8/24/67, CABLE FROM GODDING TO DAVIDSON (DB-2C1 103)
1. LATEST DRAFT NIE 14.3-67 HAS, IN SEPARATE PARAGRAPHS, STRENGTHS OF ENEMY ELEMENTS AS SHOWN BELOW:

- REGULAR FORCES (VC/VNA) 121,000
- ADMIN SERVICES 40,000-60,000
- GUERRILLAS 60,000-100,000
- POLITICAL "ON THE ORDER OF 90,000"
- SELF DEFENSE FORCES 100,000
- SECRET SELF DEFENSE FORCES 20,000
- ASSAULT YOUTH "AT LEAST SEVERAL THOUSAND"

THERE ARE NO TOTALS OR TABLES SHOWING ALL OF THESE FIGURES IN THE ESTIMATE. FINAL AGREEMENT WILL PROBABLY NOT BE REACHED BEFORE USIB MEETING ON 31 AUGUST.

2. DIA SUPPORTING MACV, BUT SERVICE POSITIONS SHIFTING. CONSENSUS APPEARS THAT SOME UPWARD ADJUSTMENTS REQUIRED TO COVER OMISSIONS IN MACV STUDIES SUCH AS DISTRICT STAFFS IN ADMIN SERVICES AND HAMLET GUERRILLAS.

3. AS MACV POSITION WELL KNOWN AT ALL ECHELONS AND NO AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED AT THE WORKING LEVEL CONSIDER THAT MY USEFULNESS HAS CEASED.
4. IN VIEW OF ABOVE I AM DEPARTING WASHINGTON 26 AUGUST FOR HAWAII WITH A 1 OR 2 DAY DELAY BEFORE PROCEEDING TO SAIGON. GP-1

DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS: DURING DUTY HOURS
8/25/67, CABLE FROM WESTMORELAND TO WHEELER AND SHARP (DB-2C1 083)
I AM TERRIBLY CONCERNED TO LEARN THAT THE LATEST DRAFT OF
HILLCR 47 CONTAINS AN ENEMY STRENGTH FIGURE OF 401,000 INCLUD-
INGS SELF-DEFENSE, SECRET SELF-DEFENSE FORCES AND ASSAULT YOUTH.

THIS G07 AND CANNOT SUPPORT THESE LATEST NIE FIGURES WITH
THE INTELLIGENCE AT HAND, THE SUBMISSION AND ADVOCACY OF SUCH
FIGURES INDICATES TO US A LACK OF DETAILED UNDERSTANDING OF THE
VARIOUS CATEGORIES MAKING UP ENEMY STRENGTH.

IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE FIGURES AND THE APPARENT
MISUNDERSTANDING OF THEM, I URGENTLY RECOMMEND THAT A TEAM FROM
THE WASHINGTON INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES CONCERNED WITH THIS NIE VISIT
THIS COMAAND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP A COMMON AND VALID SET
OF ENEMY STRENGTH STATISTICS.
8/28/67, CABLE FROM SHARP TO WHEELER (DB-2C1 102)
FM ADM SHARP, CINC PAC
TO GEN WHEELER, CJCS, WASH DC
INFO YSHKODC/GEN WESTMORELAND COMUSMACV
ZEM

REVISION ON ENEMY OB STRENGTH IN SVN (U)
A. COMUSMACV 8068/251130Z AUG 67

1. I AM IN ACCORD WITH WESTY'S
POSITION AS STATED IN REF A. REGARDLESS M HOW
FIGURES ARE PRESENTED IT IS CERTAIN THAT TABULATIONS
WILL BE MADE BY READERS. TO EVEN MENTION SELF DEFENSE
AND SECRET SELF DEFENSE IN A DISCUSSION OF ORDER OF
BATTLE WILL RESULT IN THESE CATEGORIES BEING INCLUDED
IN THE TABULATIONS.

2. APART FROM THE BASIC ISSUE, ANY INCREASE IN ORDER
OF BATTLE ESTIMATES INEVITABLY WILL BECOME KNOWN TO THE
PRESS. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT AN INCREASE AT
THIS TIME AND REGARDLESS OF EXPLANATIONS, ERRONEOUS
CONCLUSIONS WILL BE DRAWN.

