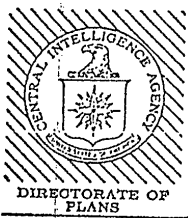


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# Intelligence Information Report

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COUNTRY: South Vietnam

REPORT NO.

SUBJECT: Lessons Used in the Indoctrination of American Prisoners of War  
DATE DISTR: 15 SEPTEMBER 1969

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Summary. A series of four lessons is given American prisoners captured in the area of Front 7. The first, after containing a brief historical review, emphasizes the unjustness of the current American participation in the war. The second develops the theme that the war is causing a split in American society. The third dwells on racial discrimination in the US and links the Negroes' struggle for civil rights to the Viet Cong cause. The last concerns the clemency policy of the Viet Cong toward American prisoners. Directed discussions follow each of the lessons. End Summary.

1. The first indoctrination lesson given American prisoners of war (POW's) in the Front 7 area of Quang Tri proposes to show them that their country's participation in the war is unjust and immoral. It is also designed to help the prisoners understand and sympathize with the Viet Cong insurgency. The lesson begins with the situation following the Geneva Accords

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of 1954, noting that the latter provided for the withdrawal of the French Army and the holding of free elections leading toward unification. It then states that the French abandoned their responsibility for supervising these elections because of the Algerian war and handed South Vietnam (SVN) over to the Americans in order to repay them for their help during the Indo-China War. The course material goes on to characterize the Diem regime as having been established by the Americans, as having been completely dependent on them, and as having been the cruelest in Vietnamese history. The Thieu-Ky Government is then described as representing the elite only, not the populace; and its support by the US is purported not to be in the latter's national interest.

2. This lesson also claims that SVN has become a virtual colony of the US, that the latter has taken over in all aspects of its life, and that this has not been to the good. Examples of this takeover are seen in the American participation in Diem's overthrow, the continued presence of US troops in the country, the complete dependence of SVN economically on American aid, and the corruption of the manners and morals of Vietnamese women (attributed in large part to the influence of American arts and entertainment). The Americans are also blamed for the spread of venereal disease in the country, the lack of adequate public hospital facilities, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the violation of traditional customs and manners, and the destruction of temples, pagodas, tombs, villages, and populations.

3. Finally, this lesson contrasts what it contends is the just and winning cause of the Viet Cong (VC) with the unjust and losing one of the Government of Vietnam (GVN) and its American supporters. Comparisons are drawn here with the Americans' victory in their own War of Independence and with the failure of the French to defeat the Vietnamese during 1945-1954. Specifically, the lesson states that the Americans cannot win because the unjustness of their cause has alienated world public opinion, because they lack the support of the majority of the Vietnamese people, and because the American public will be increasingly split as the protracted guerilla warfare of the Viet Cong results in continued attrition of men and money. The Viet Cong, on the other hand, are pictured as having the support of world public opinion because of the justness of their cause, as being able to mobilize the patriotic zeal of the Vietnamese people as a result of the "American aggression," and as being experienced guerilla warriors.

4. The second lesson aims at showing the POW's that the internal cohesiveness of the US is being ruptured by its government's "absurd determination" to continue the Vietnam War. First it claims that America is facing economic disaster because of the war, that tens of billions of dollars a year must be spent on the Vietnam effort, that unemployment and poverty in America are on the increase, that the dollar is depreciating in value, and that America's overseas markets are being lost to France, West Germany, and Japan. Then the lesson points out what it considers to be the political problems caused by the war, that the split within the Democratic and Republican Parties over the war (anti-war congressmen of both parties are noted here) has compounded the pre-existing split between the two parties (which in turn is cited as the cause of the John F. and Robert Kennedy assassinations) and that the American people have shown their opposition to the war and support of the Vietnamese people in many ways; e.g., bloody demonstrations, burning of draft cards, and self-immolations. The lesson concludes that if you (the POW's) have

a Vietnamese, you are going against the conscience and concepts of humanity and justice held by most of your fellow Americans. (Field comment. As presented by the source, this lesson seems ill-organized, building up an anti-war case based upon national self-interest and then switching to a moralistic appeal.)

5. The third lesson concerns racial discrimination in America and is designed to make Negro POW's fully aware of "their condition of slavery" so that they will oppose the US Government. The line is pressed here that racial discrimination is caused by the American Government and not by the American people, who respect all races. It is stated that the government fosters racial discrimination as a means of reducing the collective strength of the people, thus making their exploitation easier. The point is then made that Negroes are also human beings, are intelligent, and can contribute to society and that all people have the right to equal treatment according to the letter of the US Constitution. This is contrasted with the "facts" of segregation and the brutality and economic privation to which the American Negro has been subjected. The situation whereby the Negro becomes a soldier fighting in Vietnam is pictured as being of no benefit to him but only to the large industrial corporations which are growing rich off the war. The civil rights movement is praised as a struggle against genocide, and the assassination of Martin Luther King is presented as a sign that the US Government has embarked upon such a course of extermination. Finally, the Negro struggle in America is likened to the struggle of the Vietnamese "people" against "aggression".

6. The final lesson deals with the application of the VC "clemency policy" towards US POW's. The purpose of this lesson is to convince the prisoner that this policy stems from the humane spirit of the resistance forces. It is stated that the POW himself is not considered an enemy and that it is only the "imperialists" who fall into this category. The prisoners are told that despite the fact that they resisted the VC and committed atrocities against them, they will not be subjected to cruelty. Nevertheless, it is announced that three levels of treatment will be meted out to Americans coming under VC control, depending on whether they are "counter-war," ralliers or those willing to serve as penetration agents; "non-resisters," those who desert on the battlefield or who put up no resistance to being captured; or POW's, those forced to surrender on the battlefield. It is further stated that only weapons, binoculars, radios, compasses, helmets, watches, and fountain pens will be taken from the prisoners and that they will be left with what is considered their personal property; e.g., checks, money orders, contracts, pictures, clothes, shoes, field bags, belts, lighters, combs, and money. Finally, notice is given that the VC will do whatever it can to have delivered POW's letters to their families and to accommodate those Americans wishing not to return home but to remain in the "liberated" area.

7. The following procedures are used in teaching each lesson:

a. The classroom presentation consists of an oral verbatim reading of a previously-prepared standard text. The time required varies from six to eight hours. It is given in intervals of 50 minutes, with a 10 minute break between intervals.

b. The discussion period lasts three or four days, perhaps even longer depending on the receptivity of the

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particular group of POW's. The indoctrinator fields the discussion questions and monitors the subsequent discussion which it is hoped will ensue among the POW's. He keeps the discussion keyed to the particular question and observes what part of the class holds a pro-VC view and what part does not. When approximately two-thirds of the class becomes pro-VC, the discussion stops and the text of that particular lesson is re-written for its final presentation in class before proceeding to the next lesson. If two-thirds of the class fail to hold a pro-VC view, the text is re-written again, presented again, and discussed again, or else the particular indoctrinator is replaced by another one from the next higher echelon.

c. The presentation of the revised text requires two to three hours.

8. Field Dissem: STATE, USMACV, USAID, CORDS, 7th Air Force, Dir/JUSPAO (Mr. Nickel only), USARV, NAVFORV, 525 MI GP, 6499 SAG, OSI, CINCPAC PACFLT, PACAF, ARPAC