QUESTION 11

What differences of opinion exist concerning extent of Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) improvement, and what is evidence underlying different views? (e.g., compare recent Central Intelligence Agency memorandum with MACV views.) For example:

a. What is the level of effective, mobile offensive operations? What results are they achieving?

b. What is the actual level of "genuine" small-unit actions and night actions in the Army of Vietnam, Regional Forces, and Popular Forces, i.e., actions that would typically be classed as such within the US Army and, in particular, offensive ambushes and patrols? How much has changed?

c. How much has the officer selection and promotion system, and the quality of leadership, actually changed over the years (as distinct from changes in paper "programs")? How many junior officers hold commissions (in particular, battlefield commissions from noncommissioned officer rank) despite lack of a high school diploma?

d. What known disciplinary action has resulted from the Army of Vietnam looting of civilians in the past year (for example, the widespread looting that took place last spring)?

e. To what extent have past "antidesertion" decrees and efforts lessened the rate of desertion; why has the rate recently been increasing to new highs?

f. What success are the Regional Forces and Popular Forces having in providing local security and reducing Viet Cong control and influence in rural populations?

The answers to these questions are discussed in separate responses. This section responds to the question: what differences of opinion exist concerning extent of Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) improvement, and what is the evidence underlying different views?

Any analysis of improvement of the capability of Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) is directly linked to assessment of the direction of the war itself. Most observers and analysts agree that the battlefield situation has improved and that the allies are in a better position than 18 months ago.

Most also consider that the RVNAF has improved compared with several years ago. All recognize that RVNAF is faced with some major problems. The chief differences of opinion concern the (1) degree and speed of improvement and (2) the prognosis for the future. There are two views:
RVNAF is making fairly rapid strides in improvement and effectiveness and that the prognosis for a self-sufficient force designed to hold its own against an internal threat is good. RVNAF will continue to overcome its recognized endemic problems such as lack of leadership, difficulties with the population, etc. The JCS, CINCPAC and COMUSMACV are inclined towards this view.

RVNAF is making only limited progress due primarily to recent inputs of US resources, to US combat activity, and to a perception that US forces may withdraw. Significant improvement of RVNAF is limited because of constraints of the present military and political systems. RVNAF must take major political and military actions, some of which are not now underway, to become an effective force in the near future. OSD is inclined towards this view.

Both of these conclusions, however, are drawn from the same body of data from which the following trends emerge:

a. Overall, RVNAF capabilities and efforts have improved:

-- The total strength of RVNAF has increased by about 27% since 1967.

-- The number of regular battalions engaged in combat operations has increased by about 11% during 1968.

-- The firepower of RVNAF has improved. Since March 1968, Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) battalions have been 56% as effective as US battalions in killing the enemy vs 48% in 1967.

-- COMUSMACV reports that Regional and Popular Forces (RF and PF) are more aggressive and responsive, and that the combat effectiveness of regular forces has improved, compared with 1967.

-- The number of large unit operations has about doubled compared with 1967. RF and PF are conducting almost twice the number of operations as they conducted earlier in 1968.

-- The number of returnees under the Chieu Hoi program has steadily increased during 1968. Monthly returnee rates are now almost double the rate during the first months in 1968. The highest rate is in IV Corps where there are few US forces.

-- The percentage of population living in relatively secure areas has reached an all time high at 76.3% in December 1968.
b. Despite these improvements, there has been no breakthrough in RVNAF performance. RVNAF performance is still directly related to US efforts.

-- While the number of military operations has increased overall, Regular Force effort has declined slightly since the 1st Quarter 1968.

-- The number of enemy killed per contact also has declined slightly since early 1968; although the number of operations with contact per unit has increased slightly during 1968.

-- The number of small unit operations with contact is below the 1967 rate.

-- Despite increases in relatively secure population, little of this is directly attributable to efforts of Regional and Popular Forces, those forces primarily responsible for territorial security.

-- Performance of RVNAF varies greatly between units. While there has been some general improvement, some units have declined in effectiveness ratings.

-- The RVNAF desertion rate is now the highest since early 1966. RVNAF lost almost 120,000 men due to desertion in 1968.

c. RVNAF, despite some minor inroads, continues to suffer from significant systemic and attitudinal problems.

-- The officer system is a closed system; it has changed little over the years. Entry to the system depends upon education, advancement depends upon political loyalty and opportunity for corruption, rather than aggressiveness on the battlefield. While there have been some changes at the low echelons resulting in improvements in quality, effectiveness of many of the senior officers has not improved. RVNAF leadership lacks the skills necessary for modernization.

-- RVNAF is conventionally organized and equipped, not necessarily well suited to an extensive pacification effort or to countering political action. Further the RVNAF organization maximizes divisive trends in the Vietnamese social and political system, and makes poor use of available manpower resources.
SECRET

-- Despite the emphasis on pacification, most RVNAF leaders neither understand it nor support it. The pacification task has been given to RF and PF who have been inadequate. Plans call for continued shift of pacification to RF/RF; despite improvements in these forces, without regular force backup, they are likely to remain inadequate by themselves.

-- RVNAF has been unable to relate to the population and is neither a politically unifying nor modernizing force. Both RVNAF and the civil populace regard each other as "outsiders"; there has been little change in RVNAF conduct towards the populace.

The capability of RVNAF to overcome these problems and the time available to do so is the chief question. OSD believes that RVNAF can become an effective force if certain major actions are taken. These are addressed in the answer to question 14. Evidence supporting this view, in addition to that cited previously is:

-- President Thieu has consolidated his position of power to a large degree and appears to be accepted, thus the central leadership in SVN with US advice and support could begin the necessary change.

-- It appears that the South Vietnamese leadership recognizes that certain changes are necessary if they are to survive.

-- There are a considerable number of effective and honest officers and enlisted men at lower levels who could be advanced.

-- The Vietnamese are a flexible and pragmatic people who have survived over the centuries; if the necessity for change is clearly understood, systemic changes could be made and would be accepted.
Which is the level of effective, mobile, offensive operation? What results are they achieving?

While the Republic of Vietnamese Armed Forces are killing more enemy, entering more base areas and conducting more operations that was the case in 1967, the effectiveness of mobile offensive operations is difficult to ascertain. The "hard" evidence of effectiveness of these operations often conflicts or is confusing since RVNAF and allied operations are closely associated. Despite an increase in the level of mobile, offensive operations during 1968, approximately 85% of all contacts in South Vietnam (SVN) are initiated by the enemy (while the enemy continues to be able to avoid contact, he does so only at the risk of uncovering more of his support structure). Furthermore, Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces can still freely strike most areas in SVN, though with the risk of incurring increased losses over 1967.

1968 marked a gradual improvement in the level of effective, mobile, offensive operations.

-- This improvement is exemplified by the employment of mobile reaction forces, ability to conduct sustained operations, the use of reconnaissance and intelligence resources and the ability to exploit the advantages gained by fire support. This improvement, however, varies according to the missions of friendly units, tactics employed, terrain and enemy dispositions within each Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ), and to a large degree according to the combat support received from us and limited RVNAF sources. Leadership and other qualitative factors such as experience and training also strongly affect the effectiveness of performance.

-- In I CTZ, regular ground forces have experienced a growing confidence in their own capabilities. Army of Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) battalions, once dependent upon division and regimental control, can now operate independently. The trend throughout the corps is toward extended operations to continuously apply pressure on the enemy. US support still plays a significant part in the success of I Corps forces, and while their precise share of overall success against the enemy is difficult to measure, it is the considered estimate of the Corps senior advisor that ARVN's share has been significant.

-- In II CTZ, a steady improvement in all elements of RVNAF has been noted. ARVN forces in particular have shown a disposition to engage more in offensive operations to seek out the enemy, to preempt him and keep him off balance. Previously weak and ineffective units have improved their performance and are now on a par with more effective units. Although still weak in combat support, RVNAF's capability to cope with enemy guerrilla forces continues to increase.
In III CTZ, one-third of the ARVN maneuver battalions conduct offensive operations effectively, another third is relatively ineffective, while another third is unsatisfactory.

Indications are that their effectiveness is declining in IV CTZ; IV the overall number of offensive operations has not appreciably increased, but with more helicopter assets available, the ability to conduct air-mobile operations has been significant. Longer duration, large unit operations aimed at penetrating enemy base areas have been successfully conducted to destroy and capture the enemy and his materiel.

Country-wide, regular ground forces increased their percent of available battalion days on combat sweeps (offensive operations) from 35.1 for the first quarter CY68 to 44.7 during the last quarter. This equates to 2,219 more days per quarter during the fourth quarter compared with the first. The fourth quarter was particularly significant because regular ground forces for the first time during 1968 spent more time conducting offensive than security operations. NOTE: Tabulated data on operations for Vietnamese regular forces is derived primarily from the System for Evaluating the Effectiveness of RVNAF (SEER). Numbers are submitted by US advisors and refer to operations involving more than three companies of friendly troops. The number of operations and their results may be high.

Total RVNAF operations during 1968 through October involving all types of missions have increased 30%. Each South Vietnamese Army and Marine regular maneuver battalion spent 13 days per month on operations in early 1968 versus 20 days per month by October.

During January 1969, RVNAF had an average of 29 battalion sized operations in progress per day.

COMUSMACV reports that "the first two quarters of 1968 were characterized by many small-unit operations. These operations were generally of one or two days duration. During the last two quarters, CY68, the trend toward extended large unit offensive operations became evident. The average duration of these operations increased by one-third during the last two quarters of 1968. These operations have been the most productive in terms of enemy attrition."