3. I SUPPORT WESTY'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A REEXAMINATION
ON THE GROUND IN SAIGON AND URGE THAT USIB POSTPONE
CONSIDERATION OF SUBJECT NIE UNTIL THIS IS DONE.
JX 778

8/26/67, CABLE FROM PETERSON TO BROWN (DB-2C1 100)
I understand the latest proposal from the PIA conference dealing with the revision of the enemy order of battle strength describes an increase of about 40,000 to the currently held 205,000. On top of this there is consideration for including another 120,000 from the self-defense and secret self-defense category which would bring the total to about 340,000.

In light of what has been presented by MACV, the people on the ground, this makes no sense at all to me. Decisions are apparently being made based on other agency inflations that come from outdated estimates which MACV has no intelligence to support.

It was my understanding that it was fully agreed in the C-11 February 1967 conference that MACV would be the primary source for OB strength figures used by the intelligence community. It was also agreed that you had work is being completely.
OUR FIGURES AND METHODS OF COUNTING ARE ACCEPTED HERE AT GENERAL HEADQUARTERS AND ARE COMPLETELY VALIDATED.

FROM RECENT FIELD REPORTS MAY EVEN BE ON THE CONSERVATIVE SIDE. IT APPEARS LOGICAL TO SUDDENLY REVERSE THESE COMPUTATIONS AND BUILD A MAJOR MILITARY THREAT OUT OF OLD WOMEN AND CHILDREN. RAW FIGURES ARE:

- REGULAR FORCES: 1,700,000
- ADMINISTRATION: 55,000
- GUERILLAS: 13,000
- POLITICAL: 1,000

AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE INCREASES DESCRIBED ABOVE ARE INEVITABLE. THAT THE DIFFERENCE AS WELL AS ANY INCREASES WILL SOON BECOME KNOWN AND WILL REACH THE PRESS DESPITE EXPLANATIONS. ERRONEOUS CONCLUSIONS WILL BE DRAWN AND THE CREDIBILITY OF ANY MILITARILY DEVELOPED FIGURES, PAST, PRESENT, OR FUTURE WILL BE SERIOUSLY CHALLENGED.

WE MUST HOLD FIRM.
JX 893-JX 893A

5/18/67 McCHRISTIAN REPORT ON ESTIMATE OF VC IRREGULAR STRENGTH (PARTIAL)
CONFIDENTIAL

AMBASSADOR KOMER

ESTIMATE OF VC IRREGULAR STRENGTH
MACV J-2 "Estimate of VC Irregular Strength" -- Comments

Conclusions:

The attached MACV J-2 draft "Estimate of VC Irregular Strength" is the most comprehensive effort to develop meaningful figures on the subject that we have seen to date. The methodology is about as good as can be practically developed, and the conclusions seem reasonable. We note that DIA and CINCPAC tend toward lower figures while at CIA the Special Assistant for Vietnam Affairs and OCI believe the total irregular force may be as much as 200,000 -- nearly 15,000 higher than the MACV estimate.

We believe the scattered and sometimes conflicting nature of the available evidence calls for more caveats than the MACV paper contains. For example, the paper states that "the estimate of guerrilla strength is considered accurate."

We would prefer to say that 60,750 is a fairly sound figure for the guerrillas though it is subject to change as further evidence becomes available. The figures for self defense forces and for secret self defense forces are much too precise and fail to reflect the paucity of good evidence.

In any case we would urge that the guerrillas and self defense forces never be lumped together as a single figure for "irregulars" because of the big difference in validity of the two figures.

Commentary

The MACV J-2 "Estimate of VC Irregular Strength" is the most comprehensive and coordinated effort to date to accumulate meaningful statistics on a frequently shadowy subject. It is obvious that much time and effort has gone into the study, and it is also apparent that a vigorous effort has been made to develop a realistic consensus, based on the commentary of a variety of observers and sources.

