothers are responsive to rallier propaganda. They are more easily discouraged by hardships in the Front than their superiors, although they may have more binding family or economic ties to localities under VC control. (The economic stakes, however, are often small and easily matched in GVN territory.) The "floaters" among them are apt to rebel when their personal interests are seriously threatened and they are more likely than some others to be victims of the Reduction of Administrative Personnel Program. On the whole, the little brothers are opportunistic. Hence they need reassurance about the safety of rallying, and about the economic prospects it offers. Since they are rarely aware of anything outside their local situation, but intensely aware of local conditions,

they can be reached by appeals, based on precise local intelligence, that show specific reasons why they should rally and specific ways in which they can escape from the Front's control. Little brothers, like the others, are disillusioned over the VC's failure to achieve victory; they are especially sensitive to information about VC defeats and weaknesses in their own localities. They suspect VC claims that it always triumphs, and adjust them according to their personal knowledge of VC wins or losses. Although they are understandably heartened by evidence of local VC successes, these have not been frequent in Dinh Tuong Province down to the present, because of the relative military quiescence the VC has imposed on itself by its strategy and tactics there. They may be less heartened by VC talk about old local victories (Ap Bac in 1963, for example) or about claimed victories in the jungles or the highlands, far away.

The little brothers are interested in exact and accurate news of the local situation. They will be impressed by such news of successful GVN sweeps, and particularly of successful GVN pacification. If a hamlet is destroyed, it is vital that the GVN interpret the action as a consequence of the VC's unloosing the war and prolonging it senselessly. Such interpretations are often volunteered by our respondents. The little brothers are shocked by the destruction, and the VC should not be allowed freely to use such incidents as a means of mobilizing hate and resentment against the GVN and the United States. The little brother, even more than his superiors, is sensitive to the VC's inability to

protect him or his hamlet. GVN/U.S. output should repeat and reinforce expressions of resentment against the VC that are current among villagers.

The subject of reunification presents some special problems for GVN and U.S. psychological warfare. Emphasis on the subject at this time seems unwise, because of the limitations imposed by U.S. policy, and by the destabilizing effects on political opinion abroad. Nevertheless, the topic cannot be wholly ignored. The appeal of reunification seems to have been surprisingly effective for the VC in Dinh Tuong Province, where, as elsewhere in the southern delta, there is only an embryonic sense of nationalism, and a powerful old tradition of separatism and regionalism. Despite this, many of our interviewees have mentioned reunification as a reason for supporting the VC. Yet the appeal seems to be wearing thin, in part because the VC has consistently presented reunification as a precondition for peace, and is now more than ever insisting that the struggle will go on until reunification is achieved. Their emphasis on protracted war means that the struggle is likely to be a long one. Yet peace has a very powerful appeal to the peasantry today in the war-torn countryside, and any positive assertion that national unification must come before the peasant can escape from war is likely to provoke profound frustration and resentment.

For this reason as well as for reasons of policy, it may be wise for the GVN and the United States to ignore reunification in their appeals to the enforcers and the little brothers, and to concentrate on demanding actions from them that will bring peace to their hamlets and

villages. This emphasis does not exclude insistence that Vietnam's revolution will be carried through by the GVN, and that the GVN will create a nation with peace, prosperity, and justice. It may be useful in propaganda to higher cadres to make such nationalist appeals. But for the lowest cadre levels, and for the rank and file, such appeals can be given secondary emphasis. Peace comes first. As a young farmer said when asked to comment on how people would choose between peace and protracted war with a chance to reunify the country: "[They want] peace. People just don't like to get killed."

The existence of cliques and personal conflicts among VC cadres is, of course, to be expected; the question is, what can the GVN do to exploit them? Since these conflicts, according to our data, do not arise over questions of policy, but over personal issues, style of work, and treatment of lower cadres and villagers, the GVN exploitation need not deal with matters of policy. The GVN propagandist and military planner should take into account the specific conflicts and specific weaknesses revealed by intelligence.

