3 November 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: More Vietnam Numbers Problems

- 1. In light of the impending USIB consideration of MIE 14.3-67, you should be aware of the attached exchange of traific which bears on both the estimate's and the U.S. Government's present handling of the problem of counting and classifying Viet Cong guerrillas and other paramilitary or "militia" forces.
- 2. The estimate draft distinguishes the guerrillas from the others (self defence, secret self defence, assault youth, etc.). The draft contains the judgment, agreed in Saigon, that the number of querrillas is now probably in the 70,000 90,000 range. It gives no quantified guess regarding the current number of other irregular elements, a point also agreed in Saigon.
- I. We on the American side, particularly COMUSMACY, have always drawn a sharper distinction between the guerrillae and the other paramilitary elements than is drawn by the Communists. Evidence has recently come to light which suggests the VC may be further blurring this distinction to the point where our nather arbitrary U.S. breakout may be more michaeling than helpful. So will need to do a lot more concentrated research in this area and the results of this research will probably require a recasting of the id. I figures and definitious regarding guerrillae and other local VC elements.
- 4. I am not suggesting that the estimate should be withheld now am I advocating that the bidding should once again be responded

on its paragraphs which relate to this very sticky and complex problem. You should be aware, however, of the potential import of recently acquired evidence and of the Statica's views on this matter, which are expressed in paragraph six of the attached Saiges cubic.

George A. Carver, Jr. Special Assistant for Victnemese Affairs

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Attachments

Distribution:
As above w/2 atts (Saig 4140 DIR 47164)

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GET RETURNS FROM FIELD.			
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MILITIA/ GUERRILLA ORGAN	IZATION" OTHER THAN	IV CORPS REPOR	RTS, 3.3(h)(2)
SPECIFICALLY	FROM CHUONG THIEN	PROVINCE. OB NUMBER	3.3(h)(2)
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3. REVIEW OF SEPTEMBE	R PROVINCE REPORTS	AND RECENT	0.041.40
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INDICATE GUERRILLA PROGR	AM BOTH PLANS AND	ORGANIZATION-	
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COMMITTEES BEING GIVEN CONTRADICTORY ORDERS TO ENCOURAGE
MORE GUERRILLAS TO MOVE UP TO MAIN FORCES AND TO STRENGTHEN
GUERRILLA UNITS.

- 4. WE ARE PROBABLY KIDDING OURSELVES IF WE THINK IN

 TERMS OF TWO RATHER UNIFORM AND DISPARATE CLASSES OF IRREGULARS—
 GUERRILLAS AND MILITIA. THE IRREGULAR STRUCTURE APPEARS

 TO HAVE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF ORGANIZATIONS AND TO

 VARY FROM REGION TO REGION, PERHAPS FROM PROVINCE TO PROVINCE.

 IT IS A ROUGHLY PYRAMIDAL STRUCTURE THE BASE OF WHICH

 DISOLVES INTO THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE UNDER VIET CONG CONTROL

 IN A MANNER THAT MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO DRAW A SHARP LINE

 AND SAY THAT THOSE ON ONE SIDE ARE IRREGULARS AND THE OTHERS

 ARE NOT. SIMILARLY, THOUGH PERHAPS TO A LESSER EXTENT, THE

 EXISTENCE OF "PART-TIME GUERRILLAS" AND, POSSIBLE, FULL-TIME

 MILITIA MAKES THE LINE BETWEEN THESE CATEGORIES A VERY

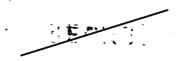
 FUZZY ONE.
- 5. THE ATTEMPT TO ENUMERATE THE IRREGULARS WITHIN PRECISE CATEGORIES IS A SISYPHEAN TASK. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE OVERLAPS OR OMISSIONS. THIS SEEMS FAR LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE FACT THAT MACY J-2 IS STILL OFFICIALLY CARRYING THE RIDICULOUS FAGURE OF 112,760 IRREGULARS, UNCHANGED FOR

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OVER A YEAR AND A HALF. AND, IF THEY CHANGE FROM THIS TO
THE FIGURE THAT WAS AGREED AT THE CONFERENCE HERE, 70,000
TO 90,000 GUERRILLAS, ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE A GREAT IMPROVEMENT,
THE SPREAD IS TOO NARROW AND PROBABLY SHOULD BE RAISED
CONSIDERABLY ON THE UPPER SIDE.

