

# The Vietnamese as Operational Target

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*A psychologist's analysis of vulnerabilities among the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese elite.*

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Like the Chinese, the Vietnamese project the image of a homogeneous people, proud of their heritage and their ethnic superiority and comforted by a great sense of unbroachable unity. But like the Chinese, they manifest this sense and appearance of unity almost wholly as a defense against outside forces, and it masks a diversity of characteristics and attitudes which far transcends it. More compelling than the Chinese sense of a common personality is his awareness of the differences between a Yunnan peasant and a Peking intellectual; and what stirs the Vietnamese more than his sense of ethnic pride is his conviction that he's better than a Northerner (if he's from the South), or than a Southerner (if he's from the North), or than either (if he's from Hue). The regional differences are only the most obvious in a catalog of dimensions along which individual Vietnamese differ, and in an intensely individualistic people these differences are a constant threat to the unity and purpose of any organized effort.

Douglas Pike points out that:

Understanding sociopolitical developments in Vietnam involves cataloging the various social and political groups, organizations, cliques, and clans—some of them covert and almost all of them

parochial or regional in nature—and then mapping the interrelationships among these various forces.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, assessing a Vietnamese in operational terms consists largely of classifying his various parochial, regional, attitudinal and cultural characteristics and watching for circumstances in which these personal peculiarities are likely to be in conflict with some "larger purpose" of his organization.

## **Conflicting Goals**

From this vantage point, the apparent unity within the DRV/NLF community almost has to be illusory, or at best temporary, "for the duration" until victory is achieved. The goal of victory, which provides the interim cement, is as difficult to define for them as it has been for their enemies. To achieve a sense of common purpose the NLF has had to be all things to all people; and while this provides enough satisfaction for many people, it is much too diverse in its ultimate promise to be satisfying or comforting to any one person who has true goals of his own. Vietnam is a country in which people rarely get involved in anything, and if they do get involved it is because there is something in it for them—status, reward, protection, or plain survival.

Although the appeals of nationalism, communism, regional loyalty, xenophobia, and even personal capitalism each play some role, there is no single cause that captures everyone; and of course many of the promises are mutually exclusive. The Southern regionalist cannot be happy with the prospect of domination from Hanoi which motivates the politically ambitious Northerner, and the Viet Minh veteran who was "sold out" in 1954 cannot be happy with a shift in strategy from military victory to internationally negotiated settlement. Interestingly, the vulnerability to rupture becomes most acute at opposite ends of the scale of fortune: when the system is threatened with defeat and the individual seeks a better prospect; or when the organization's goal is closest to achievement and the personal goal is in danger of being lost, submerged, or turned aside in the process.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, the approach to the DRV/NLF target takes place in an unusual atmosphere: the closer the Vietnam conflict comes to termination, the more anxious the truly motivated target will become about seeing it terminated on his terms. He will want to stay to see the matter won *properly*; and as this brings him into direct conflict with the diverse goals of others and face-to-face with the threat of ultimate failure-in-victory, he can become increasingly desperate, and increasingly responsive to opportunities for support and assistance.

## The Basic Personality<sup>3</sup>

Most Vietnamese are singularly self-centered people who, like the Chinese, view the broadest events and circumstances in the most personal terms. Like the Chinese, they make a great show of social behavior and group activity; and like the Thais and the Filipinos, they are substantially more shrewd and clever than the Chinese about this and often seem to be truly involved with other people and truly committed to outside interests. But in most cases this is wholesale deception (albeit habitual, often unconscious, and even innocent) ; what the Vietnamese does is usually done out of commitment to himself and to his own needs, not to some grand purpose, some great ideal, or some compelling loyalty. Ideals and loyalties exist, to be sure, but in most cases they are projections of the selfish needs of the individual. Even his participation in mass activities (à la Red Guards) is most likely to come about "because it appears to be the wise *individual* thing to do."<sup>4</sup>