The methodology is generally sound. The systematic collection, analysis, and review of statistics from as many intelligence sources as seem to be available in any one province is an ambitious effort which has produced what is probably the best province-by-province estimate which could be produced at this time. Those responsible can take great pride in their labors.
It is necessary, however, to dissent from the occasional implications of certainty which appear in the paper, e.g., in paragraph 3h7 "the estimate of guerrilla strength is considered accurate...based on access to valid information on their strength, disposition..." Although the figure is the product of the best estimates of several officers at each province, viewed and collated by ARVN and MACV analysts in Saigon, it is still an estimate, subject, as the study itself says, to the same "fallacies as all estimates, especially estimates made by top echelon on information supplied by lower echelons." The data base, available in the provinces, is still fragmentary. Sector advisors in I Corps qualified their estimates by citing a plus or minus margin of error ranging from 10 to 30 percent. Although percentages of error were not noted in other Corps areas, the S-2 in Vinh Binh Province is quoted as stating, "This estimate is believed to be below the actual figure for the province. However, our information will not support a higher estimate at this time." The implication is strong that information is not always complete, and that estimates, at times, are on the low side.

There is within the data base a difference in validity of information. Information on guerrillas is more available and easier to check. Consequently we could say that the figures for guerrillas are more accurate, based on access to evidence of high validity on some guerrilla units. However, when we come to the figures of 101,150 for self defense forces and 23,400 for secret self defense forces, we must regard the limited information available and the difficulties in terminology as providing us with a less valid set of statistics. Considering the amorphous nature of the self defense forces at the lower levels (part-time service, ill-trained, and often unarmed) and the inadequacy of the evidence, we consider the figures for these forces to have a probability-of-error of -50% and +100%.

Whatever the approach to the statistics of irregulars, we would suggest that, because of the large difference in validity, the totals for guerrilla forces and for self defense and secret self defense forces never be lumped together as a single figure. In addition, we would suggest that figures for guerrillas be rounded off to the nearest 100 and figures for the self defense and secret self defense be rounded off to the nearest 1000.

Through the study, the criteria for acceptance and non-acceptance of captured document information raise the major question on methodology. Strength figures for five provinces (Phuoc Long, Kien Phong, Binh Duong, Tay Ninh and Phong Dinh) and Military Region IV are based primarily on captured documents.
In addition, strength figures for Phu Yen and for Ninh Thuan are cited as being supported by captured documents. Of these captured docs, some are relatively recent, some are a year or more old. In Binh Dinh Province several captured documents give higher strength figures than the RITZ estimates, yet the captured docs are not accepted because they are old and do not reflect extensive Allied military and pacification activity which has subsequently taken place. Yet, in Binh Duong, where friendly forces have made military and pacification gains, the old captured docut figure is accepted, with the proviso that it may be downgraded at a later date.

There is inconsistency in weighing of capture document data which led the authors of the study into a major problem: how to face up to the several high-level, captured documents which cite a guerrilla strength of 170,351 to 180,000 at the beginning of 1966. The hords resolve the problem by citing the evidence and then dismissing it as being outdated and probably padded. There is, howe, one important factor they failed to consider in their argum. As they state the figures of 170,351 guerrillas (from one docur) and 180,000 (from two documents) are dated, may have been bed then, and are subject to downgrading to account for KIA/WIAs, deserters and those guerrillas upgraded to the main force. At the same time, it seems likely that the guerrilla forces replenished to a large extent by upgrading self defense forces. Even allowing for a reduction of the 170,351-180,000 figure to a more realistic estimate, the MACV guerrilla strength figure 60,750 seems low.
TO: MR. ROBERT W. KOCR
AMBASSADOR
MACV 1, 139 PASTEUR STREET
SAIGON, RVN

SUBJECT: Strength of VC Irregular Forces

Attached is the revised MACV estimate of the strength of Viet Cong irregular forces as you requested. This study is for your information only, since the figures contained therein have not been released outside of this headquarters. A committee has been appointed by COHUSMACV to review this new estimate as well as the Infrastructure Study.

J. A. McCCHRISTIAN
Major General, USA
ACofS, J2

SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED
NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS EXCEPT DOCUMENT
RELEASABLE TO REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, AUSTRALIA, NEW
ZEALAND, REPUBLIC OF KOREA,
PHILIPPINE REPUBLIC AND THE
KINGDOM OF THAILAND ONLY,
BY AUTHORITY OF COHUSMACV
DATE ____________________

DOWN GRADED UNCLASSIFIED WHEN
SEPARATED FROM CLASSIFIED ENCLOSURE

CONFIDENTIAL
UNACV - J2: RVNAP Estimate of the Strength of Viet Cong Irregular Forces in SVN.