If a man rallies who is the leader or member of a clique, it is almost certain that others in his clique have been thrown under suspicion, and may already be the objects of surveillance, special criticism, and so forth. The leaders of rival cliques can be expected to make efforts to discredit not only the defector but also his fellows. These efforts could easily lead to increasing disaffection on the part of the followers of a defecting leader. As pressure and threats grow, existing dissatisfactions would presumably multiply, making the followers

prime targets for rallier appeals. Attempts to make personal contact with each of these followers directly or through their families might return large dividends. Every support should be offered to defecting front-rank village cadres who try to make contact with disaffected members of their village organizations. It goes without saying that the theme of good treatment needs to be stressed. The defecting cadre could be trusted to give his former colleagues the best advice about how to rally.

The promise or prospect of position or career with the GVN is an important theme, but requires care in avoiding the creation of excessive expectations. One tactful approach would be to convey messages from former VC cadres who are functioning as leaders of armed propaganda units or as Chieu Hoi personnel, and who identify themselves as such to their audiences. It is important in Dinh Tuong, as elsewhere, to make sure that messages from persons who have rallied long before are included in the output, as a means of demonstrating the falsity of VC assertions that the ultimate fate of the rallier to the GVN is detention or death, even though his treatment may be favorable as long as he is useful to the GVN. It is also worth while to include messages from former VC cadres of higher rank, to offset the belief, mentioned by some interviewees, that Chieu Hoi is only for the rank and file and minor cadres and that those who were formerly prominent in the Front might be secretly done away with after their rally.

The VC cadres in Dinh Tuong Province sit astride major axes of communication from sea to rear areas, and

from the southern delta to Saigon. Their tasks are to hold these open for their own forces, to harry or to deny them to the GVN, to milk the province of resources, and to erode the military and political position of the opponent.

They have enjoyed some advantages from the relatively limited strategy assigned to their forces in the province, and from the correspondingly limited strategy of the GVN. In 1965, and down to the late summer of 1966, they did not have to cope with the actual introduction of large new forces, American or otherwise, into the province, nor with the massive use of new weaponry like the B-52. They have not had to face growing military defeat or an increasing disparity between available weapons or supplies and the current level of conflict.

But they also face growing difficulties: They must levy increasing contributions on a peasantry that is more and more disillusioned and recalcitrant. They must implement Front policies that often conflict with the people's desires and interests. The manpower sent to fight in the central highlands or elsewhere outside the province is no longer available to them for production. Both military and civilians now must face the prospect of protracted war, notwithstanding false VC promises concerning the year of the "general uprising" and of victory. Moreover, the peasantry want peace. Many VC cadres may well be asking themselves at the current juncture whether to stay with the movement, to desert, or to join the GVN, which may increasingly appear to them to be the legitimate authority and the probable victor.

Although this study is focused primarily on the search for VC weakneeses and vulnerabilities, it is clear from our data that the cadre structure overall has remained strong, especially in its upper echelons. It is still able to recruit new talent, and to maintain supervision and control over the cadre structure in VC-controlled areas and in most contested areas as well. It has shown resilience in the face of new difficulties and threats, and has announced clearly its determination to wage protracted war, whatever the costs.

Nevertheless, the cadre structure has demonstrated important points of friction and weaknesses. Opportunities exist for the GVN to dishearten and win over some of the middle and lower VC cadres by a combination of military, economic, and political pressures, guided by detailed intelligence and closely adjusted to the requirements of particular localities. Whether these opportunities are seized, and whether these weaknesses can be exploited, depends directly on the kinds of alternatives to continued struggle that are offered to such VC by the GVN and its allies in their efforts to promote national reconciliation.

## APPENDIX A

Recent documentary and interview data indicate that the Viet Cong have their own classification of cadres which, however, encompasses too great a span of echelons to be adaptable to our predominantly low level, village-oriented study. The following notes give some idea of the complexity of VC terminology.