It is true, in some sense, that everyone is motivated by his own needs and interests. But while the Westerner (and particularly the American) accepts direction from others, commits himself to external causes and obligations, and endeavors to submerge his selfish interests in some greater social purpose (usually experiencing a sense of guilt if he fails to do so), the Vietnamese qua Oriental is free from this sense of compulsion, and rather comfortably so. Thus a major characteristic of his is detachment—especially noted in the rural peasant, but also observable in different forms of insulation and dispassionate bystanding among urban dwellers. (Mao's Cultural Revolution was certainly motivated in part by his anxiety about this characteristic among the Chinese and his determination to get them, especially the youth,

involved in something bigger than themselves. The Vietnamese, like their northern neighbors, assert this disassociation from external events; similarly, they use it as a defense from getting painfully involved in things which "don't concern them"; and they have perhaps an even greater capacity for acting involved, when necessary, in a wholly superficial way.) The great American concern that the Vietnamese do not lend their support by pointing out Vietcong minefields in the paddylands or fingering Vietcong agents in the cities is not a reflection of anti-Americanism or pro-VCism; it is a commentary on Vietnamese insulation, which certainly hampers VC operations as well.

The Vietnamese can "get involved" when it is to their personal advantage to do so—because of coercion, for the sake of survival, or out of an opportunistic awareness of the direction in which things are moving.<sup>5</sup> (They will not help us win by pointing out minefields, but we can be sure we are winning when they start to do so.) Thus on their own motivation (or in self-protection) they can support a movement, and in their own interests they can develop close and very personal loyalties. This support rendered either to movements or to individuals tends to be quite circular: the Vietnamese supports a movement which is strong enough to protect him or meet his needs and thus helps keep it strong enough to attract him; and he identifies with a leader on whom he can depend for support and protection, adding thus to the following which makes the leader strong enough to provide the protection and to earn more support.

In both cases the attachment is personal, deriving from the individual's need for support, protection, survival, or aggrandizement, and has little to do with issues, goals, or grand purposes. The Vietnamese is looking for insurance, and he will buy it wherever he can get it, without any misgivings about doubling up on his coverage. His loyalties can be intense, but they are not necessarily singular nor total. Insofar as he has some defined goals of his own, he does, not necessarily have to ride the same horse all the way to reach them. Nothing succeeds like success, especially as a criterion for leadership, and "loyalty may be a virtue, but consistency is not."<sup>6</sup> Even in their religions the Vietnamese are likely to defend themselves in depth,<sup>7</sup> sharing with the Chinese and the Japanese a sense that if one religion is a good idea, two or three are probably better.

Despite this independence and looseness, the Vietnamese is not entirely his own free agent, however. With the attachments he makes he

assumes reciprocal obligations, and these obligations substantially control his freedom of movement. He has obligations to his family and its wider ramifications, to his hamlet, village, or its equivalent in some other geographic-social-political group. In seeking affiliations with groups, movements, or leaders who can offer protection or other rewards, he assumes obligations to give them support as long as the loyalty relationships exist; and although these can be severed, there are unwritten rules which govern the proprieties of separation. Conversely, the leaders and authorities who have the power which attracts support do have the obligation to protect or otherwise meet the needs and expectations of those who support them. Because the Vietnamese has attachments in many dimensions and directions—family, religious, geographical, scholastic, political, fraternal—and because many of these are contradictory or competitive (especially in the atmosphere which exists today), he is simultaneously pulled in many directions and effectively pinned down by a network of subtle, informal, but nevertheless compelling social forces.

In sum, then, the typical Vietnamese is intensely individualistic in outlook and purpose—often bovine, passive, and seemingly uninspired (in Western terms), but adequately motivated to pursue his own interests or to secure his own survival. His consequent loyalties and attachments can be intensely expressed and pursued but also tend to be diverse (to accommodate a variety of pressures in the complex society) and opportunistic. His outlook is inclined to be narrow; his sense of loyalty diminishes as one moves away from his immediate colleagues, family, or neighborhood; and his concerns, if authority ends at the hamlet gate, will rarely extend far beyond the hamlet hedge—or its symbolic equivalent in terms of the needs of his family or the interests of his colleagues. He seeks attachments for the support and protection he can derive from them; he seeks a job or an office (if at all) for the immediate rewards or opportunities it provides for him—rarely in order to accomplish something in a Western sense of productivity and social service. Altruism is virtually absent; and with his detachment he can be heartless, ruthless, or cruel.