1. **Purpose:** To present the revised US-JCS RVNAP estimate of the strength of VC irregular forces in South Vietnam.

2. **Background:** The strength of VC Irregular Forces currently carried in MACV Order of Battle is 112,750. This figure is a J2, RVNAP estimate of Irregular strength made in May 66. The MACV Order of Battle Summary has carried this figure monthly without change. With the establishment of the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV) and the vastly increased MACV intelligence data base, it is now possible to make a more accurate revised estimate of VC Irregular strength. This project was initiated with the implementation of the special intelligence collection program RITZ (see Annex A for discussion of RITZ).

3. **Discussion:**

   a. Under the RITZ program each US Sector S-2 Advisor submitted an estimate of VC Irregular strength in his province to CICV. These estimates were compared with all other information available in Saigon, including captured documents and previous estimates. Results of this analysis were published in a draft study by CICV on 24 March 1967.

   b. Copies of the draft study were distributed to each of the US Senior Intelligence Advisors in the ARVN Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ) on 27 and 28 March by representatives from OAC of S, J2 MACV. A cover letter from the AC of S, J2 instructed the US Senior Intelligence Advisors to send two copies of the study, one in English and one in Vietnamese, to each sector within the CTZ. The ARVN Sector S-2 and the U.S. Sector S-2 Advisors were required to examine the recommended figures against the total information available to all U.S. and ARVN agencies at the sector level.

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c. An OB Conference was held at MACV from 5 to 7 April 1967. One of the specific tasks of this conference was to revise the MACV-ARNVN irregular strength estimate and to establish joint figures for acceptance in order of battle at all levels. ARVN intelligence representatives and their US counterparts from each COM, and G-2 representatives from III MAZ and the two US Field Forces reexamined the total available information on each province in SVN. All estimates and the latest captured documents were considered. In numerous cases the ARVN G-2 representatives provided additional information in captured documents which had never been translated into English and were not available in Saigon. The Chief of OB Branch (ARNVN element), CICV took a major part in all discussions, translating as necessary to insure that all representatives thoroughly understood the documentary evidence presented. During these discussions new estimates were established and agreed upon by all representatives.

d. These new recommended figures are presented in the study on irregular strength at Annex A. This study is the final version of the original draft study published on 24 March 1967.

e. At Annex B is a study recently produced at the Combined Document Exploitation Center (CDEC) concerning VC terminology. This study describes the various terms used by the VC for different types of irregular forces.

f. Corps representatives agreed unanimously that the guerrillas (Du Kich) are the one category of VC Irregulars which represent a real military threat. The Du Kich normally are well armed and are committed as a unit. They conduct offensive operations and assist in defending VC controlled areas.
5. The self defense and secret self defense forces (A 14 and
24 14 31 14 2) on the other hand, are predominantly concerned with village
and hamlet defense. They are poorly armed and consist of both the old and
the very young members (many of them even) of the village or hamlet. US
and A/VN tactical unit commanders and intelligence personnel do not consider
them an effective fighting force. They are included in MACV Order of Battle
in order to present a complete picture of enemy strength, but with the
notation that as a combat force they are only marginally effective.

b. The estimate of guerrilla strength is considered accurate.
US and A/VN forces are frequently in contact with guerrilla elements, and
US and A/VN intelligence personnel at the sector and subsector levels, have
access to valid information on their strength, disposition and leading
personalities. Files have been maintained on these guerrilla units, and
collection efforts have been targeted at them. This is not the case with self
defense and secret self defense forces, and strength estimates on these forces
are not as accurate as the estimates on guerrilla strength.

4. Conclusions:

a. The strength estimate for guerrillas is valid, and these
forces are the only category of VC Irregulars which constitute a real
military threat in SVN.

b. The strength estimate for self defense and secret self defense
forces is not as well supported as the guerrilla strength estimate, and
these forces do not constitute an aggressive enemy threat within SVN.
5. Planned Actions:

a. The new strength estimate on VC Irregular forces (including guerrillas, self defense and secret self defense) will be published in the 1 June 1967 MACV-11A/NS Monthly Order of Battle Summary.

b. The strength figures will be adjusted retroactively to preclude inference of a sudden increase in the number of VC Irregulars.

c. New definitions for separate categories of VC Irregular forces (Annex A) will be published in the 1 June Order of Battle Summary. These definitions appropriately qualify the military threat posed by each category of these forces.

d. Separate strength figures for the various categories of VC Irregular forces will be depicted on the strength recapitulation chart (page I-1) in the 1 June 1967 Order of Battle Summary. One column will show strength of Irregulars - Guerrillas, and another column will show strength of Irregulars - Self Defense and Secret Self Defense.

