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REPORT NO. []

DATE DISTR. 6 OCTOBER 1969

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COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI AUGUST 1969

SUBJECT 1. OBJECTIVES AND PROBLEMS OF THE VIET CONG LAM DONG PROVINCE UNIT
2. VIET CONG POLICY TOWARD U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR

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STATE	DIA	ARMY	NAVY	AIR	NSA	CRS	(For Field Distribution see final paragraph)

SUMMARY-- THE BASIC TARGETS OF VIET CONG /VC/ MILITARY UNITS IN LAM DONG PROVINCE HAVE REMAINED UNCHANGED FOR THE PAST THREE MONTHS, DESPITE AN APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT DECREASE IN TROOP STRENGTH SINCE TET 1968. THE VC PROVINCE UNIT STAFF CHAPTER OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY USUALLY MEETS ONCE A MONTH BUT DOES NOT MAKE ANY DECISIONS. THE FINANCE-ECONOMY SECTION OF VC PROVINCE COMMITTEE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO MEET ITS MILITARY REGION 6 TAX COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION AT THE PROVINCE LEVEL, U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR /POWS/ ARE SENT TO THE CENTRAL OFFICE FOR SOUTH VIETNAM IMMEDIATELY AFTER CAPTURE. THE LATEST VC POLICY TOWARD U.S. POWS IS REPORTEDLY TO ACCORD THEM GOOD TREATMENT, BECAUSE THEY WILL BE NEEDED FOR PRISONER EXCHANGES NOW THAT THE END OF THE WAR IS IN SIGHT. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION AVAILABLE WITHIN THE LAM DONG VIET CONG /VC/ PROVINCE STAFF UNIT, IN LATE AUGUST 1969 THE BASIC TARGETS OF VC MILITARY UNITS IN THE PROVINCE HAD UNDERGONE NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AS OF THE LAST THREE MONTHS- THEY REMAINED U.S. AND GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM /GVN/ INSTALLATIONS AND PERSONNEL. HOWEVER, THE SET POLICY OF ATTEMPTING TO CONTROL THE RURAL AREAS, AND ULTIMATELY THE POPULATION CENTERS ADJACENT TO NATIONAL ROUTE 20, HAD BEEN AFFECTED BY A DECREASING CAPABILITY OF THE VC IN THE PROVINCE, RESULTING FROM UNDERSTRENGTH UNITS. IT WAS RUMORED THAT A NEW NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY /NVA/ UNIT, THE 730 COMPANY, CONSISTING OF 90 MEN, HAD ARRIVED IN LONG KHANH PROVINCE EN ROUTE TO REINFORCING UNITS IN LAM DONG.

2. AT A MEETING HELD ON 6 AUGUST 1969 FOR ALL VC OF COMPANY COMMANDER RANK, THE OBJECTIVES OF COMING CAMPAIGNS OF VC LOCAL FORCE UNITS WERE STATED TO BE-- /A/ INTER-DICTING NATIONAL ROUTE 20, CAUSING INTERFERENCE WITH TRAFFIC AND COMMUNICATIONS THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE- /B/ LAUNCHING MORTAR AND ROCKET ATTACKS AGAINST U.S. AND GVN INSTALLATIONS-

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AND /C/ CONDUCTING SNIPER ATTACKS AGAINST LONE U.S. AND
GVN PERSONNEL. ALTHOUGH NO GREAT EMPHASIS HAD BEEN PUT ON
SAPPER TRAINING FOR THE LAST FOUR MONTHS, SNIPER TRAINING
REPORTEDLY WAS TO BEGIN SHORTLY. /FIELD COMMENT--

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A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL
VC SAPPER ATTACK WAS CARRIED OUT ON THE NIGHT OF 11 SEPTEMBER
1969 AGAINST THE 3/53RD ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM /ARVN/
REGIMENT. THE FOLLOWING NIGHT THE SAME UNIT RECEIVED A MORTAR
AND ROCKET ATTACK./

3. TROOP STRENGTH IN LAM DONG IN AUGUST 1969 WAS
APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF WHAT IT WAS PRIOR TO THE TET 1968
OFFENSIVE. THE AVERAGE STRENGTH OF A LOCAL FORCE COMPANY
WAS CURRENTLY ONLY 30 MEN. CONTINUING SHORTAGES OF FOOD AND
MEDICINE DURING THE RAINY SEASON HAVE CAUSED MORALE TO REACH
AN EVEN LOWER EBB THAN EXISTED PREVIOUSLY.

THE WEAK POSITION OF VC UNITS IN THE PROVINCE,
COMPOUNDED BY LOW MORALE AND INADEQUATE TROOP STRENGTH, WOULD
PROBABLY PROHIBIT THEM FROM MOUNTING ANY LARGE-SCALE ATTACKS
IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY PROJECTED COUNTRYWIDE OFFENSIVE.

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4. VC COMPANY COMMANDERS WERE CONTINUALLY REMINDED THROUGH
PROPAGANDA THAT THEIR UNITS CONSISTED OF GUERRILLA FIGHTERS
WHO MUST ALWAYS BE PREPARED TO WAGE A GUERRILLA WAR, WHICH
FREQUENTLY WOULD REQUIRE EACH UNIT TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT
AND ABLE TO FIGHT WITHOUT OUTSIDE SUPPORT, INCLUDING NVA
MANPOWER.