But he can also be charming, and he certainly shares the typical Oriental determination (in most normal circumstances) to maintain pleasant relationships and avoid disagreements. For the Westerner this raises the troublesome problems of "face," "true understanding," and "honesty" or "frankness." To the Vietnamese it is part of the struggle to survive in a society whose complex dimensions impose competing and

often contradictory demands, where opposition is subtle, loyalties are conditional, flexibility is essential, and clandestinity is a way of life.

## Modifying Factors

The qualities which constitute this basic personality are likely to be encountered in all Vietnamese societies but to be modified by a number of factors which may emphasize one characteristic or another. These factors arise from geographical origin (North, South, Central), early environment (urban-rural), educational experience (provincial-parochial-foreign), cultural exposure, professional training and experience, revolutionary history, etc. For example, the basic description is probably most typical of the Southern rural peasant with a local education; it is probably subjected to greatest modification among well-to-do Northern urbanites who have received professional education and cultural exposure in a foreign (probably French) environment.

Among themselves, Vietnamese are said to "size up" and type new acquaintances very quickly according to the geographic implications of their dialects; for what it's worth, Pike gives an example of "the regional designations that Vietnamese love to dispense":

Southerners are lazy and slow-witted (Northerners), or boorish and unintellectual (Centerites ); Centerites are hide-bound and overly traditional (Northerners), or vague-speaking and too political (Southerners); Northerners are aggressive and warlike (Southerners), or money-hungry and overly sharp in business deals (Centerites ). On the other hand, the Northerner tends to regard himself as a dynamic and progressive; the Centerite pictures himself as a cultivated individual, the guardian of a treasured cultural legacy; and the Southerner believes he is the possessor of true happiness, whose secret is the leisurely enjoyment of simple pleasures and the pastoral harmony of a bountiful nature ... The Vietnamese are as conscious of region as an Indian is of caste.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly history and economics have played a role in fashioning differences of environment, influence, and attitude among the regions. The North has been inhabited longer; it has a closer and more direct involvement with China, with a history of interaction, domination,

rebellion, and warfare; and it has more of an industrialized-urbanized base. Other things being equal, Northerners are more likely to have an awareness of international conflict and threat; also more of a citified outlook, which weans them from the land and its narrower parochialism and disposes them toward social organization and really cooperative effort. Thus there should be more dynamism, more aggressiveness, more social consciousness, more awareness of and reaction to foreign influence among Northerners than among Southerners (speaking generally), because these are natural consequences of urbanization and foreign contact. This would be most pronounced among those raised and educated in the cities, but it is likely to occur among the rural types as well—at least to a greater extent than in the Southern delta—because of the greater influence that the Northern cities have probably had with time in the compacter rural areas that surround them.

Foreign exposure has been greater, generally, in the North in spite of the strong French entrenchment in Saigon and the Southern plantations; but North or South, the response of individuals who have been heavily exposed is likely to follow one of three patterns: xenophobic (general or selective); assimilative; or adaptive. In the first category are those who earnestly despise the Chinese or the French or the Americans, or all foreigners, and want no part of foreign influence or domination in the "new Vietnam" for which they are struggling. Struggling partly out of hatred, they would take a dim view of international negotiations unless they had really won an overwhelming military victory. At the other extreme are the assimilators—probably quite rare among the DRV/NLF leadership—who have psychologically surrendered their Vietnameseness to some other cultural concept, most likely French or Chinese. They would be happy to commit themselves to their chosen mentors and would thus be regarded with some mistrust by their colleagues.