While mobile offensive operations are generally effective at battalion level, such operations by both larger and smaller units are less effective: higher staffs lack experience and company operations lack the requisite force. Further, these operations have not yet reached the level of effectiveness of US units. An ARVN regular battalion is about 1/2 as effective as a US battalion. Specifically:

Operational days of contact are about 75% of that for US units. Further, analysis of data from the first three quarters of 1968, shows very little overall change in the number of operations conducted by RVNAF battalions.
In addition, RVNAF gets less artillery support than US forces. Overall RVNAF receives about 1/3 the average artillery rounds which US forces get in SVN. While the modernization program provides increased artillery to RVNAF approximating that organic to a US division, US corps artillery is so large that this addition changes only slightly the ratio of US to ARVN artillery support.

Finally, mobility is inherent in offensive operations against an elusive enemy. RVNAF has considerably less air mobility than US forces. RVNAF has about 5% of the organic helicopter lift capability of US forces; roughly 20-25% of the US lift is provided RVNAF. Even with modernization, RVNAF will have only about 25% of the helicopter lift that is now available to US forces. However, COMUSMACV reports that:

The effectiveness of these operations has increased with greater mobility of GVN forces. Mobile reaction forces have been organized in ARVN divisions and employed against the enemy. Where more assets become available, ARVN has developed a capability to conduct successful airmobile operations. Eagle flight operations have proven highly effective with small units deploying by helicopter to find the enemy and larger heliborne reaction forces used to "pile" on and destroy him. With the increase of cavalry units in 1968, more operations with infantry and armored units have been conducted. The Vietnamese marines working with mobile riverine forces have conducted highly successful operations against enemy base areas. In short, with some conspicuous exceptions, RVNAF are showing a willingness to conduct sustained operations, and are demonstrating an improved capability to conduct offensive mobile operations when given the means for performing them.

In terms of results, overall assessment of the RVNAF effort and the level of offensive operations is difficult to separate from the total allied effort.

The enemy lost about 290,000 men in 1968 from all causes; of this, 161,000 were attributed to deaths from hostile action in SVN. In general, the number of enemy killed by RVNAF in 1968 has about doubled compared with 1967, and in IV Corps, where there are limited US forces, enemy casualties more than doubled.

The JCS and COMUSMACV report their RVNAF is proving more effective in combat. During the last five months of 1967, the RVNAF kill ratio averaged 2.9 enemy to 1 friendly. In 1968, through October, RVNAF kill ratios (Excluding Tet) were about 4.0:1. But despite increased enemy losses in 1968, RVNAF kill ratios increased proportionately. During 1968, RVNAF kill ratios declined from a first quarter high of 6.5:1 to 4.1:1 in the third quarter. For offensive actions only, kill ratios declined from 6.8:1 in the first quarter to 5.0:1 in the fourth quarter.
However, the decline is due to enemy avoidance of contact rather than reluctance of RVNAF to press contact. NOTE: enemy casualty data is derived from the SEER and other operational reports based on information submitted by the unit or its advisor. Reliability of this data is not high, but is considered adequate to reflect trends.

The enemy has lost about double the amount of weapons in 1968 as in 1967; the captured to lost ratio has increased continually during 1968 from a 1st quarter ratio of 5.6:1 to 11.5:1 in the fourth quarter.

The increased casualties and weapons losses may have forced the enemy to withdraw most of his major main force units to sanctuaries to retrain and refit beginning in September 1968.
QUESTION 11b

What is the actual level of "genuine" small-unit actions and night action in ARVN, RF and PF: i.e. actions that would typically be classed as such within the US Army, and in particular, offensive ambushes and patrols? How much has this changed?

As with large unit operations, the level of effective small unit actions is difficult to assess; the evidence is again conflicting. While there are more operations now being conducted than in 1967, results have not increased proportionately. Overall the level of small unit operations during 1968 was slightly above that for 1967, but the number with contact was less than the 1967 rate.

Generally, Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) units conduct small unit operations at company and multibattalion level, the Regional Forces (RF) at platoon and company level, and the Popular Forces (PF) at squad and platoon level.

The number of small unit operations conducted by regular forces during 1968 declined slightly from 83,723 in the first quarter to 52,079 in the fourth quarter. Night actions were not tabulated during 1968. (NOTE: Data are derived primarily from advisor reports and reflect operations involving less than three companies but not less than a fire team).

--- COMUSMACV attributes this decline to (1) an increase in large unit offensive operations and (2) a decrease in the number of battalions assigned to pacification missions.

--- As a comparison, US forces conducted about one-third more small unit operations with almost three times the number of contacts.

--- COMUSMACV further reports that generally US advisors at division level and below believe that improvement has occurred, and that command emphasis and advisory help is increasing the rate of these improvements. Some RVNAF units are showing increased confidence in themselves, their armament, and their support. However, other units, particularly in III Corps, are ineffective due to lack of leadership at all levels, a fear of conducting squad and platoon semi-independent operations and a widespread lack of offensive spirit.

Generally, the definition of RVNAF small-unit operations describes those that would be considered as genuine small-unit actions by a US unit. However, the degree to which the operations reported follow the guidance above is difficult to determine as the basic source of the data is the local Regional Forces and Popular Forces leader and is not entirely subject to verification by US advisory personnel. Additionally, in some areas the criteria stated in the definition. 
RF and PF are now conducting slightly less than twice the number of operations than they conducted during the spring of 1968. About 75% of these are conducted at night; however only 45% of RF contacts and 60% of PF occurred at night. Note: These and data in the following paragraphs were extracted from the Territorial Forces Evaluation System (TFES) which defines such operations as those which consist of a fire team or larger unit but one that is less than three companies and under control of a single headquarters. The minimum duration of the operation is 6 hours (unless significant contact occurs in less time). Movement must be planned and executed for purpose of contact with the enemy.

-- Totals for CY68 are as follows:

### REGIONAL FORCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Qtr</th>
<th>2d Qtr</th>
<th>3d Qtr</th>
<th>4th Qtr</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Operations</td>
<td>93,474</td>
<td>126,006</td>
<td>169,295</td>
<td>202,900</td>
<td>591,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night Operations</td>
<td>65,183</td>
<td>93,802</td>
<td>126,817</td>
<td>145,900</td>
<td>431,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total w/Contacts</td>
<td>3,678</td>
<td>3,949</td>
<td>5,073</td>
<td>7,100</td>
<td>19,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### POPULAR FORCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Qtr</th>
<th>2d Qtr</th>
<th>3d Qtr</th>
<th>4th Qtr</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Operations</td>
<td>148,820</td>
<td>207,657</td>
<td>276,276</td>
<td>358,300</td>
<td>991,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night Operations</td>
<td>113,838</td>
<td>164,521</td>
<td>214,612</td>
<td>253,500</td>
<td>746,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total w/Contacts</td>
<td>4,708</td>
<td>4,602</td>
<td>5,731</td>
<td>8,800</td>
<td>23,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night w/Contacts</td>
<td>2,536</td>
<td>2,712</td>
<td>3,344</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>13,792</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-- Small unit and night actions of RF and PF show an increase in both total operations and operations with contact for the last half of 1968. COMUSMACV considers that this is an indication of increasing aggressiveness and effectiveness, especially for a period such as the fourth quarter, when the bulk of enemy forces avoided contact. Reasons
given by advisors for variance in quality and productivity of Regional Forces and Popular Forces small-unit actions are these:

(1) Relative strength of the enemy.
(2) Degree of interest and support of nearby US Forces.
(3) Caliber of the district chief.

The overall effectiveness of small-unit operations is difficult to determine. Data is conflicting and there appears to be considerable variance between units and areas.

-- Operations with contact per unit have increased slightly during 1968 but the number of enemy killed per contact has declined slightly. Results of operations per RF and PF unit, per operation, and per contact show only marginal improvement, despite some equipment modernization and increase in training.

-- Area security has improved, but this may be as much the result of VC/NVA inactivity as it is RVNAF activity. It appears that where the enemy makes the effort, he still can enter villages and hamlets that are defended by RF/PF.

-- RF and PF units are mainly still defensively oriented on the hamlet where their families live. However, there is an inherent danger of misinterpretation of the degree of effectiveness of Regional Forces and Popular Forces units if a straight-line comparison of number of operations and number of contacts by US and South Vietnamese Army units on one side is made against Regional Forces and Popular Forces units on the other side. US and South Vietnamese Army units in the main seek and destroy enemy main force units. The Regional Forces and Popular Forces mission of territorial security centers on keeping local forces and guerrillas from entering hamlets and villages and molesting the populace. The degree of which the Regional Forces and Popular Forces prevent attacks by active patrolling and ambushes is as much a part of the measure of their effectiveness as the number of operations or the results. The answer to Question 11f treats with this measure.

-- Territorial forces can do well, offensively, against enemy of their own size (i.e., fragmented local force units or guerrillas). Correspondingly, they are defensive-minded when strong enemy forces are operating in their general area.

-- The South Vietnamese Army Marine Corps averaged 25 enemy contacts per day during 1968 on operations of company size or less. Most recent monthly averages are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Contacts per Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 1968</td>
<td>31 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1968</td>
<td>36 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1969</td>
<td>38 per day through 22d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How much has the officer selection and promotion system, and the quality of leadership, actually changed over the years (as distinct from change in paper "programs")? How many junior officers hold commissions (in particular, battlefield commissions from NCO rank) despite lack of a high school diploma?