5. THE VC PROVINCE STAFF UNIT CHAPTER OF THE PEOPLE'S
REVOLUTIONARY PARTY /PRP/ HELD MEETINGS USUALLY ON THE LAST
DAY OF EVERY MONTH, WITH THE TIME AND PLACE ANNOUNCED AT THE
LAST MINUTE. THE MEETINGS USUALLY LASTED ABOUT EIGHT TO TEN
HOURS, OFTEN INTO THE NIGHT, AND WERE ATTENDED BY 21 OF THE
TOTAL 50 MEMBERS OF THE STAFF UNIT. IT WAS DESIRED THAT ALL

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UNIT MEMBERS BECOME PRP MEMBERS, BUT SOME WERE UNQUALIFIED BECAUSE OF THEIR MONTAGNARD ETHNIC BACKGROUND, AND OTHERS HAD NOT SERVED THE "REVOLUTION" LONG ENOUGH. THE AGENDA OF THE MEETINGS RARELY VARIED. THE FIRST PART WAS DEVOTED TO GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE PAST MONTH'S ERRORS AND TO SELF-CRITICISM, WHILE THE SECOND PART WAS DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION OF GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED IN THE COMING MONTH. THE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE RENDERED BY THE SENIOR CADRES WERE NOT IN THE FORM OF CONCRETE DIRECTION BUT TOOK ON THE FLAVOR OF PROPAGANDA. NO POLICY DECISIONS WERE MADE. THE NIGHT SESSIONS OF THE MEETINGS WERE CONDUCTED BY A HIGH-RANKING CADRE FROM THE PROVINCE COMMITTEE CHAPTER, WHO MERELY REPEATED THE SUBSTANCE OF THE EARLIER DISCUSSIONS.

6. THE VC PROVINCE COMMITTEE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO MEET ITS MILITARY REGION 6 TAX COLLECTION REQUIREMENT SINCE JANUARY 1969. NOT ALL THE REASONS ARE KNOWN, BUT THE SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER IS PROBABLY A MAIN FACTOR PROHIBITING EFFICIENT COLLECTION OPERATIONS. THE FINANCE-ECONOMY SECTION OF THE PROVINCE COMMITTEE IS HAVING PROBLEMS, AS INDICATED BY THE MINIMAL ALLOWANCE OF VN\$90 /U.S.\$.76 AT THE OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE OF VN\$118 TO U.S. \$1.00/ GIVEN EACH VC SOLDIER EVERY OTHER MONTH FOR THE PURCHASE OF TOBACCO, CANDY, AND OTHER SUNDRIES. THE FINANCE-ECONOMY SECTION ANNOUNCED TWO MONTHS AGO THAT THIS ALLOWANCE WOULD BE DISCONTINUED BEGINNING WITH THE FOURTH QUARTER OF THE YEAR, BECAUSE FUNDS FOR THIS PURPOSE WOULD BE DEPLETED. THE MAJORITY OF TAX MONEY OBTAINED BY THE PROVINCE COMMITTEE IS DERIVED FROM LUMBER AND PLANTATION INTERESTS. THE LARGER PLANTATIONS, SUCH AS LE VAN PHUOC, TRANPIR, D'AMPIR, AND TU QUY, MUST PAY 30 TO 40 PERCENT OF THEIR GROSS INCOME FOR OPERATING PRIVILEGES, AND THE SMALLER PLANTATIONS MUST PAY ABOUT 20 PERCENT. IN ADDITION, THE PLANTATION WORKERS ARE REQUIRED TO PAY A WORK-RESIDENCE TAX. SOME LUMBER AND COFFEE INTERESTS MUST PAY AS MUCH AS 50 PERCENT OF THEIR GROSS INCOME IN TAXES.

7. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION LEARNED AT THE PROVINCE LEVEL, TWO U.S. MILITARY MEN, A LIEUTENANT AND A SERGEANT, WHO WERE CAPTURED IN DI LINH DISTRICT IN 1968 WERE SENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE CENTRAL OFFICE FOR SOUTH VIETNAM /COSVN/ IN KEEPING WITH THE POLICY ON ALL /SIC/ U.S. POWS. THE LATEST VC POLICY TOWARD U.S. POWS IS TO PROVIDE THEM GOOD TREATMENT, BECAUSE THE WAR WILL SOON END AND THEY WILL BE NEEDED FOR PRISONER EXCHANGES WITH THE GVN AND THE U.S. THERE IS NO INTERNMENT CAMP IN LAM DONG PROVINCE FOR U.S. PRISONERS, ALTHOUGH THERE IS ONE FOR ARVN SOLDIERS, LOCATED IN THE VICINITY OF YT 8586-8582-9092-9086. IT IS IN A LARGE BAMBOO AREA, IS WELL-CONCEALED FROM THE AIR, AND CONSISTS OF SIX SMALL HOUSES AND DEFENSIVE POSITIONS. THE CAMP IS GUARDED BY APPROXIMATELY 10 VC SECURITY GUARDS, ARMED WITH SKS AND U.S. CARBINES, WHO HAVE ORDERS TO KILL THE 20 OR SO ARVN PRISONERS IF THE CAMP IS RAIDED. THE PRISONERS PERFORM AGRICULTURAL WORK, EAT WITH THE GUARDS, AND ARE WILLING TO ESCAPE IF THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF. SOME OF THE LESS TRUSTED PRISONERS ARE KEPT UNDER PHYSICAL DETENTION AT NIGHT. NO OTHER LARGE VC FORCES ARE STATIONED NEARBY.

8. FIELD DISSEM-- STATE, USMACV, USAID, CORDS, DIR/JUSPAO /MR. NICKEL ONLY/, 7TH AIR FORCE, USARV, NAVFORV, 525TH MI GC, 6499 SAG, OSI, CINCPAC, PACFLT, PACAF, ARPAC

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