The intermediate adaptive types are sufficiently confident and comfortable with their own identity to retain their Vietnameseness while adopting those aspects of the foreign influence which appeal to them—dress, foods, cultural tastes, technical skills, organizational methods, etc. They may also be militantly opposed to foreign domination, and some may be hateful toward certain foreign individuals or groups; but they retain a taste, a respect, or a practical appreciation for certain foreign influences or values. These certainly make the best communicators. The xenophobes are of course threatened by the assimilators and anxious about what the adapters might come up with. The adapters are likely to be more tolerant of the others; but they could become anxious over

what they might lose under a puritanical regime.

## **Ideology and Organization**

There has been much argument over the relative influence of ideology and discipline as factors affecting the behavior of the Vietnamese (as well as other) Communist forces. For the purpose of the present discussion, ideology means a personal, psychologically motivating, intellectual involvement with ideas, principles, and abstract purposes, while discipline means a willingness to behave in accordance with expectations and directives irrespective of personal preferences or beliefs. The true ideologist can reject discipline if his purposes and ideas come into conflict with those of the organization. The disciplined person has less investment in ideas and large purposes, and may have no involvement with them at all in organizational terms; he follows his orders without resistance, at least as far as non-personal, organizational matters are concerned.

The kinds of people with the basic personality described above are more likely to respond to discipline than to involve themselves in serious, behavior-determining ideological pursuits. Insofar as this personality description applies, DRV/NLF functionaries are not likely to be heavily committed to Communist ideology in the abstract sense, despite their association with the Communist bloc, nor are they likely to be heavily populated with classical revolutionaries. True ideology does not appear to play much of a role in Asian personality or politics, and Communism is an alien ideology, besides. Certainly there are exceptions to every generalization; we are bound to find occasional ideologists, social theorists, zealots, and martyrs. By curious implication, there will probably be an occasional assimilator who is more passionately committed to Chinese Communism than Mao and most of his colleagues are.

But most Vietnamese are seeking a salvation more concrete and realistic than the promise of an abstract ideology. They are searching for a sense of personal security, of certainty, of predictability in a chaotic world; and many are seeking some release from the tensions and pressures of their social obligations, especially when these are overly confining or overly diverse and competitive. They are not concerned with personal freedom

in the Western sense, which exacts a high price in social responsibility in return for freedom of thought and behavior. Rather they seek a well-defined program of expectations and requirements and the assurance that they can achieve psychological independence as long as they behave in accordance with these directions and rituals.

Thus many are attracted to the Communist organization not because of its intellectual or ideological appeal but because its structure, its discipline, and its determinism provide a kind of social womb. They derive a sense of real satisfaction from being part of a disciplined and purposive organization that tells them what to do, relieving them of independent or personal responsibility for their own destiny and actions. The organization can also provide a release from the diverse and compelling social commitments which otherwise burden the Vietnamese. By submitting to organizational discipline, the member can sometimes find a socially acceptable escape from his traditional obligations.<sup>9</sup> These people have found a "home" in the organization, a welcome sense of certainty in what they are doing and in the knowledge that the system has an answer for everything.

Discipline, organization, and unrelenting ritualistic exposure to Communist ideology have certainly had some effect on the thinking processes of these people over the years, but greater significance is more likely to lie in the effectiveness with which the DRV/NLF mechanisms have brought political, social, and behavioral order to the Vietnamese scene—a discipline to do things, more than a commitment to believe things. There is, of course, a large willingness to believe; but it is more of a disposition to accept what is said than an active, critical concern with what it means.

