DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 2D BRIGADE 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96372

INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN 26-68
11 April 1968

SUBJECT: A New Approach to Same Goals
REFERENCE: Combat Intelligence and Security Review HQs, USARV

1. The enemy's strategy in South Vietnam is aimed at three principal objectives: massive popular support for reunification with the North under NLF/VC control; the disintegration of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) as a coherent military organization and the destruction, or at least the discreditation of the established Government of Vietnam (GVN). It is evident the enemy considered the climate, political and psychological, at TET to be extremely favorable to the accomplishment of these goals. It is also apparent that the enemy considered a series of massive frontal assaults launched against major population centers throughout the country would be all that was necessary to tip the balance in his favor. In formulating his tactics, he obviously misjudged the situation and the degree of reaction to his attack, both military and civilian. Now fully aware of these errors in judgement, he has revised his tactics without altering his objectives.

2. The enemy realizes he must discredit the established government to gain ultimate victory. As a means to this end, he will attempt to demonstrate the comparative weakness and impotency of GVN military and police forces to maintain order. Rather than relying on further frontal attacks against major urban areas as the principal means for doing this, however, he seems to have moved into the countryside. Here in the rural areas, the new tactics appear to be a combination of small unit actions, stand off artillery and rocket assaults, and anti-GVN, pro VC/NVA propaganda campaign, disruption of the economy, and destruction of the Revolutionary Development Program (RD), whenever possible.

3. The propaganda effort seems to be taking several forms. In IV CTZ, VC forces in some areas are reportedly asserting that their TET offensive was a resounding military victory and that they control most of the major cities in the Delta. In other areas, the form is not entirely clear; but it appears that the enemy propaganda is asserting that a VC/NVA victory is inevitable and is promoting the advantages of peace and prosperity in the reunification of Vietnam under NLF/VCW control.

4. Another aspect of the enemy's campaign related to the propaganda effort has been the increased emphasis placed on the formation of "liberation committees" in hamlets, villages and cities. In fact, in some areas the enemy appointed and installed liberation governments. There is yet little guidance as to the full scope of this activity or what functions the newly appointed administrators are to perform. There can be no doubt, however, that these liberation governments were established to reinforce the myth of widespread VC/NVA control, to implement COSVN's policies in the rural areas, and slowly to wrest control from the elected GVN administration.

5. Another facet of this campaign is disruption of the economy in rural areas in a country wide effort. This disruption is based primarily on limiting the disruption of harvested commodities to marketing centers. By establishing control points along the routes used to transship food stuffs and by increasing collection of taxes the enemy can raise the price of food almost at will and partially isolate the urban marketing centers from the outlying rural areas. This has the effect of creating uncertainty and fear among the populace and of discrediting the GVN.

6. The enemy obviously considers the destruction of the Revolutionary Development Program one of the key steps. The harassing of RD hamlets and RD cadre has accelerated ever since TET and is apparently aimed at the total destruction of this program. Should the enemy succeed in doing this, the faith of the rural populace in the GVN's ability to develop any successful remedial programs for them would be severely shaken.

7. In connection with the demobilization of the RVNAF, the enemy also appears to have shifted the focus of his efforts into the rural areas. He is continuing

Group 4
Downgraded in 3 year intervals
Declassified after 12 years
DOD DR 5200-10

CONFIDENTIAL
to proselyte among friendly troops and is putting pressure on their families to bring them home. He has adopted the tactic of "wearing down and annihilating small forces" to a far greater extent than in the pre-TET period.

8. The enemy appears to be seeking engagements with ARVN, RF and PF elements under conditions and settings of his own choosing. VC/NVA forces are generally restricting their activities to rural areas where they can find an abundance of small and vulnerable friendly outposts. By attacking these positions, they hope to create the illusion of overwhelming strength in the minds of rural residents while limiting their own risk of casualties.

9. His approach to engagements with US forces has also undergone a change since TET. Enemy forces appear to be avoiding decisive contact with US units as much as possible. There has been a significant increase in the number and intensity of stand-off attacks directed at US bases and installations.

10. The first tactic avoids the heavy casualties which have been his lot when he has challenged the superior firepower of US units. The second tactic apparently has two main objectives: to fix US units in static base area defensive positions and to destroy or cripple those assets which give US forces tactical superiority.

11. The frequent stand-off attacks against US installations, coupled with occasional sapper activities, serve constantly to raise the possibility of a ground assault against these bases. The enemy appears to be reinforcing this threat of imminent attacks in other ways. If he is not doing so, he has tried to give the impression of maintaining his main forces close to cities and friendly installations. Some of his indications may be deliberate ruses. If deception is involved, the objective would be to keep US units occupied with defense of their bases, LOC and cities. In the meantime, should reduction of swap operations result, the enemy forces can take advantage of the power vacuum in the rural areas.

12. Stand off attacks, ambushes and sapper activity offer the enemy another advantage. While avoiding heavy casualties, they enable him to destroy some of our air power on the ground, to make resupply awkward and to hamper our command and control efforts. These are the three aspects of the US presence which most threaten his continued existence as a cohesive force. If he can limit the US forces' effectiveness through substantial attrition in these areas, he enhances the success of a major offensive.

13. The effect of these tactics and their contribution toward his objectives cannot be accurately assessed. Doubtless, they are meeting with a degree of success in some areas while proving ineffective in others. He is apparently now concentrating on a program of demilitarizing the rural population, discrediting the established government, demoralizing the RVNAF and containing US forces before he makes his next major military effort.

ACKNOWLEDGES: DAVID COL

OFFICIAL:

DISTRIBUTION: SPECIAL
US Army VN
Military History Detachment
Riverine Ops Study
Situation Reports
2/68 - 11/68
Box #2
HM 1978