CORDS REPORT - Phong Dinh Prov
2/68
The RD program in Phong Dinh Province was dealt a severe setback by the Viet Cong Tet attack on Can Tho. In order to defend Can Tho City, the Province first withdrew part and then all of the 2/33 ARVN Battalion protecting the 1967 RD villages of Tan Thoi, Giai Xuan and Cau Nhiem in the early days of the fighting. All but two RD cadre teams were pulled in to assist in the defense of Can Tho. A major portion of the RF/PF units committed to protect these 1967 RD task force areas were withdrawn leaving only the 295 RF Company in Tan Thoi Village and the 595 RF Company in Thuan Duc Village. The 826 RF Company moved from Tan Nhon New Life Hamlet to fill the position vacated by the 2/33 ARVN. There units were largely limited to protecting themselves against VC attack and so could provide little protection for the people of the area during this period. In addition, the 293 RF Company was withdrawn from Dinh Kon Village on 19 February since it could not be supported. This removed the last element shielding the 1967 RD area on its west flank.

Thus, in the face of the emergency in Can Tho, the Province denuded the RD areas of much of their external assistance in resisting the return of VC political and military units. Giai Xuan Village, a Phase II 1966 RD village, and parts of Long Tuyen, a 1966 RD village, were the scene of heavy ground fighting and subject to intense aerial bombardment since major VC units used this area as a base of operations in the period following the assault on Can Tho. The fighting in this area continued through February and numerous families were forced to flee their homes in both these villages. This situation left much of the 1966 and 1967 RD area either a battleground or a zone exposed to re-infiltration by VC terrorist groups and political cadre. Finally, the confidence of the people living in the RD areas has undoubtedly been shaken by the deep incursions made by major VC units into areas such as Can Tho. Unless early action can be taken to return RD forces to these areas in strength, many of the past accomplishments of RD in Phong Dinh may be lost.

b. Planning.

In the light of the dangerous situation now existing in the 1966-1967 RD areas, insistence from Saigon that RD forces move into the 1968 RD Campaign area immediately are unrealistic and detrimental to the prosecution of a rational pacification strategy in Phong Dinh. Instead, this team has suggested an alternative strategy designed to recoup losses suffered in the Tet attack. As soon as ARVN and US military
working in An Hung Hamlet in Thuan Duc Village and the remaining twelve teams are working in Can Tho City. The primary mission of these teams is security for the Can Tho area; although they have also been assigned to develop information on the VC, conduct a census, assist refugees, and organize self-defense forces in Can Tho.

The status of the Phase I 1967 RD village of Giai Xuan and the Phase II 1967 RD villages of Tan Thai, Cau Nhiem and Thuan Duc is unknown at this time. No member of this team has been able to visit any of these villages to assess the situation since the opening of the Tet offensive. There is no RD presence in any of these villages except Thuan Duc which has two teams in the relatively secure hamlet of An Hung, directly across the Can Tho river from Can Tho City. One battalion or more of Viet Cong occupied Nhon Loc I and Tan Nhong Hamlets (both 1967 New Life Hamlets) for at least several days before launching a surprise attack on Phong Dien District on 24 February. No one in these hamlets reported this threat to the District. A 75mm recoiless rifle was set up by the VC in the Tan Nhong RD school and the school was heavily damaged in the subsequent battle. The RD school in Tan Long was ransacked. Other damage in RD areas is unknown. Except for An Hung Hamlet in Thuan Duc Village, the VC now move through the RD areas with impunity.

The RD areas are not yet secure enough for the teams to redeploy into them at this time. Combat operations by ARVN units are continuing within the Ba Se perimeter and it is hoped that during the month of March adequate security will be re-established permitting the RD teams to move back into the Phase I and II hamlets to resurrect the accomplishments of the 1967 RD program.

d. Village Governments.

Due to the prevailing insecurity and the press of duties connected with refugee relief in Can Tho, the Public Affairs Advisor was only able to visit two village governments during February. Only one elected village government, Giai Xuan, was not functioning at the end of the month. The presence of large VC units in Giai Xuan forced the village chairmen to flee to the district headquarters at Cai Rang. Chau Thanh District reported that one hamlet chief disappeared during the Tet crisis and he is presumed dead or captured. The elected hamlet chief in Thoi Trinh B Hamlet in Phuoc Tho Village (considered secure by the GVN) was assassinated on 20 February. Except for the missing hamlet chief, all the local officials in Chau Thanh District (scene of most of the heaviest fighting) are accounted for. The large majority of hamlet officials in Long Tuyen and An Binh Village are unable to return to their hamlets and so remain near the village offices which are in secure areas. The village governments in An Binh and Long Tuyen Villages appear to be working hard to register the refugees who fled the rural sections of these villages. They have received little assistance from the province and no relief commodities. An Binh Village had to use village funds to print refugee registration forms.
Psyops leaflets are being prepared in response to reports that many peasants have become increasingly disillusioned with the Viet Cong. In two reported instances, this has even led peasants to attempt to search out and kill Viet Cong. This may be due to the loss of sons and husbands impressed by the Viet Cong for the recent offensive.

This office has also provided relevant information to the newly arrived elements of Task Force 117 and the 9th US Infantry Battalion, which information has proven useful in several instances.

3. (C) Political/Psychological:
   a. General.

   The VC attack on Can Tho and the continuing harassment and mortaring of the city has brought home to the people, many for the first time, that there is a war going on and that, despite their desire to be left alone by both sides, they are being denied this luxury.