Various VC documents have employed terminology suggesting distinctions of both seniority and echelon among cadres. In one captured document the term "intermediate echelon" was applied to an assistant chief of a regional military propaganda section. Another document** containing the indoctrination material for the 1965 reorientation course specified that it was for party members of the "basic echelon." Another reference to cadre classification was contained in a document*** giving

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* This document, dated April 30, 1965, is a plan for reorganization of the military proselyting function in a VC military region.

** "Indoctrination Document for the Reorientation of Party and Youth Group Member Cadres at the Basic Echelon Who Have Been Approved by the Current Affairs Section of the Party Committee," March 5, 1965, For Official Use Only. Handwritten note in the upper left margin indicates that the indoctrination was scheduled to take place from May 8 to 15, 1965.

*** "Plan for Supplementary Reorientation for District Committees and Their Specialized Branches, Party Chapters, and Village Party Committees," dated May 20, 1965 and signed by the Current Affairs Section of the (My Tho) Province Party Committee, For Official Use Only.

instructions from the province level on methods of conducting a supplementary reorientation for 1965, and specifying that in certain instances "first echelon cadres" should be employed.

A recent (July 1966) district level rallier stated that the Central Party Headquarters in South Vietnam (COSVN) issued a directive in 1965 specifying four distinct cadre echelons. They are: the "basic echelon" (can bo co so), the "primary echelon" (can bo so cap), the "intermediate echelon" (can bo trung cap), and the "higher echelon" (can bo cao cap). According to this cadre, the "basic echelon" denotes village level cadres, the "primary echelon" denotes district level cadres, the "intermediate echelon" is for province level cadres, and the "high ranking cadres" are those at regional level or higher. The purposes of this classification, according to our rallier's informants, were:

(1) to ensure uniformity in the level of comprehension among the trainees at political meetings;

(2) to ensure and strengthen good leadership at every level;

(3) to serve as a basis for differential allowances to various categories of cadres.

The action taken on the 1965 directive in the subject's district included restricting the membership at district level meetings to full-fledged District Party Committee members and excluding the Village Party Chapter Secretaries who, by virtue of their function, held probationary membership in this Committee, and had previously been invited to attend plenary sessions of the District

Party Committee (the so-called "expanded session" -- hoi nghi mo rong). It appeared to our subject that this exclusive policy was intended to invest the entrenched leadership at the district level with greater prestige. In the rallier's own district the prestige of the leaders had been sagging. The discriminatory system of allowances that was instituted on the basis of the new categories may have caused more resentment than the small differences in material rewards would suggest.*

Apart from the four echelons, cadres were divided into A and B categories, on the basis of seniority in service to the movement. The A category mainly comprised those who had held positions of responsibility during the Resistance and the B category those who had joined since the emergence of the Viet Cong, or had served during the Resistance in a minor capacity.