There have been no major renovations of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) promotion system since 1965. There has, however, been some reform.

-- There has been a substantial increase in the number of promotions during 1967 and 1968. At the present time, approximately 60 percent of the Regular Forces officers in the grades of captain through colonel have dates of rank in 1967 and 1968.

-- In October 1968, the Joint General Staff promulgated a new promotion directive which revised and consolidated policies applicable to all RVNAF personnel. This directive reduced time in grade criteria for Regional Forces officers to bring them into line with those applicable to Regular Forces officers. It also reduced time in grade criteria to 18 months for automatic promotions for graduates of the Officer Training School at Thu Duc to second lieutenant and for graduates of the Vietnamese Military Academy at Dalat to first lieutenant. At the same time, the Minister of Defense approved a three-year phased officer promotion plan designed to correct the officer grade imbalance caused by the rapid expansion of RVNAF in 1968.

-- Significant is the action taken by the Joint General Staff in 1968 to increase the number of officer promotions, both special and annual, to meet the expanding needs of RVNAF. Although the Joint General Staff did not, in fact, meet its established promotion goals for 1968, it did promote more officers than in any previous year. The Chief, Joint General Staff, has directed that the 1968 quota shortfall be added to the annual promotion quotas for 1969, and that 20 percent of the 1969 promotion quotas be allocated for special battlefield promotions. This policy will provide recognition for those personnel who have distinguished themselves through sustained combat operations.

-- An important improvement to the RVNAF promotion system in recent years has been the institution of an efficiency reporting system. Efficiency reports were used for the first time in the selection of officers for the 1967 annual promotion. Promotion boards allot 30 percent of the promotion score to efficiency reports, with the remaining 70 percent determined by such factors from the individual's record as time in grade, time in service, and decorations.
SECRET

-- The JCS consider that the quality of officers within the RVNAF has shown significant improvement over the years. Today, a large percentage of the officers have extensive combat experience. In addition, an impressive officer schooling system now provides officer education at precommission, branch, command and staff, and national defense level. This is supplemented by schooling for selected officers in service schools in the United States.

While the Vietnamese have a "reformed" promotion system on paper, OSD considers it has changed little in method of operation. The promotion system responds to the politics of the senior generals rather than to the needs of the professional military service.

-- Decree Law 13, implemented in late 1965, stated the general bases upon which promotions were to be awarded, but the accompanying regulations only centralized the authority for promotions at the general officer level and did not specify the actual criteria upon which officer eligibility was to be evaluated. In practice, then, a tradition of rather long standing has been maintained: promotions are still made through negotiation and compromise at promotion boards between general officers trying to advance their proteges. This process is especially prominent in the promotion and placement of field grade officers where each general seeks to protect and position his supporters on the basis of politics rather than professional abilities.

OSD further considers that the price paid for the promotion system's responsiveness to the politics of the senior RVNAF generals is its autonomy. It has been unable to respond effectively to both requirements for professionalism and to the war itself.

-- First, the selection system has tended to reinforce and exacerbate the gap between the GVN and the population. In particular, the educational requirements for officer candidacy (i.e. the equivalent of a high school diploma) and the means employed to get adequate numbers of cadets to parallel the uneven growth of the RVNAF (i.e. occupational and educational drafts) produce officers more interested in the perquisites and privileges of rank than in effective military leadership. Education and the city life it required resulted in what many observers have now perceived as a gap between officers and soldiers.

-- The education requirement also tended to place the armed forces in a position where it had to compete only poorly with other forms of employment which offered higher pay and considerably better living conditions. As officers that during their initial period of service might have gained valuable operational experience were seduced to the better jobs, inexperienced cadets and junior officers replaced them and consistently deprived the RVNAF and the war it fought of the already small pool of experienced leaders.

11c-2

SECRET
Furthermore, the majority of subsequent promotions made in the RVNAF are not for military skills. Special, "other than battlefield" promotions in 1966-67 and 1967-68 accounted for 19% and 20%, respectively of all promotions, while less than 2% of all officers provided in those years owed their rank to combat victories.

RVNAF has not loosened significantly the educational requirements for commission.

COMUSMACV reports that the exact number of noncommissioned officers who have received commissions without having a high school diploma is not available. However, information provided by the Adjutant General/Joint General Staff shows that the number of noncommissioned officers commissioned as aspirants was approximately 520 in 1966, 490 in 1967, and approximately 1,900 in 1968. Indications are, that of the 1,900 commissioned in 1968, 99 percent did not have high school diplomas; however, because of their commander's recommendation, they were promoted to officer rank. It should be noted that those promoted without a high school diploma cannot be promoted beyond the rank of captain until they have completed high school level education.

Only 7% of all RVNAF officers have received commissions from the ranks and this proportion actually declines to only 4.8% in the 1967-68 class of Officer Candidates. There can be no concerted effort to raise the overall quality of officer leadership without RVNAF availing itself of the experienced leaders from the enlisted ranks.

The steady expansion in the size of the RVNAF has overtaken army politics in the sense that the need for more officers and, hence promotions has outstripped the capacity of the RVNAF political system to sanction such promotions. As a result of the early exhaustion of a limited reserve officer pool and the input of a great number of junior officers during 1968 (approximately 10,000 from Officers Candidate School), the overall quality of leadership in RVNAF has experienced some dilution. The quality of leadership varies from outstanding to weak at all levels, and MACV is directing efforts to influence RVNAF to identify and eliminate weak leaders.

While there is only about a 2,000 shortfall in regular and Regional Force (RF) officer strength compared with authorized, there is a considerable imbalance in the grade structure. These forces are short about 8,200 officers in the higher grades of Captain through Colonel and over about 6,100 in the aspirant and lieutenant grades.
Based on US standards, which may not be germane to South Vietnam but save as a comparison, RVNAF should have about 65% more officers than currently authorized.

In comparison to past two year periods the annual promotion rate actually declined despite the constant growth of the regular forces' size and leadership needs. COMUSMACV estimates that, at the current rate of promotion, and attrition, 90% of those authorized for all grades would be available by end CY 70. OSD estimates it should take the RVNAF a minimum of 2.5 years to fill the mid-1968 requirement for officers.

The relatively rapid expansion of the RVNAF filled the officer corps with men of approximately the same age (50% of all officers, for example, are between 25 and 31 years old). The relative chronological homogeneity of the officer corps has resulted in cleavages between those "political" officers who spend a rewarding and lucrative career in the national, provincial, or corps capitals and those "combat" officers who bear the brunt of the fighting with few rewards in the hinterlands. Morale, thereby, is low among these Vietnamese field officers who have held the same rank for 8 or 10 years while witnessing his colleagues at Saigon or Corps rapid advance due to favoritism. The "political" officers are divided between Thieu and Ky, while those officers bearing the brunt of the fighting may be beginning to coalesce into a 3rd faction opposed to both. Thus, the hope that Thieu's apparent victory over Ky in the struggle for control of the executive and the army will bring both stability and effectiveness to RVNAF command may well be frustrated. The Thieu consolidations represent the victory of one faction over another rather than the end to the causes of such factionalism. The Thieu consolidations represent but another act in the continuing drama of coup and countercoup within the Vietnamese military elite.

In summary, OSD considers that unless the promotion system is regularized and given the autonomy it clearly needs from the vagaries of general officer politicking, the increase in RVNAF effectiveness may well be limited.
QUESTION 11d

What known disciplinary action has resulted from ARVN looting of civilians in the past year (for example, the widespread looting that took place last spring)?

Looting and other misconduct by Republic of Vietnam Armed troops toward the civilian populace have undermined the confidence of the people in RVNAF. Despite some efforts to correct the situation, efforts to undertake the required attitudinal changes of RVNAF towards the populace have not been productive.

COMUSMACV reports that his command has no firm evidence of widespread looting. However, as the Joint General Staff saw fit to publish a memorandum in March 1968 concerning theft, robbery, and rape, there apparently was concern in this area during the Spring.

The number of such RVNAF personnel brought to trial during 1968 totaled eight. Of this eight, one enlisted man was acquitted, one officer received a sentence of five years detention, and six enlisted men received sentences of six months detention (suspended).

During 1967, several measures were taken to preclude RVNAF's stealing from the populace. A key program was the institution of a free issue of operational rations to troops. Prior to that time, the cost of operational rations was deducted from the soldier's pay. Consequently, he was prone to live off the land to save this expense.

During 1967, all South Vietnamese Army infantry battalions received training in Revolutionary Development, which stressed the importance of gaining the respect and cooperation of the people. This training was eventually extended to all other RVNAF battalions and to a high proportion of Regional Forces and Popular Forces units.

Many officers either have a disdain for dealing both with their men and with the peasants, or have come to expect and tolerate looting by believing that it "makes soldiers fierce" and unites them with a tradition of soldiering associated with the legendary and successful armies of Vietnam's past. During the third quarter of 1968, about 50% of MACV advisors with Vietnamese Army and Marine units report that one-third of the populace has a feeling of hostility towards their unit. On the other hand, 68% reported that their units respected the right of the populace and property most of the time.

What may be a more serious problem, however, is not that looting will probably continue despite even the most concerted reform efforts but that it is part of the larger problem of the army's lack of compassion and respect for civilian life and property. Such lack of compassion, in turn, is likely to further alienate the civilian population from the government's cause.
SECRET

QUESTION 11e

To what extent have past "anti-desertion" decrees and efforts lessened the rate of desertion; why has the rate recently been increasing?