- CVER WHETHER THE LINE BETWEEN GUERRILLAS AND MILITIA HAS BEEN FURTHER FUZZED AND FURTHER INACCURACY ADDED TO ALREADY DUBIOUS GUERRILLA OB FIGURES, WE OUGHT TO STRIVE TO ACHIEVE A WHOLE NEW APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF QUANTIFYING VIET CONG IRREGULAR STRENGTH. I SUGGEST THAT COMMUNIST "PEOPLES FORCES" SHOULD BE THOUGHT OF MORE IN TERMS OF EXPLOITATION OF POPULATION RESOURCES RATHER THAN IN TERMS OF CLASSICAL MILITARY OB. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE PROBLEM HANDLED IN TERMS SOMEWHAT LIKE THE PARAGRAPH WHICH FOLLOWS.
- 7. THE VIET CONG HAVE ACCESS TO BETWEEN 2.5 MILLION
 AND 3 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE TERRITORY THEY CONTROL PLUS SOME
 IN DISPUTED AND GVN-HELD TERRITORY. THEY CONSIDER ALL OF
 THEM RESOURCES TO BE USED IN WAR. A LARGE PART OF THEM ARE
 DIRECTLY EMPLOYED ON A SPORADIC, PART-TIME, OR FULL-TIME BASIS



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PAGE FOUR SAIGON SECRET

IN MILITARY AND QUASI-MILITARY ACTIVITIES. PERHAPS AS MANY AS 100,000 ARE SERVING AS FULL-TIME GUERRILLAS AND AT ANY GIVEN TIME THERE MAY BE 100,000 OR MORE OF THE OTHERS STANDING GUARD. BUILDING FORTIFICATIONS, REMOVING WOUNDED AND DEAD, PERFORMING WOGISTIC SERVICES OR OTHERWISE PARTICIPATING IN THE VC WAR EFFORT. WHAT THEY DO FOR THE VIET CONG IS LARGELY DONE BY UNIFORMED FULL-TIME TROOPS IN ALLIED FORCES, WHICH MAKES COMPARISON OF NUMBERS MISLEADING.

8. WILL REPLY BY CABLE AS SOON AS ANSWERS ARE RECIEVED FROM OUR IV CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE AND MACV OB.

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- 1. SEPTEMBER VC ACTIVITIES REPORT OF CHUONG THEN PROVINCE

 (PARA 1, REF A) INDICATES THAT BEER DISTRICT-LEVEL DEFECTOR STATED

 THAT A COSVN DIRECTIVE OF JULY 1967 "DID AWAY" WITH VC HAMLET AND

 VILLAGE GUERRILLAS, AND "CONSOLIDATED A MILITIA/GUERRILLA ORGANIZA
 TION." REPORTED ORGANIZATION APPEARS TO COMBINE GUERRILLAS AND

 SELF-DEFENSE MILITIA. REF A FURTHER STATES THAT "MEMBER OF VC TRA

 VINH PROVINCE MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE . . . VERIFIED THE ESTABLISH
 MENT OF MILITIA/GUERRILLA UNITS." VC ACTIVITIES SEPTEMBER REPORT OF

 IV CORPS (REF B, PARA 2), COMMENTED THAT "VC APPEAR TO BE TRYING TO

 CONSOLIDATE THEIR LOW-LEVEL UNITS."
- DEFENSE ELEMENTS (ONE OF THE TWO APPARENT COMPONENTS OF CONSOLI
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DATED "MILITIA/GUERRILLA" UNITS), THESE REPORTS RAISE POTENTIALLY
STICKY BUT FUNDAMENTAL ORDE. OF BATTLE: ACCOUNTING PROBLEM. FOR
EXAMPLE, HOW WOULD ONE COPE WITH FUTURE REPORT OR DOCUMENT
LISTING 10,000 "MILITIA/GUERRILLAS" FROM PROVINCE X. SHOULD THE ENTIRE
10,000 BE EXCLUDED FROM THE OB, OR ALL OF THEM INCLUDED, OR SHOULD
ONE MAKE AN ARBITRARY DECISION TO INCLUDE SOME OF THEM AND NOT
OTHERS. THE LAST COURSE WOULD RAISE VERY DIFFICULT AND POTENTIALLY
CONTROVERSIAL PROBLEMS REGARDING CRITERIA.

- 3. BECAUSE THIS PROBLEM COULD DIRECTLY AFFECT WHOLE OB PICTURE, REQUEST YOU TAKE FOLLOWING STEPS:
 - A. DETERMINE STATE OF EVIDENCE CONCERNING SO-CALLED "MILITIA/GUERRILLA" UNITS (WHETHER, FOR EXAMPLE, SUCH EVIDENCE IS CONFINED TO IV CORPS REPORTS).
 - B. INFORM CHIEF OF MACY OB BRANCH OF THE POTENTIAL ACCOUNTING PROBLEM (WHICH HE MAY WELL BE AWARE OF).

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