   During the entire month the residents of Can Tho and the thousands of refugees who poured into the city have been interested primarily in survival. The fear and terror that originally drove them here have now subsided and have been replaced by more generalized feelings of insecurity. Taking advantage of these feelings are those children and old men digging up sand and dirt to put in sandbags sold for 200VN a piece. Many people are obviously preparing for the worst. Several are visibly upset over what they consider the inability of the ARVN to protect them. These same people are also highly critical of the ARVN's engagement with the VC at the University. When this was followed by large-scale looting by the ARVN troops, many found it difficult to consider the soldiers as their protectors. Others, however, apparently accept the destruction of the University and the surrounding area by VNAF dive bombers as a necessary corollary of war although they wish something less drastic could have been done. While the refugees are grateful for the emergency assistance provided them, they want to know when and how the government will help them to rebuild their homes. This is a potential trouble spot which the VC might well try to exploit and the GVN should be aware that the best thing it can do to build an even more solid base of support among the refugees is to fulfill its promises of assistance to the refugees now.

   As to whom the people feel was responsible for violating the Tet Truce and causing all the damage, it all depends on whom you question. Most merely reply that "you know as well as I who was responsible", which is merely a way of avoiding expressing their true feelings. It appears, however, that most of them accept the fact that it was ultimately the presence of the VC that brought down the bombs and rockets, but then these same people also consider that the ARVN used "a sledgehammer to kill a mosquito".
f. Chieu Hoi

Only 15 Hoi Chanh rallied in February continuing the trend of low VC defection rates. Intensified psyops activities were conducted by the Armed Propaganda Teams in refugee centers in Can Tho and in the districts during the height of the fighting. As a direct result, 4 VC soldiers rallied from the Tay Do Battalian and 1 from the 309 Battalion. One APT group provided security for the Chieu Hoi Center during and after the battle. Weapons training for the APT began on 26 February with 20 members participating. Instructors from the Cai Von Training Camp are conducting this training at the Regional Chieu Hoi Center. Three Hoi Chanh were recruited and employed as Kit Carsen Scouts by the 3/9 US Infantry Battalion. Thirteen other Hoi Chanh are presently enrolled in carpentry and masonry courses conducted by EDCON.

4. (C) Security:

a. General.

The security situation has deteriorated during the past month as a direct result of the VC Tet offensive. The pacification effort has come to a complete halt. Route 4 is virtually closed to commercial traffic, although some traffic does go through on days when military road clearing operations are conducted. Inter-provincial Route 31 is closed as a result of craters and one destroyed bridge. Route 27 to the west remains open and relatively secure. The Xa No Canal remains open but constant surveillance must be maintained to forestall VC tax collection activities. The bleak security situation is improving. The ARVN, RF, and PF have apparently blunted the Tet offensive, inflicted heavy casualties on the VC, and are now regaining the initiative. Because there was never an apparent triumph, large numbers of VC infrastructure did not surface in this province as in others.

b. Enemy Situation.

During the early part of the month, the VC continued their Tet offensive. In their effort, the enemy made substantial military gains. The VC forced the withdrawal of friendly forces from large portions of the Ba Se perimeter and gained the ability to launch indirect fire attacks on the IV Corps vital installations. Binh Thuy Airbase has been shelled 10 times, Can Tho Airfield 11 times, and the IV Corps ammo dump was shelled twice. Two ground attacks were directed against Can Tho airfield, and one probing action against Binh Thuy Airforce Base.
(2) RF. RF have undergone a turbulent shuffle during the past 29 days. Nine companies have been shifted. RF companies continue to occupy 2 of the RD areas; however their mission has changed to vital installation security.

There has been a degrading trend toward defensive thinking on the part of some Vietnamese leaders. The intensity of the VC attacks has caused several district chiefs to lose all offensive spirit. They seem content to wait for the VC to go away. To date RF have suffered relatively light casualties; 43 have been killed. RF and PF have accounted for 141 VC KIA and 47 VCC, and they have recovered 97 weapons. Company commanders of 4 RF companies have been wounded and, because of the shallow depth of RF leadership, these companies have been hurt badly. On 23 February 2 RF Companies and 3 PF Platoons, screened by a Ranger Battalion, moved 2 kilometers SW of Can Tho and began outpost reconstruction at 3 sites. This was the first re-seizure of territory lost to the VC during the Tet offensive. On 28 February 2 companies recaptured positions 4 kilometers SE of Can Tho. These positions had been withdrawn on 4 February.

(3) PF. Nineteen PF outpost and watchtowers were abandoned during the Tet offensive. Four of these have been recaptured. The PF took the brunt of the VC push and have sustained 55 KIA, 163 WIA, and 3 PF are missing. Two outposts were actually overrun. All others were withdrawn because of inability to provide support and/or overwhelming VC force. PF acquitted themselves admirably. One small combat action which depicts the ingenuity of which the PF are capable occurred in the town of Cai Tac. A VC seized an APC at the base camp of the 3/9 Cavalry and went on a shooting rampage thru the camp and into the town. The Tam Vu PF left their watchtower, patiently encircled the APC and completely disabled it with rifle grenades.

(4) RD Cadre. Combat operations by RD cadre are not normally reported under the military security section; however the actions of 49 RD cadre men who voluntarily terminated their Tet leave and turned themselves into Phung Hiep District deserve special mention. These RD Cadre fought as a platoon and made a significant contribution to the defense of the town.

(5) US/FWMAF. The Mobile Riverine Force (2 Brigade of the 9th US Division) conducted operations in the province on 14-17, 19-20, 22-23, and 26-27 February. This was the first use of US ground troops in the province. The reaction of VN military was highly favorable. The 9th US has had heavy and sustained contact with VC on several occasions. Results of 12 US operations to date have been 240 VC KIA, 14 VC captured, 112 VC suspects and 43 weapons captured.