RVNAF personnel are deserting at a rate of almost 120,000 per year. In combat units, the rate is the highest; gross desertions account for about 65% of the losses in these units. MACV has estimated that desertion rate will be reduced by about 50% during 1969—in fact, achievement of the new force goals is contingent upon this.

The successes of past desertion reduction programs attest to the fact that a reduction in the current high desertion rate is possible.

---

The following table illustrates RVNAF desertion rates over time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RVNAF Net Desertions per 1000 Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Qtr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total RVNAF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

--- Desertion rates during 1965 and early 1966 rose to high levels, reflecting the political instability of the Government of Vietnam and enemy battlefield successes at that time. As the US build-up took effect and the Government of Vietnam was able to reestablish itself, the implementation of Decree Law 15 of 1966 and of a series of administrative reforms within the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) began to result in steadily decreasing desertion rates. As enforcement of Decree Law 15 (which increased sentences for desertion to a minimum of five years at hard labor and provided punitive measures to be taken against inducers and accomplices) proceeded, the punishments for desertion became adequate deterrents. Prior to February 1968, about 16,000 people were tried and 11,000 sentenced. By 1967, the desertion rate showed a 34 percent drop from 1966, and by January 1968, the rate had decreased to the level of 1963.

--- The administrative reforms within RVNAF during 1966 and 1967 consisted of increased attempts at troop indoctrination; pay raises in June 1966, May 1967, October 1967, and a PF pay raise in July 1968; increases in fund allowances; some leadership improvements; and upgrading of Regional and Popular Forces (RF and PF). These programs also had some
effect—the PF desertion rate, which was the highest in 1960, is now the lowest; interestingly enough, PF casualties during the same period declined from 31% of the RVNAF total to about 20% in 1968. However, we do not know the extent that these forces have made local accommodations with the Viet Cong—we suspect there has been some.

Yet despite these programs, the desertion rate rose in 1968. This rise is attributable to several factors.

-- In February, the GVN declared a general amnesty and all those deserters previously sentenced was sent to combat units; about 13,000 deserters returned. Following this, rates rose. COMUSMACV reports that such amnesties granted to deserters by the Government of Vietnam, despite advice to the contrary by the Chief, RVNAF Joint General Staff, have not strengthened the desertion control program.

-- COMUSMACV reports that the present high desertion rate is due primarily to the large number of men entering the service as the result of the general mobilization.

"Prior to 1968, the RVNAF was a relatively stable force filled primarily with mature, trained individuals. As a result of the Partial and General Mobilization Decrees, the RVNAF expanded from a strength of 817,358. This accelerated mobilization required a general shift of the older officers, non-commissioned officers and enlisted men from their original units to one of the newly formed units. This shift resulted in a significant portion of RVNAF being manned by young, immature conscripts and volunteers supervised by a reduced quality of leadership by the young officers and noncommissioned officers."

"Statistics have shown that a soldier is more prone to desert during his first 6 months of service due to fear of the unknown, fear of combat, and because of strong family affiliations. This is the basic reason why desertions increased during the summer and fall of 1968 as over 200,000 new personnel were inducted or volunteered for service during this period."

-- In addition to new personnel, the increased rates may be due in part to the highened intensity of combat and Viet Cong proselytizing.

The rising desertion rates turned slightly downward during the last quarter of 1968. Yet despite this further reduction may be difficult.

-- RVNAF initiated a program in July to encourage the populace to turn in deserters; the leave policy has been liberalized slightly as has been
motivational training for new servicemen; and desertion "quotas" have been assigned to units. These programs appear to be having some effect.

-- The endemic poor environmental conditions of RVNAF, which contribute to desertions, such as low pay, little dependent housing, limited leave policy, transportation problems to get home even if a man gets leave, remain to be corrected.

-- The Vietnamese people take a very pragmatic attitude toward desertions. They feel that desertion is not bad but a way to beat the central authority.

We do not know to what extent the rising desertion rate indicates disaffection with the GVN or how many deserters remain in GVN areas and how many go to the VC. The answer to these questions become more important as the RVNAF and GVN supporters become increasingly aware that they probably will have to make some political accommodation with the Viet Cong. Fewer may be willing to die in combat. Thus continued innovative actions are required to reduce RVNAF desertions.
QUESTION 11f

What success are the RF and PF having in providing local security and reducing VC control and influence in rural populations?

Information on the success of local security and the reduction of VC control is soft and recognized as such, but some conjecture can be made and trends discerned.

The JCS, COMUSMACV and CINCPAC report that the best overall measure of the success of Regional forces (RF) and Popular forces (PF) in providing local security and reducing Viet Cong (VC) control is the trend in relatively secure and VC controlled population.

--- Since the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) began breaking out rural population separately, the trends have been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Rural Population</th>
<th>Jan 68</th>
<th>Mar 68</th>
<th>Oct 68</th>
<th>Dec 68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relatively Secure</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Cong-Controlled</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, despite the Tet setback, relative security has been extended to about 1.3 million people in the rural areas during 1968, and the Viet Cong have lost approximately 0.7 million of the population they controlled at the outset of the year. NOTE: HES data does not necessarily depict an accurate reflection of the security conditions at any one time nor does it reflect internal variation with categories of security, yet trend information is considered adequate.

--- During the Accelerated Pacification Campaign, for example, significant numbers of Regional and Popular Forces units have been redeployed mostly from relatively secure areas into contested hamlets. Some 227 Regional Forces companies and 710 Popular Forces platoons (roughly 15 percent of the total territorial security forces) are now stationed in formerly contested or Viet Cong-controlled target hamlets. Although territorial security forces are spread somewhat more thinly, even taking into account the almost 100,000 strength increase over the past year, the enemy has not taken advantage, either through lack of capability or a conscious decision, of this deployment of friendly security forces.

Viewed from a slightly different perspective, another good indicator of the status of local security is the status of the Viet Cong (VC) local government or infrastructure (VCI): the existence of a small disciplined organization in a village or hamlet is a significant threat to an individual.

--- As of the end of November 1968, only about 21.2% of the population lived in areas where the VCI were considered eliminated (this does not include...
non-hamlet secure population as rating of this group does not include specific VCI questions -- and the extent of VCI may be considerable). According to HES figures, about 61% of the total population and 80% of the rural population is subject to VCI influence; this has increased since 1967 as we find more about the VCI, despite anti-infrastructure efforts. Recent VCI political activity has also offset our efforts to destroy the VCI -- as of the end of December 1968, about one-half of SVN's villages had "liberation committees"; about 10% of the relatively secure population lived in areas with such committees.

-- Actual Government of Vietnam (GVN) control is increasing very slowly. As of December 1968, only about 47% of the population of SVN was under primarily GVN influence with only 32% in rural areas.

-- Whereas the VC has a disciplined organization at village/hamlet level, the GVN does not: The GVN structure is smaller by almost one-half -- the GVN has only about 15% of its structure at this level.

-- The existing rural GVN organization has little protection. During 1968, about 1300 GVN officials were killed and 300 abducted (it is likely that the large majority of these were from rural areas).

-- There is no significant programmed expansion of GVN and civil manpower resources at village and hamlet level. In fact, the GVN structure has declined in size due to general mobilization and input into RVNAF.

With respect to performance and effectiveness, while both RF and PF have improved, improvements are still not rapid enough. COMUSMACV reports that:

-- The presence of 353 Mobile Advisory Teams has added backbone to the Regional Forces/Popular Forces, improved their training, and increased the air and artillery support which they receive. Other similar programs such as Marine Combined Action Platoons, training courses conducted by US combat units, and numerous combined operations have enhanced the ability of the Regional Forces/Popular Forces to provide better protection to the people.

-- More than 100,000 M-16 rifles are already in the hands of Regional Forces/Popular Forces. Another 150,000 will be issued within the next year. The increased firepower and increased confidence these rifles give to the Regional Forces/Popular Forces have enhanced their effectiveness and aggressiveness. As discussed in more detail under Question 11b, both Regional Forces and Popular Forces contacts in the last quarter of 1968 were up almost 100 percent over the 1st quarter of the year. Night contacts increased more than 100 percent during the same period.

-- The pace of Regional Forces/Popular Forces improvement is still not rapid enough. The first year's improvement program carried out in 1968 was moderately successful. With greater Government of Vietnam command interest being shown from the President on down, with the Territorial Forces Evaluation

llf-2
SECRET
System (TFES) as a Government of Vietnam and US management tool, with more than 350 Mobile Advisory Teams available for full-time work, and with a vigorous improvement program for 1969, the Regional Forces/Popular Forces should be able to extend security to 90 percent of the population, which is the goal set by President Thieu for 1969.

OSD considers that despite increases in RF and PF operations and the increase in overall security ratings, improvement and extension of area security directly attributed to these remain marginal.

How much of the success of the accelerated pacification program is due to lack of VC opposition and how much is due to RF/PF efforts is not clear. An indicator is the fact that only about 20% of the RF/PF units in this program have moved from their original location.

-- Local units are mainly defensively oriented, related to villages or hamlets where their families are, rather than to conducting forays to close by VC hamlets.

-- The number of RF and PF units (currently about 32% and 65% of the total units respectively) protecting villages and hamlets has changed only slightly throughout 1968.

-- According to analysis of TFES reports and RES security ratings, the population unprotected by RF or PF improved during 1968 almost as rapidly as those protected by RF or PF; further, security improvement existed only when PF were present.