[Document content continues, but the image quality makes it unreadable in this context.]
APPENDIX A

THE STRENGTH

OF

VIET CONG IRREGULAR FORCES
This study presents the revised MACV estimate of the strength of VC irregular forces in SVN. The figures shown are the results of an intensified and coordinated intelligence collection program directed at VC irregulars. This program was undertaken in the belief that an accurate estimate of the strength of VC irregular forces will provide a measure of the VC's ability to increase their regular force strength and to offset their regular force losses. It should also provide a better understanding of the problems facing both the GVN and Free World forces in pacification and revolutionary development.

The primary means of implementing this collection program has been through Intelligence Collection Program M7Z. Under M7Z the focal point of collection is at the GVN province level. The Sector Intelligence Advisor and assigned sub-sector advisors, in coordination with all U.S. and SVN Intelligence Agencies within the province, are the key collectors. From the provinces the M7Z reports estimating strength are sent to the Corps Advisory Groups which direct, coordinate and monitor the collection activities of the Sector Advisors. From Corps, the collected reports are forwarded to the Combined Intelligence Center Vietnam where they are analyzed and compared with other estimates and captured documents available in Saigon.

Thus, the M7Z estimates from the various provinces are based on the most current information available to the U.S. Sector Advisors and represent what they believe to be the strength of Irregular Forces within their provinces. While these reports are the primary basis of the revised MACV estimate, they have not been accepted automatically in all cases. For example, in some provinces captured VC documents are available which give
a good picture of Irregular strength in that province. Frequently when this is the case the actual VC figures are used.

The figures presented are broken out by type of Irregular force. For this purpose the following definitions have been decided upon and accepted throughout the intelligence community:

(1) **Irregulars** - These are organized forces composed of guerrilla, self-defense and secret-self-defense elements subordinate to village and hamlet level VC organizations. These forces perform a wide variety of missions in support of VC activities and, in fact, provide a training and mobilization base for the VC maneuver and combat-support forces.

(2) **Guerrillas** - These are organized into squads and platoons which frequently operate outside their home village or hamlet. Acting alone they harass government out posts, police VC controlled territory and provide protection for various types of communist activities such as collection of taxes and dissemination of propaganda. At times they are called upon to operate with local force units and have also been known to serve as a reconnaissance screen for main force formations.

(3) **Self-Defense Force** - A VC para-military structure responsible for the defense of hamlet and village areas controlled by the VC. These forces do not leave their home area, and they perform their duties on a part-time basis. Duties consist of conducting propaganda, constructing fortifications and defending home areas.

(4) **Secret Self-Defense Force** - A clandestine VC organization which operates in GVN controlled areas. Often they lead a "legal" existence during the day and operate at night. Their missions include intelligence collection, sabotage and propaganda. Usually they operate directly under party supervision in three-man cells.

This study is organized by Corps with the respective strengths of the various Irregular forces presented by provinces. The first section consists

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of a chart showing total countrywide strength of VC Irregular Forces by Corps.

Below the chart is an analysis of this total estimate. There are four more sections representing each of the four Corps. Each of these follows the same format with a chart showing total Corps strength by province followed by analyses of the various provinces within the Corps. Supporting documentation for each provincial estimate is presented in the analysis section.

Also, it is significant that although the revised figures are higher than those previously carried, the current estimate of Irregular strength is still not as great as total strength figures appearing in captured documents. The documents cited below indicate that countrywide VC Irregular strength is almost twice as great as currently estimated.

A CAVC Current Affairs Committee Resolution concerning the situation in the rural areas states that, "guerrillas increased to 120,000; several thousand NVVN joined." The requirement of this year is 300,000." (HCMV CAVC Log 301-341-67).

The rate of infiltration in the document appears to be late 1945 or early 1946.

The figure 120,000 is for guerrillas only and is approximately 3 times greater than the 40,700 H/Q revised guerrilla strength estimate.