Can Tho Airfield security forces have repulsed two ground attacks inflicting heavy losses on the VC — 84 VC KIA, 31 VC captured and 27 weapons recovered.
5. (U) **New Life Development:**

a. **Economics.**

The economic situation in Phong Dinh has not been seriously upset by the VC Tet offensive even though land communications routes were seriously disrupted as discussed below (para. 5.b.). Prices had risen considerably before Tet. Following the VC attack, prices stayed at the Tet level except for 2nd grade rice which rose 2 or 3 piastres in price. Prices have now begun to decline and rice in particular is now below the pre-Tet price since the harvest is in full swing. Throughout the crisis adequate rice was available in Cai Rang warehouses. Distribution also presented no major problem as the road to Cai Rang was early open to traffic. Only a few special items in short supply, such as cigarettes, kerosene, fish and condensed milk, have risen sharply in price.

In Thuan Trung District RF/PF troops were posted in the fields to secure the rice harvest. This effort appears to have met considerable success in denying the rice to VC tax collectors. Such operations were not possible in other districts due to the necessity of defending Can Tho and district towns from large-scale VC attack.

b. **Material Resources and Transport.**

Of the three major land communications routes in Phong Dinh (Highway 4, Route 31 and Route 27), only Route 27 to Long Xuyen has been left unscathed by the VC Tet offensive. Route 31 running from Highway 4 to Chua Ngoc Thien was severed by a VC mining incident on 3 February which caused 75% destruction of the bridge at Rach Gui. In addition, ten other mines were detonated on Route 31 since 31 January. National Highway 4 running south to Soc Trang was cut by VC mines on 31 January and remained closed until 20 February when a military force from sector moved down Highway 4 to Phuoc Hiep clearing and repairing the road as it went. On 12 February President Thieu visited Can Tho and ordered the Public Works Service to open Highway 4 to Soc Trang by the end of the week. This demand proved unrealistic in the face of the prevailing insecurity and so Highway 4 remained largely closed to commercial traffic. The Viet Cong again cut the road the night of 20 February and a game in which the VC blew up the road every night and Vietnamese or US military forces repaired it the next day ensued running through 23 February.

c. **Agriculture.**

The Agriculture Advisors on this Team were at the International Rice Institute in the Philippines during the Tet offensive. They are presently on home visitation. The Public Affairs Advisor has replaced the Legal Affairs Advisor (who was lost in action) as advisor to the Land Reform Service. The chief problem in agricultural affairs is the continued intense military conflict within the Ba Se perimeter.
This battle has greatly inhibited the rice harvest in this area since farmers fear they will be fired upon by US and VNAF aircraft searching for the Viet Cong. A band on the outer rim of the Ba Se perimeter has similarly been subject to heavy aerial attack to drive out VC units operating there. This situation is particularly serious since the rice crop is rapidly becoming over-ripe and in the next week could be lost to some farmers. On 20 February the Province Chief declared that all farmers could work in their fields from 0800 to 1400 hours daily without fear of fire from aircraft. Events rapidly overtook this proclamation since a combined US-ARVN sweep of the area within the Ba Se perimeter was instituted on 26 February. Heavy fighting accompanied by considerable bombing quickly broke out and continued through 27 February thus temporarily nullifying any period of grace during these days.

By comparison, crop damage caused by bombing and fires was not an extreme problem. Some rice is suffering from lodging resulting in losses in some fields.

d. Self-help.

Self-help activities were almost non-existent because of the military situation and lack of security.

e. Public Health.

A number of difficult public health problems were created by the VC Tet offensive. The large number of civilian war casualties created by the fighting (approximately 600 war victims were admitted during February) taxed the resources of Can Tho Hospital especially since many Vietnamese hospital staff members were unable to return from their Tet vacations for 5-6 days after the attack on Can Tho. This great influx of civilian war casualties meant that approximately 700 surgical cases were handled in February by the USAF Surgical Team and Vietnamese surgeons, a new monthly high for the hospital. The large number of persons moving into the hospital with their wounded relatives also created sanitation problems in the hospital area which were eventually corrected. The problems faced by the hospital were exacerbated when three Vietnamese anesthesiologists were recalled by the ARVN. Subsequent administrative action succeeded in having two of these three men temporarily returned to duty at the hospital.

During the crisis numerous individuals distinguished themselves by their devotion to duty in spite of the hazardous conditions prevailing. Individual members of the Vietnamese staff worked long hours to compensate for the personnel shortage. The VPVN doctors and the USAF Surgical Team worked throughout this period as did the US Hospital Adviser. Unexpected assistance was provided by the VIS workers in Can Tho and the CARE representative who stood guard with borrowed weapons at the defenseless hospital at the height of the crisis and worked long hours providing unskilled help in the hospital.
The other major difficulty in this area arose in the refugee camps where public health and sanitation were serious problems. Steps taken to deal with this situation are discussed in the paragraph on refugees (para. 5.a) below. The Public Sanitation Office did a commendable job in cleaning up the garbage that began to pile up along the streets and in the marketplaces of Can Tho in the period following the attack.

f. Public Education.

The use of 11 public and private schools in Can Tho as refugee centers has delayed the resumption of classes following the Tet vacation. The presence of large numbers of refugees in these schools has resulted in some damage to school facilities and general uncleanliness in and around these schools. This Team is now pressing the province to establish a realistic plan to move the refugees out of these schools and reopen them for classes as soon as possible. To date no refugees have been relocated. In the rural areas outside Can Tho such as Ly Khanh, An Ninh, Nhon Nghia and Nhon Ai, schools cannot be re-opened at this time due to insecurity and failure of teachers to return after Tet. Many schools in rural areas will have to be repaired and several rebuilt before they can be reopened.

g. Refugees.