-- The PF is programmed to be expanded over current levels by only about 6,000 men.

Thus it appears that influence of the GVN versus the VC is growing slowly and principally under the weight of allied effort. Yet influence extension still operates with minimal resources on the part of the RVNAF and GVN. For greater productivity in this regard, commitment of additional manpower and equipment resources is necessary.
To what extent could RVNAF -- as it is now -- handle the VC
(Main Force, local forces, guerrillas), with or without US combat support

to fill RVNAF deficiencies, if all NVA units were withdrawn:

(a) If VC still had northern fillers
(b) If all northerners (but not regroupes) were withdrawn

RVNAF capabilities and possible NVA withdraws are difficult to predict;
judgments are highly conjectural at this time.

The JCS, CINCPAC and COMUSMACV estimate that it is highly probable that
Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF), as it exists today, adequately
supported by US artillery, engineer, tactical air, helicopter, and naval
assets, is capable of handling the Viet Cong. Without US combat support
and when opposing Viet Cong main and local force units, the RVNAF would
have to reduce the number of offensive operations and adopt more of a
defensive posture. This would result in loss of control by the Government
of Vietnam over substantial rural areas.

The above response is predicated upon two assumptions: first,
there exists an internal environment characterized by a workable economy,
a relatively secure civilian populace, and a functioning government.
Secondly, the North Vietnamese Army forces have withdrawn to North Vietnam
and terminated external support to Viet Cong Forces. Otherwise, if
external support from the north were to continue, it is visualized that
filler personnel would infiltrate in ever-increasing numbers to counter
any substantial RVNAF success. This could result in a prolongation of
the conflict unless substantial Free World military assistance force
presence were either continued or reestablished.

It is highly probable that the RVNAF, as it exists today,
adequately supported by US artillery, engineer, tactical air, helicopter,
and naval assets, is capable of:

(1) Making substantial progress in the elimination of Viet
Cong main and local force units, including those with northern
fillers.

(2) Making sustained progress in a reduction of the Viet
Cong guerrilla threat although elimination would require a
prolonged period of time.

(3) Achieving favorable results in a shorter time frame,
if northern fillers are withdrawn.
SECRET

-- It is estimated that without US combat support and opposing Viet Cong main and local force units, with or without northern fillers, the RVNAF would:

(1) Reduce numbers of offensive operations and adopt more of a defensive posture.

(2) Consolidate some forces and redeploy them within or in the proximity of major populated areas.

(3) Lose Government of Vietnam control over substantial rural areas.

(4) Retain Government of Vietnam control over major populated areas.

However, OSD considers that if all northerners withdraw the Viet Cong effort in the South may collapse, thus such a complete withdrawal may be unlikely.

-- North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces in the south now comprise about 70% of the enemy regular combat forces. If all northerners withdraw the internal threat would be reduced from about 202 infantry type battalions to 73 with a regular force strength of about 37,000.

-- If fillers remained, the VC threat would be from 92 to 130 maneuver battalions. The larger figure is based on movement of NVA fillers into newly formed VC units.

RVNAF's capability against VC forces with NVA fillers is closely associated with time.

-- If most US forces were withdrawn now, RVNAF improvement may stop or regress. Most RVNAF gains are closely related to support provided directly and indirectly by US forces; if these forces are withdrawn rapidly, RVNAF's newly gained confidence may collapse.

-- While there has been considerable progress in increasing the force levels of RVNAF (now at about 826,000 to be expanded about 872,000 by end FY70), the initial expansion and modernization was designed to maximize combat power, rather than develop a balanced force. The impact of this expansion and modernization is just now being felt. The second phase of the modernization and improvement program is to develop a balanced force capable of coping with the internal VC threat, but despite acceleration, goals will not be met before end FY 72. Thus RVNAF capabilities should increase over time. Continued RVNAF modernization and more evidence of improvement over time will reinforce judgments on the question of RVNAF capabilities.
To what extent could the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces -- as it is now -- also handle a sizeable level of North Vietnamese Army forces?

a. With U.S. air and artillery support?

b. With above, and also U.S. ground forces reserve?

c. Without U.S. direct support, but with increased RVNAF artillery and air capacity?

(S) Today's Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF), without full support of US combat forces, could not cope with a sizeable level of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces.

a. Should the present RVNAF be reinforced with US air and artillery support, their capability of defense would be improved, but not to the extent of being able to cope with the type and complexity of combat imposed by major North Vietnamese Army involvement.

b. The posture of the present RVNAF would be further strengthened if reinforced by major US air and artillery support, and backed up by major US ground force elements in a mobile reserve posture immediately available for commitment. The utility derived from placing major US Forces in stand-by reserve would depend on US willingness to use them as a threat and to commit all or part of the reserve as needed.

c. Finally, the question as to whether the present-day RVNAF, without US (or Free World Military Assistance Force) direct support but with an increase in organic artillery and air, could cope with sizeable North Vietnamese Army forces relates directly to the concept of the Phase II development.

-- Phase II is designed to restructure the present-day RVNAF to provide a more balanced combat support and combat-service support capability and includes a significant increase in air and artillery support. Air unit activations will commence in the 3d quarter, FY 1970 and be completed by end FY 1972. Artillery unit activations, currently underway, will be completed in the 2d quarter, FY 1970.

-- The RVNAF, with their present structure and degree of combat readiness, are inadequate to handle a sizeable level of North Vietnamese Army forces. The RVNAF simply are not capable of attaining the level of self-sufficiency and overwhelming force superiority that would be required to counter combined Viet Cong insurgency and North Vietnamese Army main force offensives. Some of the RVNAF would necessarily have to be redeployed to concentrate defenses in and around critical population centers and installations, thus abdicating a greater extent of rural areas to Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army control.

[Signature]
As has been cited previously, and as covered more fully in the response to Questions 14 and 26, the plans for the Phase II RVNAF provide for balanced military forces that are within the maximum capability of the nation to support, and structured to deal with an internal security threat, free of external aggression or support.

(TS) Although the question does not consider gradual US troop reduction, the most likely and feasible scenario would be RVNAF gradually improving its capabilities and effectiveness. Associated would be a phased reduction in US forces.

COMUSMAC considers that, with the momentum that has been built up in the pacification program, the expansion and modernization of RVNAF, and the steady attrition of the enemy, it would be possible to plan for removing one division from South Vietnam during mid-summer of 1969. He and Ambassador Bunker discussed this with President Thieu and were met with a favorable response.

In addition, reduction of other US forces should be possible in the near future. The numbers and timing depend upon progress of RVNAF modernization (some units will turn over their equipment to RVNAF units during 1969), improvements in effectiveness of RVNAF, and a drastic reduction in the RVNAF desertion rate.
QUESTION 14

What, in various views, are the required changes - in Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) command, organization, equipment, training, and incentives, in political environment, in logistical support, in US modes of influence - for making the RVNAF adequate to the tasks cited in Questions 11 and 12, above? How long would this take? What are the practical obstacles to these changes, and what US moves would be needed to overcome these?

The JCS, CINCPAC and COMUSMACV consider that by 1972 the planned Phase II RVNAF will be adequate to handle the Viet Cong insurgency if the Viet Cong are not reinforced and supported by the North Vietnamese Army.

--- Command and Organization. From the initial decision to improve and modernize the RVNAF as a self-sufficient and effective military force until the present, planning has focused on developing the RVNAF command and organizational structure and providing the equipment, training, and logistical support adequate to the task cited in Question 12b, above. No major changes in command structure or organization are believed required at this time.

--- Force Level. The Phase II accelerated RVNAF force structure consists of a 10-division South Vietnam Army with a minimal logistic support force, expanded territorial forces which will total approximately 431,000 men and a 40-squadron South Vietnam Air Force. The approved SVN Navy plan calls for a balanced naval force of 24,734 men. Because of limitations on manpower availability, this total force is the maximum that can be achieved and sustained. It is the minimum force believed required to meet the likely threat from an internal insurgency without North Vietnamese Army support.

--- People's Self Defense. The Government of Vietnam is also pressing the People's Self Defense and similar programs. As these become more effective and involve a substantial portion of the total population, they can be expected to make at least part of the Popular Forces and Regional Forces available for more intensive efforts against local guerrillas and even local forces. This would correspondingly free elements of the Army of Vietnam now required to assist in this role, which could then be utilized not only against Viet Cong main force but also North Vietnamese Army main force units. While this would not be adequate to handle all of the North Vietnamese threat, it could contribute substantially to this mission.

--- Equipment. The RVNAF has yet to achieve the full quantities of equipment called for by the Phase II accelerated force structure nor has the planned modernization program of equipment yet been completed. When the equipment called for by these programs is received, the equipment will be adequate to meet the requirements.
SECRET

-- Training. Training within units needs to have continued emphasis. The product of the RVNAF training systems, to include their schools, is generally satisfactory. High skill, long lead-time training, such as helicopter pilots, must, for some time, continue to take place in the Continental United States.

-- Incentives. While increased pay for the RVNAF would amount to an increased incentive and could possibly assist in solving the desertion problem, there are no current plans for any raise. The RVNAF is currently paid at a level equal to, or greater than, the Government of Vietnam civil service. Other forms of incentive, such as increased promotion opportunities and greater use of decorations and awards, are being pressed by US advisors.

-- Logistical Support. While not yet approved, the recent recommendations of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, for an increase in logistical spaces of approximately 9,400 will produce a better balanced force more capable of self-sufficiency. It is a minimal logistical structure.