A captured notebook belonging to an unidentified NVN level cadre contains a record of a speech made by Anh Can (probably Hon An) on Oct 21, 1966 (probably an off print of Com 217-12) which has the following significant passage: "As for the military forces, we must organize around 300,000 guerrillas (210,000 would be good) and 300,000 militia. Now, we have 80,000 guerrillas and 130,000 militia." (HCMV CAVC Log 302-341-67). This speech appears to have been made in late 1965 or early 1966. Adding both figures mentioned in the speech produces a total of 370,000 Irregular Forces, considerably higher than the NADY estimate.
### Former Viet Cong Strength Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTR</th>
<th>Guerrillas</th>
<th>CP Forces</th>
<th>IC Forces</th>
<th>Comra Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>UNK</td>
<td>UNK</td>
<td>UNK</td>
<td>27,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>UNK</td>
<td>UNK</td>
<td>UNK</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>1,475</td>
<td>5,175</td>
<td>17,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>16,950</td>
<td>10,520</td>
<td>53,050</td>
<td>50,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNN Totals</td>
<td>UNK</td>
<td>UNK</td>
<td>UNK</td>
<td>112,760</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Revised Viet Cong Strength Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CTR</th>
<th>Guerrillas</th>
<th>CP Forces</th>
<th>IC Forces</th>
<th>Comra Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>17,150</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>74,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>16,450</td>
<td>56,450</td>
<td>57,550</td>
<td>42,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>8,550</td>
<td>5,550</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>18,500</td>
<td>21,150</td>
<td>51,050</td>
<td>51,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNN Totals</td>
<td>60,750</td>
<td>101,500</td>
<td>23,400</td>
<td>185,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Guerrillas — These are organized into squads and platoons which frequently operate outside their home villages or hamlets. Acting alone they increase government cost and provide a basis for various anti-government propaganda. As a result they are called upon to respond to various threats and dissemination of propaganda. They are organized into squads, platoons, and companies of varying sizes. These guerrillas are trained in guerrilla warfare techniques and are equipped with a variety of weapons. They are considered a threat to government security and are often targeted for elimination by the government. They are often supported by the local populace and are able to operate in areas controlled by the Viet Cong. They are trained to operate independently and are able to conduct hit-and-run attacks and sabotage operations. They are considered a serious threat to government stability and security.

(4) Comra Self-Defense Force - a clandestine VC organization which operates in VC controlled areas. Often they lead a “legal” existence and are considered a legitimate element of the local population. They are trained to operate in VC controlled areas and are considered a serious threat to government stability and security.
1. The new MACV estimate of the strength of Irregular forces is higher than the figures presently carried in the Order of Battle Summary. This is not an indication that the strength of Irregular forces has increased, but only that intelligence knowledge of Irregulars has been greatly expanded and refined.

2. Also, it is significant that although the revised figures are higher than those previously carried, the current estimate of Irregular strength is still not as great as total strength figures appearing in captured VC documents. The documents cited below indicate that countrywide VC Irregular strength is almost twice as great as currently estimated.

a. A CCNV Current Affairs Committee Resolution concerning the situation in the rural areas states that, "guerrillas dropped to 120,000; the requirement of this year is 300,000." (CCNV CCVEQ Log 301-2552-67). The date of information in the document appears to be late 1965 or early 1966. The figure 120,000 is for Guerrillas only and is approximately 3 times greater than the 40,750 MACV revised guerrilla strength estimate.

b. A captured notebook belonging to an unidentified CCNV level cadre contains a record of a speech made by Ahn Sau (probably an AKA for Muyen Chi Than) Chief of the Liberation Army and possibly No. 1 man in CCNV) which has the following significant passage: "As for the military forces, we must organize around 300,000 guerrillas (250,000 would be good) and 300,000 militia. Now, we have 120,000 guerrillas and 150,000 militia." (CCNV CCVEQ Log 302-1245-67). This speech appears to have been made in late 1965 or early 1966. Adding both figures mentioned in the speech produces a total of 330,000 Irregulars, a figure considerably higher than the MACV estimate.
c. A captured notebok belonging to an unidentified VC cadre contains the following information on the strength of VC irregulars in 1966 (Operation Oldпрофессионала log #05-1704-67)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VC Military Region</th>
<th>Guerrillas</th>
<th>Militia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24,485</td>
<td>4,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30,561</td>
<td>23,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24,867</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>103,624</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5,134</td>
<td>24,52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>170,351</strong></td>
<td><strong>73,442</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once again the figures appearing in this captured document are much higher than the revised MACV estimate.