At the height of the influx, there were 12,250 refugees in 11 GVN supported relief centers in Can Tho. This figure has now decreased to 6,400. Figures are not available on refugees outside these camps but there are probably 4,000 more outside their homes. The response of the Province to the influx of refugees created by the battle for Can Tho has been erratic. At least as early as the afternoon of 1 February, GVN officials including the Deputy Province Chief for Administration, the Social Welfare Chief and several others had assembled at the Province Headquarters to decide on emergency relief measures. At that time the workers of the Vietnamese Red Cross were already working in the schools which had been transformed into refugee centers informally registering refugees and distributing relief commodities. By way of contrast, the GVN allowed military units to confiscate the major portion of several thousand loaves of bread purchased that day for distribution to the refugees. As a result, the refugees had to do without for another day.

In the early days of the emergency the GVN relied excessively on other agencies for assistance. The Social Welfare Service replied to plea for action to register the refugees properly and establish order in the camps by declaring that the Red Cross would take care of registration and most of the refugees would go home pretty soon anyway. The Red Cross performed admirably in this difficult period but in some cases their distributions were haphazard and inequitable, due at least partially to the failure of the GVN to assume full control and coordinate relief activities. This situation led to conflict between the GVN and the Red Cross several days later when the GVN began to assert its authority over the relief program.
During this early period the GVN also relied on outside sources for foodstuffs for the refugees. Over six thousand packages of C-rations were contributed by the US Army First Logistical Command at Can Tho Airfield to meet immediate, pressing needs for food in refugee camps. The GVN also obtained rice from CARE via the Vietnamese Red Cross. The GVN intimidated the chairman of the local branch of the Vietnamese Red Cross into regularly turning over a considerable portion of his CARE-bought rice (76 bags) to the province and using much of the remainder to supply several GVN refugee camps. This team urged the Deputy Province Chief for Administration and the Social Welfare Chief to use the 1 million $VN emergency relief fund set up by the central government for Phong Dinh but received the reply that CARE was supplying enough rice to meet the existing needs. Only when the rice purchased by CARE ran out and foodstuffs could not be obtained from other sources, such as 14 bags contributed by Can Tho merchants, 12 bags lent by CORDS Region IV Refugee Division and contributions from private persons in Long Tuyen Village, did the province itself begin to purchase rice on 9 February. A major reason for this tardiness on the part of the province was the incomprehensible failure of the central government to provide Phong Dinh with the actual funds from the 1 million $VN fund set aside for refugee relief in this province. Given the bureaucratic rigidity of the GVN administrative system, it is not surprising that the province was unwilling to buy relief commodities with funds formally budgeted for other purposes even though it had been authorized to spend 1 million $VN (subsequently increased to 5.1 million $VN). Thus, even after the province began purchasing rice, it bought rice on credit rather than disbursing funds and refused to pay for sleeping mats and rice obtained by this team for distribution in the early days of the crisis. The 4 million $VN in relief funds were finally received on 19 February.

At least as early as 3 February the province had organized a Province "People's Relief Committee" as ordered by the central government with specific relief functions assigned to various services. Unfortunately the major burdens in the relief program fell on two services: Primary Education and Public Health. The Primary Education Service was assigned the task of administering the GVN refugee camps (ultimately 17 camps). Thus the Primary Education Service fell heir to the onerous tasks of maintaining order in refugee camps, organizing the refugees, educating the refugees to maintain public sanitation, distributing commodities in the individual camps and registering the refugees. Through much of this emergency period large numbers of Social Welfare Service cadre sat idly in their office. The Social Welfare Service had only to purchase rice and haul it to each camp once a day and make occasional distributions of soap, supplied by CARE, and condensed milk. Left alone to face these difficult tasks, except for some help from Red Cross, the Primary Education Service was unable to control the situation in several camps where conditions deteriorated rapidly. Fortunately two camps were located in Catholic schools and two were in pagodas where the religious leaders provided effective direction for their refugee centers.
Furthermore, the directive from Saigon had stated that American advisors were to be an integral part of the "People's Relief Committee" in each province. Nevertheless, no American advisor was even invited to sit in on the meetings of this committee for several days. This Team originally learned of the existence of this committee by coincidence. It then had to take the initiative to name formal counterparts for the various committee officer and sub-committees previously set up by the Province and insist vigorously that they be made an integral part of the committee.

The supply of water and food was spotty for several weeks of the emergency. It rapidly became apparent, though, that the major problem facing the refugee program lay in public sanitation. In the early days of the crisis, a Korean COPRAM team was the only public health agency working in the refugee camps. This group did an outstanding job throughout the emergency providing medication, giving immunizations and spraying camps with DDT. The ARVN 4th Medical Detachment also sprayed a number of camps several days later. Nevertheless, lacking effective GVN leadership, a number of the centers rapidly became cesspools with garbage-strewn courtyards and toilets piled high with human excrement.

The Region IV Public Health Inspector organized GVN and CORDS agencies (both Province and Region) on 10 February to attempt to clean up the mess. Unfortunately the Province Public Sanitation Office was faced with a considerable task in cleaning up the city and so could not assign workers to clean up refugee centers on a daily basis. Public sanitation trucks did, however, make daily garbage collections with fair consistency. An official was assigned to direct efforts to clean clogged toilets but this program achieved little due to lack of cooperation from the refugees and inadequate water supply. On 19 February the GVN decided to turn on the water for two schools where sanitation had been a great problem. The delay in making this decision remains unexplained. Daily MEDCAPs were conducted after 12 February by 5 teams -- 2 Vietnamese with American medics assisting; 2 Korean and one ARVN. Public Health took charge of regular DDT spraying in the camps. The US Navy Seabee team stationed in Can Tho built 8 portable latrines which could be burned cut daily to be used at the two worst centers. Thanks to these programs and the efforts of elected camp leaders and their assistants, the sanitation of the camps gradually improved although remaining poor in several schools.