There will be ample pragmatic use of Communist methods and Communist utterances at the tactical level; but the individuals themselves are more likely to be committed to or concerned with matters which are more personal, more local, more immediate, or more historically Vietnamese than dialectical materialism. (The superficial adaptation to American political theory in the South is probably a fair commentary on the extent to which a commitment to Communist political and economic principles really penetrates the psyche of much of the opposition leadership. Similarly, the ideological chaos fomented in China during the Cultural Revolution—in which Liu Shaochi's accepted classical doctrine can become heresy by definition in the flip of a switch; for example—shows the shallowness of commitment to any particular

belief among the most orthodox Communists in Asia. )

This compartmentation between ideological commitment and behavioral compliance creates an interesting and potentially confusing problem for assessing loyalties and commitment among functionaries as much of a problem for the guardian within the authoritarian system as for the detached observer outside. Those who make the greatest display of commitment to party or organizational purposes and directives—and thereby earn the unquestioning trust of their colleagues—may be extremely shallow in their true convictions or loyalties. People of this type may be ritualistic role-players who have no emotional or intellectual involvement with the doctrines or beliefs of the movement at all; they are able to act enthusiastic as though accepting everything because in truth they are not really concerned with anything. (The man with a conscience, or a sense of intellectual integrity, is bound to be disturbed or disaffected to some degree, at some time, with any organization.)

Paradoxically, then, "perfect" behavior can mask the most superficial commitment, and those who have earned the greatest trust may be those who are least concerned with what it is all about. These are not potential ideological defectors, because they are not concerned about purposes; but they can transfer their loyalties quite readily to new leadership, or to another system which provides the same kind of support and comfort. Moreover, this same kind of behavior can mask the intentions of the disgruntled person who is waiting for an opportunity to escape. Interviews with VC defectors have revealed that many

... carefully hid their true feelings not only from the cadres but also from their comrades. Apparently as a result of this, the interviewees were often not aware of changes in the morale of their units . . . It thus happened not infrequently that a defector believed himself the only disaffected man in his unit, and that he was surprised to discover other defectors from his outfit in the Chien Hoi Center.<sup>10</sup>

For similar reasons, these people are not revolutionaries in the psychological sense, or at least psychological revolutionism is likely to be less characteristic of the later-generation personnel than of the earlier organizers and leaders. In psychological terms, the true revolutionary combines some kind of ideological commitment with an inability to

adapt to the existing social or political order. Hence his recourse is to tear down the existing order and create a new one that suits him. But allowing for exceptions (especially among the elders), these people are, neither heavily committed to ideology nor incapable of adapting to an existing system. In their own view, at least, they represent the true order of things in Vietnam—as opposed to French colonialism, American imperialism, or mandarin or puppet governments in the South—and are endeavoring to preserve or restore their heritage and independent destiny. Many, if not most, are psychologically more disposed to preserve some sense of order and status quo than to disturb it.

Thus some who show up as firebrands or zealots may be cloaking exploitable vulnerabilities. Others may appear more like bureaucrats in a well-established career program. Age and experience with the movement will be factors in determining how each sees himself and the movement in these respects. Pike again provides a handy summary describing the characteristics of successive generations of NLF leadership:

The initial NLF leadership corps was made up of ex-Viet Minh. Many of these, probably the majority, were professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers. They were competent and enjoyed high status among their followers. Most of them had been in the movement, either Viet Minh or NLF, for most of their lives, although generally the guerrilla leaders had served longer than the civilians. Within the NLF these early leaders came to hold the main-line administrative posts or became commanders of the Main Force units. They were inclined to be more nationalistic and less doctrinal than those who came after them, and they were far less pro-DRV.

Those who rose in prominence after the launching of the NLF, that is in the early 1960's, were more politically oriented, less apt to have a professional background, and therefore of somewhat lower status in the eyes of the rank and file. They were more doctrinal, more anti-GVN, pro-DRV, and pro-Communist.

With the regularization came both cadres and top leaders from the North; their great social trauma had been the Viet Minh war. Most had been young cadres during the Viet Minh war and had climbed the status ladder in the North according to DRV standards, which meant that they excelled in Communist virtues, technical competence, zeal, discipline, and unwavering faith in the cause.