3. A province by province estimate based on the best intelligence sources and agencies available to both AVN and MACV simply does not support the higher figures contained in the captured VC documents. There are several possible explanations for this.

a. The information contained in the VC documents is dated – at least two of the strength figures are over a year old. Also these figures have to be collected and reported through the VC chain of command until they finally reach COGVM and it is not unreasonable to assume that this takes some time; thus, the figures may even be older than they appear at first glance. Much has happened since these figures were promulgated: allied military pressure has been greatly increased and expanded; VC casualties have soared; recruiting new replacements has become increasingly difficult for the VC; upgrading of Irregulars to local and main force units has been taking place on a wide scale. All of these factors have been a great drain on Irregular strength.
b. The validity of figures appearing in captured VC documents is always open to question. Frequently it is difficult to determine whether recorded figures are meant to be accurate reports or merely propaganda for local consumption. And even if the figures are meant to be accurate, their validity is still open to question. For example, hamlet and village authorities on whose reports the figures are based have their own positions to think of, and it is not unreasonable to expect padding of figures where quotas and goals have not been met.

c. Total Irregular strength figures promulgated by COVN can be nothing more than an estimate. As an estimate it is subject to the same fallacies as all estimates, especially estimates made by the top echelons on information supplied by lower echelons. Since the criteria and methodology of the VC estimate are unavailable, its real reliability cannot be ascertained.

4. Despite the arguments against the higher VC figures, it is still possible, of course, that the MACV estimate may be low. If this is the case, it should become apparent as the intensified collection effort against VC irregulars continues. If and when higher figures can be confirmed they will be used. At the present time, however, it seems unwise to jump at the higher total strength figures contained in VC documents when their reliability is uncertain, and they cannot be supported by a province by province analysis.
The first page contains charts depicting both the former MACV C3 holding and the revised MACV strength figures for VC Irregular forces in I CTZ. The revised figures are broken down by province and by type of Irregular force, i.e., Guerrillas, Self-Defense Forces and Secret Self Defense Forces. The listed strength figures have been approved by the MACV I Corps C-2, 33 C-2 Advisor and C3 III MAF. These are the figures carried in I Corps and III MAF Order of Battle as well as by MACV and RVNAF JCS.

The succeeding pages contain analyses of the various provinces within I CTZ. For each province the old MACV C3 strength figures are presented (the ones formerly carried in the MACV Order of Battle Summary), followed by the revised figures. Supporting data for the revised estimate appears below the figures themselves. It should be noted that for I Corps the old C3 figures were not broken down by type of Irregular force.
4/1/67 CIA CABLE, SAIGON TO DIRECTOR (4688)
PRIORITY DIRECTOR

REF: DIRECTOR 88258

1. The 5-7 April conference will be strictly ARVN-J-5 and ARVN affair held at CICV and will focus on ARVN OB major threat. Head or ARVN CICV component will probably be senior ARVN present. Last remaining members - ARVN team leaving Vietnam 3 April. Agency representation not repeat not seem appropriate.

2. DIA team remains at odds with MAC/V-J-5 on several points, including battalion-contact statistics, irregular and political OB, and in-country recruitment/conscription. DIA team want lower figures in each case.

3. Concerning irregulars, DIA team plans recommend to both General McChristian and General Carroll that "irregular" figure be scrapped and only "guerrillas" carried as part of military force figure. Their reasons, which we find persuasive, are:

A. Cut-off point for lower levels of irregulars.
PAGE 3   SAIGON 4688

BE AWKWARD TO UNDO. MACV WILL PROBABLY PUSH 192,000 FIGURE FOR IRREGULARS UNLESS DIA TEAM SELLS IDEA OF BREAKING OUT GUERRILLAS.

5. ALL ABOVE INFORMATION RECEIVED OUT OF CHANNELS AND MUST BE KEPT IN HOUSE.

SECRET

B-447
8/29/67—CABLE FROM BUNKER TO ROSTOW
CABLE FROM ABRAMS TO WESTMORELAND (MAC 174)

To the White House, Eyes Only Walt Rostow

Bob Komer and I wish bring to your attention potentially serious problem created by new NIE now on verge of completion.