Three villages around Can Tho, An Binh, Long Tuyen and Giai Xuan, were heavily damaged in the fighting. The Province has not provided relief assistance to the large number of persons that fled their homes in these areas despite a request from the leader of the Hoa Hao-organized relief committee in Long Tuyen.

Difficulties have been encountered with respect to the registration of refugees whose homes were destroyed in the fighting. The Social Welfare Service again abdicated its proper role in this process throwing most of the responsibility on the already over-burdened Primary Education Service. As a result the refugees in Can Tho City were slow in being registered and issue of assistance is just now ready to begin.
Villages suffering heavy destruction outside Can Tho have received no aid in the registration process. An Binh Village had to print its own registration forms. The most pressing requirement at this time is to move the refugees out of the schools so classes can begin again for the children of Can Tho. The present province plan envisages moving all the refugees (approximately 6,400 people) into 4 pagodas and 2 Catholic schools.

The reconstruction program has made better progress. In one large area containing 552 homes near Can Tho University, streets have been surveyed and the rubble is being cleared away. Some of the land previously occupied by homes is being set aside for a new school. Many of the houses destroyed in the attack were owned by squatters who paid no rent. It is presently estimated that 1800 houses were destroyed in Can Tho. Destruction in several areas was great but statistics are not yet available. Legally, these squatters now have no standing. The province plans to settle these people generally near their former homesites. They will thereafter be required to pay land rent but the province plans to establish rent controls over the private landowners.

The province also has plans in this area to assist in the formation of building cooperatives of 20 families each to construct two-story apartment buildings. The success of this plan will depend largely on the cooperation of local contractors, the response of Saigon to a request for the provision of home-credit for this program and availability of local long-term credit.

h. Youth.

The Public Affairs Advisor has assumed the additional duties of Youth Affairs Advisor following the tragic loss of the previous advisor, 1st Lieutenant Kendrick K. Kelly III, who was reported missing-in-action on 4 February. Youth activities have generally been in abeyance during the crisis. A representative from Can Tho University did offer the assistance of students from the University in refugee relief activities but nothing concrete has been done as yet. Buddhist Boy Scouts helped out several days in cleaning up refugee camps.

6. (U). Economic Resources in Support of Pacification:

a. RD Cadre Teams.

At present there are fourteen RD teams in Phong Dinh with an average present-for-duty strength of 50 cadre. During February, 5 cadre deserted, 3 were reported missing (investigation underway), 1 was killed and 61 cadre are unaccounted for. Morale and discipline of the teams are good. The cadre are eager to return to the hamlets which they were working prior to the Tet offensive.
No training was conducted in Phong Dinh this month. The buildings of the training center outside Can Tho suffered some damage in the fighting. Sixty-nine cadre will depart for the Vung Tau National Training Center on or about 29 February and RD Team 15 will return from Vung Tau at the same time.

There were no significant losses of equipment to VC action during February. Minor losses of equipment during the month did occur through negligence. There are no significant supply shortages among RD teams.

b. Static Census-Grievance.

In February 2,937 residents were interviewed by C/G cadre. Thirty aspirations were reported and the Province acted on all of them. Census Grievance cadre were not able to induce any Viet Cong to rally to the government. Ninety-eight VC information reports were received in February. Thirty-two of these were disseminated resulting in 10 VC KIA and 5 VC captured.

c. Self-Defense Forces.

No information is available on the activities of hamlet self-defense groups in RD hamlets during the period following the VC Tet offensive. It can be assumed that this program, as is true of the RD program as a whole, has been set back seriously by the great deterioration of security in most RD areas.

Following directives from Saigon, the province is taking steps to arm hamlet groups in Can Tho and Cai Rang to resist any renewed VC attacks on urban areas. To date 4 hamlet groups totalling 368 persons have been organized in Can Tho but only 60 weapons have been distributed to 2 groups. At least 1 other group (60 men) has been organized in Nhon Ai Village, Phong Dien District but has received no weapons.

d. Technical Cadre.

The Public Sanitation Office was not adequately staffed to collect garbage and insure sanitation in the refugee camps during the emergency period. As discussed in the Public Health paragraph (para 5, e.), the ARVN mobilization stepup has already start to eat into our critically important technical cadre at the hospital.

e. Police.

Twenty seven officers successfully completed training and were returned to the province. A total of 31 officers were added to the rolls this month. The total strength is now 1,301. The morale of the department appears to be excellent. The Tet offensive molded everyone into one fighting unit. It was common to see the policemen from the NPFF, Special Branch, and the Uniformed Police fighting side by side.
Chief Dam continues to demand the very best from the members of his command. When he found out that a district police chief wasn’t doing a good job, he relieved him. He is considering relieving another district police chief.

7. (C) Provincial Administrative Personnel and Organization:

   a. Responsiveness and Ability of Officials.

   The performance of most province officials during the emergency period was disappointing. Rather than rising to the situation, many of them responded rather lackadaisically and showed greater concern for bureaucratic technicalities than the welfare of 12,000 refugees. A major exception to this rule was Mr. Chieu, the Primary Education Chief, who responded admirably as usual. His pleas for action on serious problems in the refugee camps often fell on deaf ears. Mr. Dat, the Public Sanitation Officer, made sincere, if sometimes ineffectual, efforts to do his job. Particularly disconcerting was the general inactivity of Social Welfare cadre who could be seen daily sitting idly at their desks rather than visiting refugee camps to uncover and solve the numerous problems. Social Welfare and Refugee Relief cadre should have registered the refugees. The Social Welfare Chief promised proper registration would begin on 4 February but this task was not complete at the end of February since Social Welfare cadre did next to nothing to aid this process. It was often very difficult to get action on such matters as water supply for refugee camps since authority and responsibility were confused. At times members of this team were forced to take independent action to meet pressing needs left unfulfilled by the province.

   b. RD Councils.