They had a vested interest in victory through following orders from Hanoi, for it was there that their homes were located, their families lived, and their careers were rooted. Their motivation was quite different; it was North Vietnamese whether or not they had originally come from the South. Above all, these Northern-trained leaders, and they were found chiefly in the NLF military apparatus, were professionals, less marked by the self-righteous puritanism that characterized the earliest NLF leadership group or the individual initiative and revolutionary consciousness that marked those who rose in the ranks during the early stages of the insurgency. They were less moved by the deep sense of frustration that drove the earlier leaders, and their devotion to the cause stemmed more from career building than from ideology or hatred.<sup>11</sup>

To summarize: One's experience is a factor in the strength of one's discipline or the quality of one's apparent commitment, and discipline has a more significant influence on the behavior of these people than purpose or ideology in the abstract or ideological sense. Abstract purpose or ideology will rarely have greater significance for them than factors which have more personal meaning. Even in its strongest manifestations, discipline can range from a kind of reassuring support for the individual to a form of escape from other responsibilities, to a mask for superficiality of commitment, to a cloak for disaffection. And both discipline and apparent commitment are merely additional factors in the assessment of a Vietnamese to be viewed along with all the other contributions to his make-up.

## Issues of Conflict

Among these rather personally oriented people, then, it appears that many readily discernible factors such as age, experience, and origin can affect views and attitudes about the movement and its purposes, and that many of these attitudes are necessarily contradictory, giving rise to conflicts between people and to anxieties within them concerning purposes, strategies, and outcomes. Differences in origins can make for differences in loyalties; differences in motivations make for differences in goals and acceptable solutions. These differences can be accommodated as long as the movement is far enough removed from

victory that any outcome is still possible; but they are bound to come into conflict as the outlines of a revolution become more and more defined, and the conflicts can be viewed as operational vulnerabilities. Some of the inescapable (and interrelated) issues are these:

**The problem of unification.** To Northerners, and to Southerners whose lives and careers have been shaped by association with the North, a victory without unification is no victory at all. To some Southerners and Centerites who have strong regional ties or are primarily motivated by some purpose or sense of parochial independence not especially related to the politics of Hanoi's leadership, the realities of unification could be as bad as those of foreign domination, and perhaps even worse. Thus within the movement there will be some strongly motivated people who see true unification as a particular threat to their most important interests and others who feel just as strongly that without unification their purposes have been betrayed again.

**The problem of coalition.** The NLF has shown a great deal of ambiguity in the past toward the question of coalition and has lost the support of some elements who favor a truly cooperative political solution in the South—unusual though this would be in Vietnamese political history. (Compromise is a factor in their continuing effort to balance their diverse obligations, but it usually entails agreements within groups, not between opposing political factions.) While the more militant interests will show no tolerance for affiliations with GVN elements, there are other interests, and some political careers, which would be best served in a true coalition. Again, such interests are most likely to be found among those who are looking for Southern solutions without Northern hegemony.

**The problem of neutralism.** Because this is an appealing alternative to militancy, it is naturally attractive to those who are sincerely interested in peace and some kind of honest solution to the conflict in local terms. But since every conflict breeds people whose careers depend on conflict (especially when it continues long enough for careers to mature), real neutralism constitutes a threat to those who have become experts in international power politics, military affairs, and similar pursuits.

**The problem of ideology.** Even though these people are not especially susceptible to real ideological commitment, some few will be found who are true believers in one creed or another; and all are involved at least in rendering lip service to some portion of

the DRV/NLF litany. While the lip-servers maintain some greater freedom of movement, they are nevertheless identified with certain sub-groups; and other members of these groups may expect commitments and actions from them which they find quite uncomfortable, or well beyond their expectations. At any rate, when the crunch comes, there is bound to be some scrambling among those who are, or are not, identified with Communism, Marxism, nationalism, regionalism, localism, Sinophilia, Sinophobia, xenophobia, neutralism, unification, or anything else, since not all of these can come out on top. In a society in which nothing succeeds like success, the pressures and tensions will be quite diverse: there will be protectionism and jealousy on the part of those who are members of the successful "in" groups, and in the "out" groups there will be hostility among the true believers toward the defecting lip-servers who didn't pull their weight.