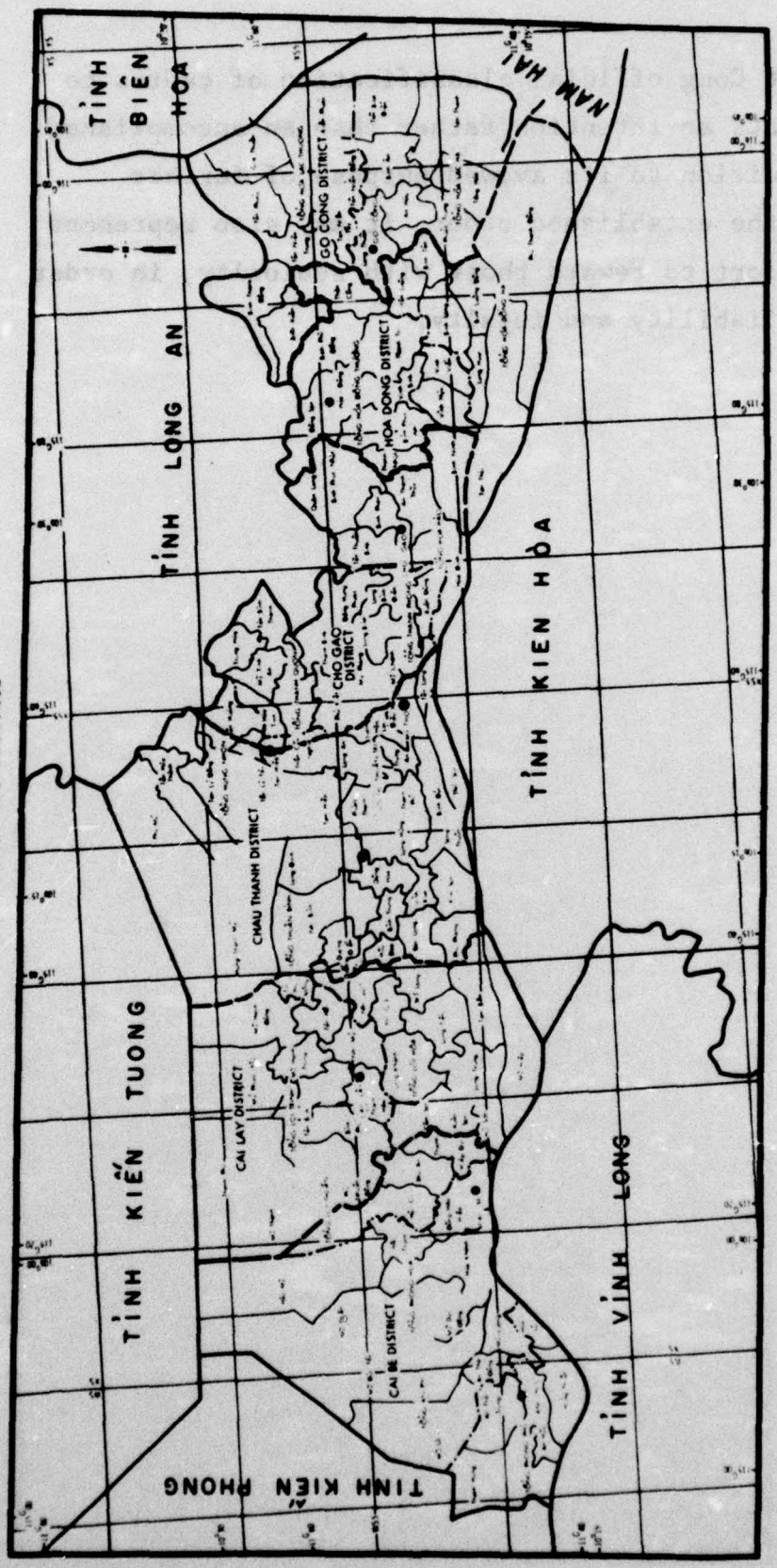
In the subject's own District Party Committee, eight members were classified in the A category and nine in the B category. The frictions created by this invidious distinction, however, ultimately forced the District Committee to postpone its permanent adoption. The interviewee's efforts to impose the A and B classification at the village level met with a strong reaction from the village cadres, and had to be abandoned.

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*Our District level informant related that the Tam Hiep Village Secretary, exhorted everyone at the [Village Party Chapter] meeting to keep in mind that the classification only aimed at strengthening the Party leadership at the village level. 'We should not,' he added, 'view this as an attempt to fix our positions the way former kings bestowed gratifications on their mandarins.'" Despite this explanation, the meeting foundered in bickering and reproaches.

The Viet Cong official classification of cadres to date represents an intention rather than an accomplished fact. In addition to its avowed purpose of further entrenching the established order, it may also represent a belated effort to reward those with seniority, in order to foster reliability and loyalty.






VC MY THO PROVINCE

DINH-TƯỜNG PROVINCE (GVN BOUNDARIES)

