A new study of the size of the enemy military and political structure in South Vietnam has been concluded. The study has been conducted by this headquarters working with other segments of the intelligence community.

We have re-examined in depth over a period of several months not only the strength of the enemy's organized military units, but also his guerrillas, his administrative services personnel and the Viet Cong political organization.

Intelligence data for some of these categories is much more difficult to collect than is the case for others.

For some time now there has been relatively good intelligence available on the enemy's regular combat elements — his "hard core" of NVA units and Viet Cong main and local force units. But solid information upon which to base strength estimates for the guerrillas and the administrative services has only become available in recent months and this has made our new study possible. Information on the Viet Cong political infrastructure is also improved, although still spotty.

In 1965-1966, we aimed our collection mostly against the primary threat—the enemy's hard core forces. We were forced to rely on broad estimates for other categories, knowing that these estimates were based on inconclusive data.
The situation has now changed. Over the past eighteen months, we have improved the quality and the quantity of our intelligence collection programs for all categories. These improved programs, along with the documentation being uncovered by allied search and destroy operations ranging into areas of South Vietnam formerly considered as safe havens by the enemy, plus a marked improvement in quality and quantity of reports from the local populace, prisoners and increasing numbers of defectors, have enabled us to make a better estimate of the enemy's total military strength figures.

I want to emphasize that the new figures we are releasing today cannot and should not be compared with other than the hard core category of the figures we have been using. Although these older estimates were derived from the best information we had at that time, our new, expanded intelligence base has not only resulted in more accurate figures but has also shown us the areas of inaccuracy in our old estimates.

As a result, it is impossible to use the new figures to show that one category has risen or fallen in strength over the last six or twelve months. Except in the category of hard core forces, the old data was incorrect by virtue of being incomplete and founded on an inadequate base. What we have done is essentially to start over from a sound, broader intelligence base.

I would like to describe to you today two basic categories of enemy strength figures—his armed forces and his political infrastructure.
as well as non-regular military support units directly subordinate to
the personnel of military units from the military to the district level.
The next category is administrative services, which comprises

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

civilian staff in the present theater.

Regular forces peaked at about 127,000 in September 1966, and has since

Regular forces peaked at about 127,000 in September 1966, and has since

regular strength, we now estimate that VC/NVA

estimates of enemy regular strength as a result primarily of previous

study confirms this. I might add that in reevaluate our

intelligence has been good on the enemy's regular elements and the new

intelligence has been good on the enemy's regular elements and the new

forces, for a total of 118,000 regular forces opposing us. As I said, our

We currently estimate 25,900 NVA forces and 65,000 VC main and local

The new estimates of the regular forces are essentially unchanged.

The new estimates of the regular forces are essentially unchanged.

and the Viet Cong main force and local force units.

this category includes North Vietnamese Army units in South Vietnam

REGULAR FORCES

forces, including with the regular forces.

let me begin with the new order of battle for the enemy's armed

The political category includes only the political infrastructure.

sources and Fortresses.

regular forces (both North Vietnamese and Viet Cong), administrative

The category of armed forces includes several subdivisions--
The old intelligence data included in estimated 100,000 to 120,000...
members of VC/NVA regular units in his assigned area, but he has not been as identifiable.

Information from the documents captured this year strongly suggests that the guerrilla forces have been considerably larger than we had believed.

Our recent studies put the probable guerrilla strength between 70,000 and 90,000. Again, it should be emphasized that these figures are not as firm as the figures for the regular forces.

Whereas the guerrillas are a definite "Military threat," our newest intelligence indicates that the other subdivisions in the old "irregular" total—the self-defense and secret self-defense forces—should not be considered a "military threat" and part of the order of battle.

Self-defense elements, operating at all levels from village to region, are home guards, primarily for the control and light defense of VC-held areas. They are fixed; they perform most of their duties part time; they include personnel of all ages; and they have a high percentage of females. Some are lightly armed; many are not armed at all. While they are a large element obviously available as a base for recruitment as well as for political and logistical support work, they are not a fighting force comparable to the guerrillas.