   There were no RD Council meetings at province or district level in February.

   c. Effectiveness of GVN Administration in Pacified Areas.

   The exact meaning of the term, "pacified area", is presently subject to some confusion. It is obvious that security has deteriorated drastically in many areas previously listed as under GVN control. The span of administrative control of many elected village governments extends little beyond their village offices at the present time. The Provincial Government is active only in Can Tho and district governments are largely limited to their district towns at this time.

8. (U) USD/JUST "0" Section:

   No special reporting requirements received this month.
9. (c) Required Actions:

a. Early commitment of sufficient ARVN forces west of the Ba Se Road to secure the 1967 RD areas so that RD cadre can be returned to these areas.

b. Suspension of any requirement to implement the 1968 RD Campaign Plan until 1967 and 1966 RD areas respectively can be resecured, damage repaired and village government restored.

c. Revision of Vietnamese command relationships to place the BTSZ in subordination to the Province Chief (Restatement from January 1968 report).

d. Immediate action by the JGS to complete integration of Joint Company 8 into RF with the proper rank for each individual (Restatement from January 1968 report).

e. Supply of IR-8 seed for 6,000 hectares as called for by the Provincial IR-8 plan. (Restatement from January 1968 report)

LESTER M. CONGER
LTC, Infantry
Province Senior Advisor
THUAN TRUNG DISTRICT
Period Ending February 29, 1968
District Chief: Captain Ngo Cam

The military situation in the District has improved somewhat. Viet Cong incidents have been confined to harassing fire on some of the outposts and propaganda teams entering villages and hamlets. The use of RF/TF units to provide security for the rice harvest was a great success. No Viet Cong incidents were reported in connection with the rice harvest.

Programs in the District have slowed down because of the absence of key staff officers and civilian officials who were unable to return after Tet. Many refugees in large, house-type sampans have moved into the Thoi Lai-Thoi Dong Canal. New houses have been constructed in Thoi Lai by refugees. These refugees are from the Thi Doi Canal area which has been a target of constant bombing. The only major problem at the present time is a short supply of consumer goods.

During one operation on 8 February, the 177 RF Company made contact with one VC company in Thoi Khuong (A) Hamlet only 200 meters from the center of Thoi Lai Village. As a result, 9 VC were killed, 2 VC were captured and 11 weapons were captured. Thoi Lai Village has received several rounds of a locally manufactured rocket. Most of the rounds were duds.

RAYMOND C. FISCHER
1 Lt. Artillery
Acting District Senior Advisor
CHAU THANH DISTRICT
Period Ending February 29, 1968
District Chief: Captain Dang Huu Binh

The reoccupation of the Alpha Belt (a line of outposts around Can Tho inside the Ba Se perimeter) is the priority mission of this District at the moment. Hopefully the reestablishment of OP's in this area can give us the opportunity to strengthen our security stature in this area.

Throughout this very trying period the District Chief, Captain Binh, has displayed impressive capabilities as a leader and an administrator.

BARRY L. WINZELER
Major Infantry
District Senior Advisor
THUAN NHON DISTRICT
Period Ending February 29, 1968
District Chief: Captain Nguyen Ngoc Luu

The District town was mortared eight times and there were fifteen attacks on PF outposts during the reporting period. Over fifty roadblocks were erected on Route 31 and ten incidents of cratering and mining occurred. The 75% destruction of the Rach Goi Bridge has stopped heavy traffic from making a continuous trip through the District since 3 February. Commercial traffic on the Xa No Canal was interdicted by the VC on numerous occasions between 31 January and 18 February and merchants were searched, taxed and turned back. Since 18 February normal traffic is slowly being restored during daylight hours. The District has been in a completely defensive status since 30 January with no participation in division or sector operations. Requests for permission to conduct sub-sector operations have been denied. In this defensive role, however, no outposts were lost or abandoned nor were any weapons lost. There were ten confirmed VC structures and approximately 25 sampans destroyed during the reporting period.

Development programs have not progressed at all and planning ceased to exist this month in this District. The one election scheduled for February has been cancelled due to the difficulties of transporting election supplies from Can Tho and travel restrictions on the voters. Rice is being harvested now with the help of RF and PF security forces. Only about 35% of potential will be realized this period. Transportation of POL supplies has been a problem this month and has curtailed the activities of the Vietnamese Navy boat platoon and generator-operated communications. ARVN's inability to provide medical evacuation of wounded soldiers and civilians has caused some morale problems and unnecessary deaths.

The understandable lack of air cover and observation craft in this District for the outlying areas has allowed the enemy freedom of movement and increased control over the rice harvest in these areas. This situation has eased in the last few days.

RICHARD C. MORRIS
Major Infantry
District Senior Advisor
Phong Dien District
Period Ending February 29, 1968
District Chief: Vo Van Dam

I. Overall Status of Pacification.
   1. Military situation - With the advent of the VC TET offensive, the military situation has deteriorated to its lowest point since the birth of this district in June 1966. The VC have been, and still are able to do as they desire throughout 90% of the district. This includes the placing of 2 to 3 battalions within the district, using its LOCs freely in and out of the area of the Can Tho vital installations, and attacking the OP/WTs, and the mortaring of the district town at will.
   2. The pacification program in both Tan Nhon and Tan Long hamlets has not only been halted, but has been dealt a serious setback. Prior to TET, it was hoped that the RD program in these hamlets would be completed by the end of February, but now an undetermined amount of time will be necessary to repair the damages, regain the confidence of the people and complete unfinished projects.