-- Modes of Influence. No significant changes in US modes of influence are called for or required. Certain reductions are being made within selected Army of Vietnam units in the level of US advisory effort as these units achieve maturity and effectiveness. In the territorial forces, on the other hand, consideration is being given to doubling the level of the Military Assistance Training program. This program, which provides small five-man advisory teams to work with the Regional Forces/Popular Forces, has been a significant contributing factor to the improvement of territorial forces.

-- Timing. Primarily because of long lead-time training requirements and secondarily because of stretch-out of delivery of required equipment, it will be FY72 before the planned force can be fully effective.

-- Obstacles. Obstacles to the success of the program include the remaining high desertion rate and needed improvements in quantity and quality of leadership. These problems are receiving continuing command emphasis.

-- US Moves. In any case, until the goals of the Improvement and Modernization Program are achieved, US support units (approved at about 39,000 personnel) will be required to make up RVNAF shortfalls against the threat postulated in Question 12b, above. Continued US materiel support under a Military Assistance Program/Military Assistance Service Funded program will be required indefinitely to maintain an effective force. A continuing requirement for a US presence in the form of a Military Assistance Advisory Group is anticipated also (approved at about 19,000).

In addition to the above views of the JCS, CINCPAC and COMUSMACV, OSD considers that there are other required changes in RVNAF.
SECRET

Without major reforms within the RVNAF command and selection system, however, it is unlikely that the RVNAF as presently organized and led will ever constitute an effective political or military counter to the Viet Cong. Moreover, as the Government of Vietnam's (GVN) major presence in the countryside, the RVNAF as presently constituted will only continue to widen the gap which exists between the government and the rural population. Thus, any program of priority changes must have as its primary purpose the provision of an interval during which maximum pressure can be exerted on the GVN to make the necessary organizational and political changes commensurate with the assumption of a larger role in the political struggle and the war. Actions enumerated in the following paragraphs should be undertaken. While some of these are underway in varying degrees, they must receive more emphasis.

a. Concentrate on those organizational and command changes that can improve RVNAF strategic capability to assume a greater share of the overall military burden and increase their competence to better confront the enemy's military and political infrastructure.
SECRET

- Initiate top echelon political action to emphasize and reward professionalism in the RVNAF by making the basis of promotion and assignment professional competence rather than political loyalty. Immediate action on this priority is essential if the RVNAF is to emerge as a viable and an effective military establishment in South Vietnam. From the standpoint of GVN politics, the army is also at a major watershed in its development. President Thieu has succeeded in replacing those senior generals and other once-influential officers loyal to Vice President Ky. The Thieu victory, however, is not likely to bring either stability or effectiveness to future RVNAF operations unless Thieu can make the choice between basing RVNAF commands on professionalism rather than politics. First, while all major RVNAF commands have changed hands, the primacy of politics and political loyalties as the basis for advancement has not been changed. Second, if politicizing remains the basis of command assignment in RVNAF, then the Thieu victory is a temporary one at best. The tension between supporters of General Cao Van Vien vs Premier Tran van Houng, paralleling the basic antagonism between northerners and southerners in the polity at large is likely to further divide the RVNAF generals and threaten Thieu's hold over them. Similarly, at the battalion level and throughout the field generally, the tension between those officers who have fought hardest and advanced least versus those who have had little fighting experience but rapid advancement is likely to hamper the ability of the GVN to successfully carry out major transfer of fighting responsibilities. Unless the closed system of loyalties and regionalism is replaced in the promotion and assignment of officers the same problems of inept leadership and corruption will continue to paralyze the RVNAF regardless of the magnitude of future US/Allied assistance to the GVN.

What is now required, in essence, is to overlay the Vietnamese system with effectiveness criteria, institutionalize advancement and assignment on such criteria, and use US pressure to regularize the promotion system. There are some indications that the GVN both realizes that this must be done and is willing to do so. They have taken some steps to improve low level leadership. We should help the GVN make changes at the top. This can be done by first making it clear to the GVN at the highest levels that: (1) while we will continue support, we intend to reduce our effort, (2) that the GVN can no longer survive without making certain changes and we will assist them in making these changes -- teach the leadership to survive in a changing system. In this regard, we should provide highly qualified and sensitive advisors for selected high level RVNAF leaders (at the Joint General Staff, Corps and division level) to work directly with these leaders.
In consultation with the Vietnamese, we should decrease the number of American advisors assigned to RVNAF units which have demonstrated the capability of operating effectively.

b. Increase the quality and quantity of territorial security and pacification operations aimed at expanding GVN influence and diminishing the VC support structure and its guerilla and local force units.

Give priority attention to the territorial security forces by increasing support from regular forces, by providing more and better functioning communications as now planned under current RVNAF modernization and improvement programs, by increasing the force levels of Popular Forces and by detailing more regular force officers and NCO's to fill leadership shortages in territorial security units.

Emphasize quality rather than quantity in the Phoenix program by providing greater incentives for the identification and capture of high ranking or key personnel in important positions within the VC infrastructure, as opposed to elimination or larger numbers of lower ranking personnel of lesser importance.

Be prepared to establish a national constabulary type territorial security force under the Ministry of the Interior as may become necessary in the event the activities of the RVNAF are severely circumscribed in the post hostilities environment due to a restriction of the use of the RVNAF to maintain security, law and order resulting from a ceasefire agreement or other agreement to terminate hostilities.

Augment territorial security forces as required with RVNAF regular force maneuver battalions, and US maneuver battalions if necessary, to improve level of security in selected high-priority districts. Develop more effective pacification tactics.

Reward unit and individual performance in providing local security and eliminating the VC infrastructure through promotions, awards and publicity.

Initiate motivational and educational actions to change the attitudes of RVNAF personnel towards the populace and toward pacification programs.

Revitalize the RF by redistribution of leaders from headquarters elements to combat units, cross assignment of ARVN officers, and improved training and motivation.

Bring about attitudinal changes in RVNAF leadership towards the worth of the populace and the necessity for local security. Here, the special advisors could be effective instruments in stimulating and guiding the Vietnamese, thereby bringing GVN leaders and RVNAF to the realization that effective protection of the local people is an essential priority if nation-building activities are to be carried out.
c. In addition to the foregoing groups of actions, there are a number other less critical actions that should be taken to improve RVNAF. Among those, we should:

   -- Modify the RVNAF force structure as the threat in SVN shifts in emphasis to an internal one. The current RVNAF is conventionally equipped and organized, not necessarily well suited to political action or countering guerrilla warfare. Its many varied and separate commands maximize divisiveness. Powers of military commanders continue to conflict with political development. The essential task is to build a structure that maximizes cohesiveness and national loyalty. Rather than separate commands, differences should be manifested in mission assignments.
QUESTION 15

How much, and where, has the security situation and the balance of influence between the Viet Cong and Government of Vietnam actually changed in the countryside over time, contrasting the present to such benchmarks as end-61, end-63, end-65, and end-67? What are the best indicators of such change, or lack of it? What factors have been mainly responsible for such change as has occurred? Why has there not been more?

-- The number of relatively secure hamlets changed from 7,000 to 8,000 in early 1963 to about 4,000 in the fall of 1964 and mid-1965; 5,000 at the end of 1967, 4,559 after Tet, and 6,425 in December 1968. The main factors responsible for the changes for the better are the loss of local support when the North Vietnamese Army began to replace the Viet Cong programs, and the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. Obstacles to favorable change are failure of the Government of Vietnam to push reforms and a "wait and see" attitude on the part of the populace.

Security Changes in Vietnam

The JCS, CINCPAC and MACV consider that the following historical evaluation reflects the change in the countryside since 1964 and the reasons for this change:

-- After failing to make political gains in South Vietnam between 1954 and 1959, the Viet Cong added a military thrust to their strategy. By 1959, security started to become a problem, and by end-1961, security had begun to deteriorate seriously as the Viet Cong guerrillas and small units attacked the practically defenseless hamlets and villages. The Army of Vietnam, organized for another type of war, was unable to cope with the terrorists, propagandists, and night guerrilla actions which marked the enemy campaign.

-- The Government of Vietnam developed the Strategic Hamlet Campaign as a counter strategy. It stemmed the loss of security in the countryside and in early 1963, was on an up trend of success. Perhaps 7,000 to 8,000 hamlets would have been classed as relatively secure by today's more sophisticated standards. But by the summer of 1963, the house of cards had started to collapse as a result of strong pressure against the strategic hamlets by more powerful enemy units, political problems at the center which culminated in the 1 November 1963 coup, and the unwillingness of the Army of Vietnam to adapt itself to the enemy's kind of war. By the time of the coup, the number of relatively secure hamlets had decreased to about 5,500.