Despite thorough re-analysis by now massive MACV Intelligence Machine which has brought MACV position much closer to that of CIA, the latter's experts appear insistent on refining out an estimate which will make enemy strength 190,000 instead of the range centering on 200,000 developed by MACV.

CIA does this chiefly by adding to strength figures some 10,000 so-called Self-Defense and Secret Self-Defense forces.

Bob Komer
GE 2 SAIGON 273 TO S E C R E T EYES ONLY VIA CAS CHANNELS

ICH ARE NOT ORGANIZED MILITARY UNITS AT ALL BUT RATHER A
ADHOC, COSTLY UNARMED, PART-TIME HAMLET DEFENSE ELEMENT
WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND OLD MEN ON WHICH WE HAVE VERY LITTLE
IDENCE AND WHICH IS SO INCONSEQUENTIAL AND RARELY ENCOUNTERED
US AS NOT TO WARRANT INCLUSION IN ENEMY STRENGTH. IN LAST
ALYSIS ONLY ARMED MEN PLUS STRUCTURE CONTROLLING AND SUPPORT-
3 THEM SHOULD VALIDLY BE INCLUDED.

I NEED HARDSLY MENTION THE DEVASTATING IMPACT IF IT SHOULD
AB OBT CAS THESE THINGS SO OFTEN DO THAT DESPITE ALL OUR
ACCESS IN GRINDING DOWN VC/NVA HERE CIA FIGURES ARE
ED TO SHOW THAT THEY ARE REALLY MUCH STRONGER THAN EVER.
SPITE ALL CAVEATS, THIS IS INEVITABLE CONCLUSION WHICH MOST
PRESS WOULD REACH.

WESTY HAS GONE BACK HARD AT BUSS WHEELER ON THIS AND I
TEND TO MENTION IT TO THE PRESIDENT IN MY COMING WEEKLY.
E CREDIBILITY GAP CREATED WOULD BE ENORMOUS, AND IS QUITE
CONSISTENT WITH ALL THE HARD EVIDENCE WE HAVE ABOUT GROWING
ERY LOSSES, DECLINING VC RECRUITING AND THE LIKE.
8/20/67 CABLE FROM ABRAMS TO WESTMORELAND (MAC 7841)
I HAVE TALKED WITH KERWIN AND DAVIDSON THIS MORNING
ABOUT THE CONFERENCE THAT HAS BEEN GOING ON IN WASHINGTON
ON THE DRAFT NIE 14.5-67. COL HANKINS FROM DAVIDSON'S SHOP
RETURNED FROM THIS CONFERENCE AND INFORMED THAT THE MACV
SUBMISSION WAS ACCEPTED WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS BUT CIA
INSISTED ON ADDING THE SD AND SSD. THE FEELING IS THEY HOLD
THIS POSITION TO SUPPORT FIGURES THEY HAVE PREVIOUSLY USED.
ADDITIONALLY TOM INFORMED THAT JOE FRIED, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS,
HAS THE HIGHER FIGURES AND ZORTHIAN AND SIDLE, HAVE BOTH URGED HIM NOT
TO USE IT BECAUSE HE WILL BE SHOWN WRONG. IN THE LIGHT OF ALL
THE FOREGOING I DISPATCHED THE MESSAGE TO THE CHAIRMAN ON THIS
SUBJECT.
10/2/67 MEMORANDUM FROM BUNKER TO BUNDY AND HUGHES
1. We here are eager to do all we can to show results we are achieving in Vietnam, as called for by Deptel 45007.

2. A key element in any such Washington/Saigon effort would be the unveiling of the new and better-based intelligence analyses MACV has developed with respect to enemy strength. Those do not seem to show at first glance any overall reduction in enemy strength. Their importance, however, is that they represent a far more sophisticated and valid categorizing of VC/HVN strength, which shows that enemy combat forces have declined. Even more important, they provide a baseline from which we expect to be able to deduce enemy losses in the various categories or a quarterly or even monthly basis.
3. However, we hesitated to utilize the new intelligence
before until the new NIE not being in approved. Our under-
standing is the NIE will reflect consensus of Washington and
Syrian intelligence community. Therefore, I am eager to
know what new NIE likely to be approved, and what figures it
contains. GP-4

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