II. Problem areas affecting the present military situation are many. For TET, approximately 25% of the FF and 70% of the sub sector staff were allowed to take leave; the surprise offensive staged by the VC; the withdrawal of the 2/33 ARVN Bn and the 294th RF Go to Can Tho; the superiority of firepower through better weapons and a more ample ammunition supply enjoyed by the VC; the almost defensive attitude of Vietnamese leaders within this district and the disapproval by Sector of the majority of sub sector's operations requested have all had an influence on the current situation.

III. Efforts to revive the pacification programs shall not and can not begin in earnest until the military situation stabilizes. As to the future of the RD program (Phase II 67) as it applies to this district, all will depend upon decisions made at higher headquarters.

IV. Major problems that possibly can be remedied in part or total at this level are: 1. instilling an offensive attitude in VN leaders; 2. the reopening of the BA SE Road and Cantho River and other LOCs and 3. in a small way, revive the pacification program. Problems which must be dealt with at higher headquarters are: 1. remedying the serious gap which does exist between VC and RF/FF firepower and 2. a study of the feasibility and the establishing of directives to consolidate PF OP/WTs and employ in offensive means of protecting the LOCs etc. that are now inadequately secured by the OP/WT system. I have recommended such a plan to the district chief, but it must take and order from above before this will become reality.

WILLIAM D. COHLISS
Major Armor
District Senior Advisor
Phong Phu District
Period Ending February 27, 1963
District Chief: Captain Nguyen Van Huy.

1. The security of Phong Phu deteriorated considerably during the month. The enemy conducted approximately forty-three attacks in the District and burned at least one informant's house. They also assassinated the Hamlet Chief of Thoi Trinh. The VC used small arms, automatic weapons, mortars and rockets singly or in combination during their attacks. The harassment in the District was considered as diversionary to allow larger forces to penetrate the area of the Ba Se perimeter and attack the vital installations near Cantho.

2. The increased enemy activity caused three watchtowers to be evacuated. Dinh Mon outpost was abandoned because of insufficient forces.

3. The results of RD in Tan Thoi leaves the village with a new government and all schools ready to begin classes. No RD Cadre remain in the area. The security of Tan Thoi is nonexistent since the 2/33 as well as the RD Cadre have departed the area. The self defense program could help relieve the problem if the people were armed.

BENJAMIN F. CLEMENT
Captain Infantry
Acting District Senior Advisor
PHUNG HIEP DISTRICT  
Period Ending February 29, 1963  
District Chief: Major Nguyen Ba Tri

There was a sharp increase in VC activity within the District as in the Province generally. The district forces have been set back in some areas, but have not been defeated at any point in spite of determined efforts by the VC to overrun watchtower/outposts and the District town. Five watchtowers were vacated because we were not able to support them. Two of these have since been re-established.

During this past month the district forces have been able to defend themselves and the District town but have been unsuccessful in providing security on National Highway 4. This road was interdicted on 31 January and remained closed except when repaired for convoy traffic on 22 and 23 February. Sufficient forces are not available to the District Chief to secure the 21 kilometers of Highway 4 in this District. Following repairs, Highway 4 was cut again on the nights of 22 and 23 February. Additional forces should be provided immediately to this District for security on Highway 4.

The successful defense of the District town can be attributed to the aggressive action taken by the District Chief. Logistical support was inadequate during the current VC offensive. A reserve stock of ammunition should be established at each district and speedily replenished on an emergency basis.

All development programs are at a standstill and will remain so until a degree of security can be re-established in this District.

WILLIAM N. WARREN  
Major Infantry  
District Senior Advisor
CORDS REPORT  _  GO CONG PROVINCE 2/68
GO CONG PROVINCE

For Period Ending 29 February 1968

1. Status of the Revolutionary Development Plan

All RD teams were withdrawn from the RD areas on 4 February. Nine teams were deployed in defensive positions around the Provincial Capital. One team was deployed in defense of Hoa Lac district town and one team in Hoa Dong. The U.S. team agreed that deployment of the teams in this defensive role during the initial phase of the VC-Tet offensive was justified in view of the increased enemy military activities throughout the province and the fact that the enemy had the capability to destroy the teams piecemeal if they had been left in the hamlets.

The VC Tet offensive has set RD back to Phase I, 1967. For all practical purposes the GVN control only five islands. These are the Provincial Capital and the 4 district towns. The VC have had complete freedom of action in the previously pacified villages and hamlets. They have been able to reestablish infrastructure in these locations and to destroy or seriously weaken the control of the village and hamlet governments.

The Revolutionary Development Program was reinitiated on 28 February. This program is divided into three phases as follows: Phase I (28 February – 15 March). 9 RD cadre teams will work in the hamlets making up the City of Go Cong by making a census to verify family books and to destroy any VC infrastructure that has been established. The two teams in Hoa Lac and Hoa Dong will conduct the same type operations for the same period. Phase II (16 March – 15 April), 9 teams will re-establish old hamlets between the Provincial Capital and 1968 Pacification areas in Hoa Tan and Hoa Lac. The two teams in Hoa Dong and Hoa Lac will move into 1967 hamlets close to the district capitals to re-establish GVN control and destroy infrastructure. Phase III (16 April – 15 October), 10 teams will move into the 65 area in Hoa Tan and Hoa Lac. New Teams (6) returning from training will be employed in the 1967 hamlets in Hoa Binh to re-establish those 8 hamlets.