**The problem of ultimate domination.** All of these issues relate, ultimately, to one general concern: who or what will be the dominating force in Vietnam, with or without unification? An individual's concern in this respect will arise not only from the essential investment he may have in the outcome but often more importantly from the associations he has established with particular leaders in the informal manipulations for power within the organization.

**The problem of careerism.** Related to the problem of ideology is the essential disparity which evolves between the old timers who are in the fight for some grand purpose (selfish though it may be) and the youngsters and newcomers who are in it not so much out of intrinsic purpose as because this is the order of things today and the only thing to do at this developmental stage of their lives and careers. Among these will be bureaucrats, technocrats, petty organizational politicians, and other types who are much more concerned about where they are going in the organization than where the organization is going.

These are some (and only some) of the issues or problems which DRV/NLF functionaries cannot completely ignore, whether or not they are deeply concerned with any one of them. And the modifying factors of individual background and experience discussed above will point a man toward these issues through their influence on his attitudes, motivations, and personal loyalties. They may predispose him to anxiety, hostility, antagonism, or disaffection towards certain possible solutions to the conflict, certain policies or tactics of his organization, or certain

people within it.

Characteristically, the Vietnamese like support and insurance; they respond to strength and power; they want their side to win, but they want to be on the winning side. They are out for what they can get, in a society which expects each man to look out for himself and in which manipulation, subtlety, and the covert approach are second nature. In each case a man's decision to act or not to act, positively or negatively, for or against an individual, a group, or a purpose will evolve from his calculation of what's in it for him, his evaluation of the rewards, threats, and risks of taking action, versus a disposition to let things go their own way.

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## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1 Douglas Pike, *Vietcong* (MIT Press, 1966), p. 374. Pike will be cited frequently in this paper, and perhaps sometimes plagiarized, since his work shows a particular awareness of the human factors in the Vietnamese effort. A reading of his first and last three chapters is highly recommended to those who are concerned with the human and personal aspects of the Vietnamese target or colleague.

2 This can be observed quite directly in South Vietnamese responses to the threat that peace or negotiations pose to their personal equities in the outcome.

3 Any effort to generalize about any group will necessarily do some injustice to every member of it. This stereotype of the Vietnamese personality structure is presented with the recognition that there will be individual exceptions to every statement, which nevertheless do not destroy the applicability of the over-all pattern for purposes of general analysis and general planning.

4 Pike in *The Washington Post*, Feb. 25, 1968, p. D3. Emphasis added.

5 Words like "insulation," "selfishness" and "opportunism" have an inescapably negative quality to the conditioned American ear. It does not follow that all Vietnamese are the sneaky hoods that these terms

may suggest. These qualities arise from the subtleties of development in this society, and the Vietnamese who did not cultivate them would not be understood by his own colleagues and would actually lose their respect.

6 Pike, p. 10.

7 Pike, p. 12. Also see Lucian Pye's *Some Observations on the Political Behavior of Overseas Chinese* (CENIS/MIT, 1 June 1954) for a discussion of the pragmatic, personal, opportunistic, back-the-winner, non-ideological political orientation of the Chinese, which is quite relevant to the approach which the Vietnamese typically takes to political and social considerations.

8 Pike, p. 5.

9 Nguyen Huu Tho, NLF Central Committee Chairman, is an interesting case in point. We tend to regard him as a reformed visionary—an enlightened idealist who has magnanimously given up home and family to live a celibate life of service in a jungle retreat. It is just plausible, however, that he remains as irresponsible in his proper social obligations as he was in his youth, that he has found in the secret service an escape from a deranged wife and the cares of raising two daughters. Similarly, Li Thi Rieng, a cadrewoman for 25 years, found she could subordinate the compelling demands of wife and motherhood to the disciplines of the service and escape the chattel status which was being forced on her as an orphaned peasant girl in her own village.

10 L. Gourc and C. A. H. Thompson, "Some Impressions of Viet Cong Vulnerabilities: an Interim Report," RAND memorandum 4699-ISA/ARPA, August 1965. Page 29.

11 Pike, p. 375-6.

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