Secret self-defense forces are essentially low-level fifth columnists, used for information collection. Both self-defense and secret self-defense personnel work for the enemy because the enemy now controls them, but our experience has shown that when government forces assume control...
In the case of the military, we have already undertaken additional studies.

I should also report that our draft in this category is not as good as

but they will not be carried as part of the total military strength.

sufficient figures. From now on we will carry on estimate of these cadres.

are the political cadres. They were previously included in the total enemy

which the enemy forces are directed, controlled and supported. These

Now let me turn to the Viet Cong political structure—through-

VIEI CONG POLITICAL CALEARS

Total: 223,000 to 248,000.

2. Guerrillas—70,000 to 90,000.

2. Administrative Services—35,000 to 40,000.

Then and Local)

1. Regular—118,000 (composed of 55,000 NVA and 63,000 VC

categories with the current strengths indicated:

To sum up, we now estimate enemy armed forces in the following

battle the self-defense/secret self-defense estimate.

Guerrillas to between 70,000 and 90,000 and recruits from the order of

tupation eliminates the broad distorter distortion, changes the number of

with guerrillas and two-thirds self-defense/secret self-defense. The new

The old system, then, broke down 100,000 to 120,000 recruits into one-

military force. We have, therefore, removed them from the order of battle.

a continued or dependable force and do not form a vital part of the enemy's

Although they cause some casualties and some damage, they do not represent

these people usually cease their resistance and work for the government.
security. Our estimates will improve as our studies continue over the
next few months.

The data we have on hand, and the GDI estimate of a figure of 75,000
people, is used to focus on the infrastructure in much

the early years of the war which went down to the village level,

political infrastructure. The figure was based upon the GDI study from

For a long time, we have calculated a figure of 39,000-40,000 for this

through the hamlet level.

For information of South Vietnam, both of which extend from the national

ship and administration of a paramilitary front organization (National Front

Central Office for South Vietnam) at the national level, and the leader-

structure, which includes a command and administrative apparatus

people. It embodies the party (People's Revolutionary Party) control.

through which the Viet Cong can control or seek to control the Vietnamese

Viet Cong infrastructure: The political and administrative organization

The country team has developed the following working definition for this

that is established, we will also have a better fix on its size.

have a better fix on the organization in the next few months. Once

more important political targets than others. In any case, we hope

of the infrastructure have more influence than others and are therefore

and that command relationship to each other. Obviously, some members

of the political infrastructure is organized, the missions of its component parts

of the political infrastructure to give us a better understanding of how
The function of the political cadre is not military. Therefore, we will no longer carry them in our military order of battle. However, the political organization, under orders from Hanoi, controls and directs all phases of the struggle, including the level of military operations. Therefore, they must not be overlooked as key elements who must be overcome along with the armed forces. We must consider them in enemy estimates, even though we have separated them out from the armed forces estimates.

RECAP

To sum up, our new, greatly broadened intelligence base has permitted a more realistic evaluation of enemy military and non-military strength. The total enemy order of battle is now between 235,000 and 248,000. We believe that this represents some decline in total enemy order of battle, although we do not yet have sufficiently good retroactive analysis to be precise in all categories. As I mentioned, VC/NVA organized unit strength probably peaked at about 127,000 in September 1966 and has declined slightly.

Our estimate of the political cadre is 75,000 to 85,000.

In closing, I would like to restate two points once more:

First, the new study has not changed our estimate of the regular forces we face. Our primary intelligence efforts have been directed toward estimations of the regular forces and the number remains at about 115,000.

Secondly, in all other areas the new study has resulted in...
old figures. Since they are based on new data, they logically cannot be used in conjunction with old data for any firm comparisons of past and present enemy strengths.