-- This deterioration presented an opportunity for rapid progress by the National Liberation Front in recruiting, arming, and influencing the South Vietnamese population. The series of governments following Diem was characterized by starting their tenure with the highest level of support they were ever to achieve and rapidly losing this support until they fell or were overthrown. By the fall of 1964, in the judgment of nonaligned Vietnamese,
US and other foreign missionaries and numbers of the Viet Minh, the National Liberation Front enjoyed the active, willing cooperation of more than 50 percent of the population in South Vietnam and a belief among the majority of the population in the inevitability of a communist takeover. Scarcely 4,000 hamlets could be regarded as relatively secure. At this time, the National Liberation Front made a decision in late 1964 to depart from its own principle of protracted warfare and try for a knockout blow in 1965. The immediate results of this decision were:

a. The promotion of local effective and politically astute cadre from positions in the infrastructure to command or political positions in companies and battalions.

b. An increase in taxation to support main force units.

c. A reduction in the draft age to recruit the necessary filler personnel.

d. The replacement of local cadre leaders with more youthful, less politically knowledgeable individuals, many of whom tended to take financial advantage of their position.

e. A resultant shift from effective, discriminate terrorism wherein unpopular Government of Vietnam leaders were targeted, to indiscriminate terrorism wherein the noninvolved population began suffering casualties (mortaring and mining).

f. The increased vulnerability of main and local force units now concentrated in base areas to the Government of Vietnam, US air and artillery fire.

--- The enemy's overall strategy was to consolidate his units into regiments, or to coordinate several battalions, to threaten vital areas, including Saigon. The Army of Vietnam committed itself rather poorly in these battles and was forced to fall back toward the cities. Later at Tet 1964, the countryside was turned over to the Viet Cong so that by mid-1965 only the same hard core of some 4,000 hamlets that remained under Government of Vietnam control in mid-1964 could still be considered relatively secure.

--- A new factor was added to the security equation on 7 February 1965, when the United States bombed North Vietnam. At the same time, the National Liberation Front agreed to more overt support by North Vietnam rather than "lose face" by disbanding their recently formed main force and local force battalions and companies. They chose to escalate in a belief that the United States was a paper tiger. The United States and the Government of Vietnam continued to escalate. The once popular belief in the inevitable communist takeover began to evaporate.
Throughout 1966 and 1967, improved and strengthened pacification programs and the balancing off of enemy and friendly forces by external replacements, i.e., North Vietnamese Army and US troops, allowed the Government of Vietnam to slowly expand control by following the oil spot concept. Relatively secure hamlets increased by about 500 in 1966. Another 500 were added in 1967 bringing the end-1967 total, by this time measured by the Hamlet Evaluation System, to approximately 5,000 relatively secure hamlets.

Relatively secure population improved slowly and irregularly from about 40 percent in early 1965 to more than three-quarters of the total in South Vietnam by the end of 1968, in spite of the Viet Cong Tet and May attacks in that year.

Indicators of Change

All of the factors described above continued to exacerbate the relations of the National Liberation Front and North Vietnam with the population until Tet 1968. The Tet attack by the enemy, in retrospect, probably cost him even more dearly in the alienation of the population than the excessive casualties he took. A composite grouping of the relatively noninvolved observers on the scene in Vietnam, people who are able to converse across the political spectrum, now estimate that the enemy forces enjoy the willing cooperation and support of less than 15 percent of the population, and possibly as low as 10 percent. Moreover, neither the population nor the majority of the enemy's forces any longer expect a military victory. The evidence to support the observations made above is as follows:

a. The fact that by all known measurements of Government of Vietnam versus communist control, the former enjoys the greatest degree of control exercised in this decade, and the latter the least. With due respect to the limitations of the Hamlet Evaluation System report, such error or bias as is contained in the overall report is a constant and the Hamlet Evaluation System report is indeed a valid measure of trend, particularly over the past 18 months. The 31 December 1968 figures reflect the highest level attained since the start of the Hamlet Evaluation System in January 1967.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENT OF TOTAL SOUTH VIETNAM POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatively Secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Cong Controlled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. The urban population which, although not widely supporting the enemy prior to Tet, was neither resisting the enemy nor inclined to seek an end to the war. This population now, by all measures of attitudes, has taken a distinctly hostile attitude toward the Viet Cong, particularly the North Vietnamese Army.

c. The Rural Technical Team Reports in the III Corps Tactical Zone, a series of over 300 in-depth interviews with the population by non-Government of Vietnamese personnel, reflect an almost total reliance by the enemy on terrorism, coercion, and the abandonment of attempts to woo the population.

Prior to mid-1964, data did not exist for the evaluation of population security. Beginning mid-1964, Government of Vietnam data showed that approximately 50 percent of the total population was considered relatively secure and about 20 percent of the population was under Viet Cong control. The remaining 30 percent was considered "contested" population. The nadir of relatively secure population was reached in February 1965, when only 40 percent of the population was considered relatively secure by the Government of Vietnam. Following this low point, there was a gradual improvement as evidenced primarily by changes from the contested to relatively secure categories. Government of Vietnam data for end-1965 showed that just over 50 percent of the population was considered relatively secure and about 20 percent was under Viet Cong control. Listed below are significant benchmarks in rural population control since January 1967, using Hamlet Evaluation System data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Population</th>
<th>Jan 67</th>
<th>Jan 68</th>
<th>Feb 68</th>
<th>Dec 68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relatively Secure</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contested</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Cong Control</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/ As measured before the Viet Cong Tet attacks

With respect to geographic areas, population security has been the most favorable in the II and III Corps areas. Population security in III Corps has always been the best. Allied troop density and the Saigon population base account for the high relatively secure picture in III Corps. The III Corps rural population security situation is also...
high with just over 77 percent of the population being relatively secure at the end of December 1968.

-- Provinces which showed the most change during 1968 with respect to relatively secure population, are indicated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Up</th>
<th>Down 1/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quang Tri (I Corps)</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kien Phong (IV Corps)</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phuoc Long (III Corps)</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thua Thien (I Corps)</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh Thuan (II Corps)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kien Giang (IV Corps)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/ Only two provinces showed a net regression in relatively secure population during 1968.

Factors Responsible for Change

-- The greatest single factor determining popular support in any area is the presence of US/Government of Vietnam or North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong Forces. The populace generally tends to support whichever side is in military control.

-- The shift in I, II, and III Corps went from a predominately Viet Cong force in 1967 to a predominately North Vietnamese Army force in 1968, has resulted in a withdrawal of support on the basis of family or village connections and its replacement by passive resistance and noncooperation. This should not be interpreted as a shift of support to the Government, but only as a shift of support from the enemy.

-- Although sometimes over-dramatized, the urbanization taking place in Vietnam is reducing the degree of Viet Cong control and increasing the degree of Government of South Vietnam control, regardless of security considerations. In a recent analysis of the increases in population during the 1960s in the III Corps Tactical Zone, to include the province and district towns and hamlets of 2,000, it was estimated that approximately one-third of the population of these towns and hamlets (1,000,000) had shifted location from the rural areas to one of the aforementioned population centers. In spite of problems of housing, income, urban strife, the present benefits of urbanization outweigh the postwar costs and with the coming of peace, relocation to rural areas may again be accomplished.

-- The increase in quantity, the improvement in quality, and the increasing attention being focused on the territorial forces, are making substantial inroads to improve security in what were once considered inviolate enemy areas.
-- By all indications available to COMUSMACV, CINCPAC, and the JCS, there has been dramatic change in the security situation and balance of influence favorable for the GVN. Best estimates indicate that since January 1967, alone, more than 2,000,000 of the rural population have been brought into the relatively secure category. This represents a favorable change of more than 12% of the total population.

Some additional critical factors responsible for the change are:

a. A 28 percent increase and modernization of the RVNAF force structure over the period 1965-1968;

b. The large Free World Military Assistance Force troop build-up in South Vietnam over the period 1965-1968;

c. The US civil and military advisory buildup over the past 3 years at all levels of the Government of Vietnam structure;

d. Intensified anti-Viet Cong infrastructure programs beginning in 1967; and


Obstacles to Change

(OSD agrees with this assessment of the obstacles.) Obstacles to expected favorable changes in the countryside are:

-- Failure of the Government of Vietnam to push reforms and to crack down on corrupt practices.

-- Continuation of a "wait and see" attitude on the part of the population with regard to the outcome of the negotiations in Paris.

-- A too hasty withdrawal of US Forces, thus causing both a reduction in security and a loss of confidence by the people in the Government of Vietnam.

-- Early pacification programs had only limited success for the following reasons: (1) effective counteraction by the Viet Cong; (2) breakdowns in coordination by a shaky Government of Vietnam; (3) lack of communication and cooperation between the national Government and officials at corps through district levels; (4) lack of coordination machinery among US agencies Saigon and in the field adequate to the broad scope of the threat; (5) the slow development of conceptual agreement among Government of Vietnam and US officials; (6) overly optimistic reporting of results and data interpretation in response to public and political pressures; (7) over-emphasis on quantitative measurement rather than quality of effort and results; (8) programs more ambitious than initially achievable; (9) inadequacies in local leadership, cadre selec-
tion, and cadre training due, in part, to the losses to terrorism; and (10) inadequate provision of means for treatment of basic political, economic, social, and psychological problems. The underlying cause in most cases was the inability to achieve the essential political objective of engaging the people in support of the Government of Vietnam.

OSD considers the following factors to be a partial explanation of the changes in the security situation and the balance of influence in the countryside of Vietnam since 1961 and the reasons for those changes:

(N.B. The answers to questions 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 are so closely interrelated that one answer should not be considered without considering the other answers at the same time.)

---

The following table represents population control data from the end of 1962 to the present. This data has been retroactively adjusted in order that data from the older reporting systems might be matched with the data presently produced in the HES. The two different systems used between 1962 and the beginning of the HES in early 1967 suffered from ambiguous and changing categories and definitions and from lack of detail and critical system checking. The HES, which we rely upon now, while far more systematic and detailed, remains quite subjective. (It is important to keep in mind that these statistics can only show gross relative trends and are constantly in need of caveats and refinements that can only be supplied by the subjective judgments and analysis of informed knowledgeable individuals.)

**RETROSPECTIVE POPULATION CONTROL DATA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GVN Aligned</th>
<th>VC</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>7674</td>
<td>2587</td>
<td>15210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>9011</td>
<td>2729</td>
<td>15590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>6716</td>
<td>3302</td>
<td>15980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>8884</td>
<td>3550</td>
<td>16379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>6065</td>
<td>2832</td>
<td>16402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>7236</td>
<td>2862</td>
<td>17209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>8165</td>
<td>2155</td>
<td>17477</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/ For end 1966 and following, A+B+non-hamlet secure population was considered GVN aligned; 'C' hamlet population is not counted; therefore, the categories presented do not add up to total population.

This table illustrates well the roller coaster nature of the size and percentage of GVN aligned population with the average population in this category over the past six years being 7,679,000, but going as high as 9,011,000 (1963) and as low as 6,065,000 (1966). At the same time, the relative constant nature of the population in the VC category is noticeable with the average VC population being 2,860,000 for the six years and the variation from this mean being not more than ± 700,000. (The reported
February 11, 1968

SECRET

I: Images for VC population are probably quite soft. Few VC hamlets, if any, are subject to accurate census.) If retrospective urban population over the last six years is subtracted from the above secure population category, then the rural GVN aligned population has remained relatively constant at about 5,000,000 if the end-1963 and end-1965 data is not considered (they appear over-stated in any case.) This analysis suggests that the security situation and the balance of influence in the countryside have not appreciably altered over time: the GVN aligned population was about 5,000,000 in 1962 and remains about that in 1968, and the VC population was approximately 2,600,000 in 1962 and is approximately 2,200,000 today. In the remainder of the population (7-10 million) two phenomena seemed to have happened over time: (1) many individuals (perhaps up to 2-3 million) have abandoned the rural areas and moved either into or nearby the urban areas; (2) 5 to 7 million have wandered back and forth from GVN influence to VC influence dependent upon who was placing the greatest pressure upon them to conform at any given moment.

-- Examination of the past two years of HES reports indicates that the movement of individuals and census adjustments brought about nearly as much of the total net gains in "secure" population as did the population brought into this category by improvement in hamlet ratings (35-39% from adjustments to 41-52% from improvements). This tends to show: (1) that population goes up in secure areas not because the people are committing themselves to the GVN particularly but because they want to get out of the fighting in rural areas; (2) that there is a significant amount of "gain" which results from accounting adjustments not actual change. Additionally, analysis of the number of hamlets which regressed vs. the number of hamlets that improved shows that 40 to 44% of time the number of hamlets which improved their ratings was matched by the number of hamlets whose ratings regressed. This analysis somewhat supports the above thesis that much of the rural population vacillates back and forth between the GVN and VC.

-- More detailed data to examine the balance of influence in the countryside did not become available until the HES went into operation in January 1967. However, the crucial issue of any analysis regarding the HES revolves around the degree to which "C" hamlets may be considered "relatively secure." Examination of some of the indicators reveals the following:

1/ JCS notes that: According to the HES, the gain in percent of relatively secure population in 1967 was 3.8 percent for the first six months and 1.7 percent for the last six months, a total of plus 5.5 percent. Total gain in relatively secure population was 1,297,000. Total loss of contested and VC population reported was 378,000. Difference between gains and losses was due to population expansion, refinement of population data, and migration of people GVN controlled areas in which the population counts are often merely best estimates. Such "accounting" changes are necessary to achieve more data on increased population under GVN control, which is the true measure of pacification progress.
a. The RES system was designed as a management tool to assist in allocating GVN and US resources in rural South Vietnam. As such, the responses concentrate on those areas over which the GVN/US have the most direct influence, namely the activities of GVN ministries and political activities directed by the GVN. Accordingly, 12 of the 18 "indicators" measure GVN presence and activities with only 6 "indicators" measuring enemy activities. The values assigned to these "indicators" are given equal weight in determining the alphabetical standing of each hamlet and the system is thus biased in favor of ratings favorable to the GVN. Moreover, RES ratings are made by Americans, few of whom speak Vietnamese, who are in the district generally from 6 months to a year, and who are able to visit the hamlets being rated on an average of less than once a month. Accordingly, the raters' ability to appraise those elements of GVN activity is far greater than for those of the VC. This is illustrated by the fact that when the requirement is laid on him to pay particular attention to certain VC activities such as that of the infrastructure (VCI), reported findings, as indicated in the tables below, indicate greater VC presence than was formerly perceived. It is for these reasons that OSD considers that C hamlets should not be considered as being "relatively secure" and that for "grading" purposes only 50% of the C hamlets should be considered as primarily under GVN influence.

The following tables illustrate the influence of the Viet Cong Infrastructure over the hamlet (rural) population as shown by indicators 2a and 2b of the Hamlet Evaluation System:

**Indicator 2a, Hamlet Infrastructure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dec 67</th>
<th>June 68</th>
<th>Nov 68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;B</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D&amp;E&amp;VC</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicator 2b, Village Infrastructure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dec 67</th>
<th>June 68</th>
<th>Nov 68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;B</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D&amp;E&amp;VC</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In indicator 4a which "measures" the presence of GVN administration in hamlets, a rating of "C" is given when "Managerial groups are resident; mostly locally appointed or elected; and are usually present at night." Following table indicates the percentages under this category for 1968:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dec 67</th>
<th>June 68</th>
<th>Nov 68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;B</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D&amp;E&amp;VC</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the "C" hamlet population is split evenly between primary GVN influence and primary NLF influence, the above tables would show the following:
Thus, the range of possible percentages for the rural populace "subject to significant VC presence and influence" would be from 39.6 to 46.7 percent, given the above interpretation of the "C" hamlets. Other assessments would tend to show that at least 65% of the rural population is subject to disciplined VC infrastructure activities. Probably as close as it can be estimated, 50% of the total rural population is subject to significant VC presence and influence and, at least 50% and probably more, of the rural population living in "C" hamlets is subject to such presence and influence.

The following table represents yet another way of looking at the HES statistics with regard to assessing GVN or VC influence. It summarizes data from indicators 3C (Internal Security), 2A (VC Hamlet Infrastructure), and problem areas 8a and b (Tax Collection). In this analysis, "C" ratings were considered en toto for both GVN and VC categories, thus alleviating the necessity to split their population in half.

**HES INDICATOR DATA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural and Urban GVN or VC/Infrastructure Functioning</th>
<th>December 1967</th>
<th>November 1968</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GVN</td>
<td>VC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop. (000)</td>
<td>11,122</td>
<td>10,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Collections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop. (000)</td>
<td>12,220</td>
<td>8,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural GVN or VC/Infrastructure Functioning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop. (000)</td>
<td>5,464</td>
<td>8,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above tends to indicate that the GVN can claim to have built up a reasonable internal security apparatus with some degree of popular participation in areas which contain about 68% of the population. At the same time, the data tends to show that the VC can claim an active infrastructure operating in areas which have about 62% of the population. There is an overlap of about 30% and between 1967 and 1968 both sides increased their apparatus by 3 - 4%.

---

The tax collection data shows that the GVN collects taxes from about 75% of the population while the VC collect them from about 53%. At least 28% pay taxes to both sides.

---

The data represented by the above table tends to support the contention that the balance of influence in the countryside has not been tipped strongly in favor of either the GVN or the VC; further, the indication is that there has not been great change over the past two years.

---

A recent analysis of population regression and gains presented some evidence that there is a high correlation between VC attacks and population regression. Further, a high correlation was demonstrated between kill ratios and population regression. Since high kill ratios are associated with periods of high VC/NVA activity, this tends to support the correlation between VC attacks and regression. Additionally, examination of RF/PF casualties versus population regression shows a high degree of correlation and also supports the initial contention that VC attacks are the most significant factor in affecting regression in the rural population. At the same time, examination of VC attacks, kill ratios and RF/PF casualties versus population improvement shows little or no significant correlation. Further, checking population gains against friendly operations showed little or no correlation. Thus, population gains do not seem to relate directly to level of military activity while population regressions do, particularly enemy military activity.

---

OSD's analysis of the available data tends to lead to the following overall conclusions: (1) The portions of the SVN rural population which was aligned with the VC and aligned with the GVN is approximately the same today as it was in 1962: 5,000,000 GVN aligned and nearly 3,000,000 VC aligned; (2) At the present, it appears that at least 50% of the total rural population is subject to significant VC presence and influence; (3) The most significant factor negatively affecting the situation in the countryside is VC/NVA military activity.
In addition OSD supports the views of JCS, CINCPAC, and COMUSMACV that:

-- The main factors responsible for the changes for the better are the loss of local support when the North Vietnamese Army began to replace the Viet Cong; urbanization, improvement in RVNAF, Free World Military Assistance Forces buildup, anti-Viet Cong infrastructure programs, and the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. The greatest single factor determining popular support in any area is the presence of US/Government of Vietnam or North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong Forces. The populace generally tends to support whichever side is in military control. (OSD considers it more accurate to state that the presence of US/GVN or NVA/VC forces is the greatest single factor in determining the level of security in any given area and that the level of security is the major factor in providing a climate in which popular support may elicits. Popular support or commitment is probably more the function of political, social, economic and psychological measures than the function of military activities. Thus, the populace will acquiesce to whichever side is in military control but not necessarily support.)