The RD cadre team chief, Major Chau was killed in action on 5 February. The RD council chairman has again been appointed RD cadre chief, as an additional duty. This unacceptable to the U.S. team as stated in previous reports. One man cannot be expected to effectively perform both tasks.

The U.S. Sea Bee team leader visited province on 19 and 20 February. Based on this Liaison visit the full team (13 men and equipment) should arrive during this reporting period. The Province Chief has requested release of the 46,400,000$VN funds allocated to support this team. The central RD council has requested additional documentation on proposed projects prior to releasing the funds. Documentation is presently being prepared.
2. **Project PACT**

No progress has been made in this area due to current policy.

3. **Political/Psychological**

a. **General**

The VC Tet offensive totally dominated the month of February. Based upon this offensive, the people's psychological reaction may be divided into the following phases:

1. **February 1-4**: VC activity throughout the country was viewed as surprisingly strong. A dramatic decline in confidence toward the GVN was not matched by a revolution toward the VC trace violation. Go Cong City feared an imminent VC attack.

2. **February 5-9**: Two VC attacks on Go Cong City (see military section) further reduced confidence in GVN.

3. **February 10-29**: The ambush death of Hoi Linh, VC Go Cong Province Chief, started the upturn of morale. Some further GVN victories, although modest, have maintained the momentum pacification once had.

b. **VIS**

VIS performed well above standard in producing quick-reaction leaflets and broadcasting to exploit GVN successes. Ten different leaflets each of a 5,000 run, were mimeographed and quickly distributed. Notable was an enlarged photograph of the dead VC Province Chief shown in the markets which convinced an otherwise skeptical population. Especially in Nha Dong District, VIS support of the eviction program has helped produce a province total of more than 2,000 evictions fleeing the VC drift.

VIS activity in the countryside suffered along with other GVN programs, as a result of decreased security and communication.

c. **Election Activities**: No change

d. **Minorities, Political, and Religious Groups**: No change.

4. **Security**

a. **General**

Sector military operations totaled ten multi-battalion operations during the month. Of significance was the 6 February operation conducted in Nga Tan only 3 kilometers from Go Cong City. Friendly elements engaged a VC battalion size force in a fierce battle which lasted 4 hours. The Province
Deputy for Security, Maj Chua was killed in this operation. Heavy casualties were taken by both sides. The air strikes hit VC positions late in the afternoon as the VC forces retreated back to defensive positions in Go Cong City. Major ground and mortar attacks have been launched on Nhon Qui outpost on route 5 in an attempt to isolate Go Cong from Saigon. The attacks were repulsed, but friendly forces suffered heavy casualties.

Recent engagement with the VC forces have indicated the inferiority of friendly armament. The friendly forces armed with BAR, M1 Rifle, and M1/2 carbines are decidedly at a disadvantage against the VC who are now armed with AK type weapons, new Chicom Light Machine Guns, and B-40/D41 rockets. Earliest upgrading of RF/FF armament is required to successfully engage and rout the VC.

A VC controlled area north of the city was designated a free fire area to tactical helicopters on 17 February. The helicopter support was excellent and VC activity in that area has been greatly suppressed. City security must be maintained constantly as was evidenced on 19 February when the 4/12 Battalion and two RF Co's from Go Cong City were conducting an operation in Nha Lao. VC forces took advantage of the small force providing city security and conducted an attack on the city. The VC attack has definitely restricted the use of local forces to screening their immediate area.

Again, friendly operations were conducted predominately in areas of light OB where propagandists and caches were the primary objectives. The kill ratio decreased sharply from 5:1 to 2:1 with 45 friendly forces killed and 91 enemy forces killed. An additional 120 VC KIA was estimated by friendly forces. No casualties were incurred by booby traps or mines. Fifty enemy weapons were captured. Subsectors have been relatively active with small unit operations. The advisory effort is continuing to stress the importance of more sub-sector controlled operations into areas of heavy OB.

The main obstacle to restoring pre-Tet level security for Go Cong City and the Province is the VC area of Binh Khan (SW NW of City), which is interlaced with rivers and canals and is difficult to enter. Based on the difficulty of entry and the size of the area, an operation in that area dictates a need for a minimum of a 3 battalion operation (4 BN's desirable) spanning 2 to 3 days duration. The Sector is capable of committing 2 battalion size force. US or ARVN support of 1 to 2 battalions and air support is required to execute this operation. The FC has requested support from 7th ARVN Division, but the Division is currently unable to...
sup out the Sector request. A success will operation, Ninh Quan would destroy the VC forces or reduce them to Pre-Tet level and would be a major step toward restoration of Pre-Tet security and resumption of the RD program. Water patrols would greatly assist security gained from a tactical operation.

c. Enemy Situation:

In keeping with the nationwide TET offensive, VC military activity in Go Cong Province increased significantly, both in frequency and intensity, during the month of February. The enemy gained the initiative early in the month by launching mortar attacks on the provincial capital and conducting an assault within the city limits to release prisoners from the jail. In response to this threat, friendly forces were drawn into a piecemeal defense around the city and the outlying forces assumed a defensive posture, leaving the Viet Cong in virtual control of the countryside. Post harassments and interdictions of lines of communication tripled over previous reporting periods and the favorable casualty ratio decreased markedly.

Only an ill-timed daylight reconnaissance in force attack by the VC on Go Cong's defenses on the 19th marred the enemy's offensive, as gunships decimated the attacking force. That setback brought the offensive to a temporary standstill, and only minor activity is being experienced at present. The fact remains, however, that the enemy retains the initiative should be choose to exercise it.

Based on the best intelligence available the VC have activated a provincial mobile battalion, brought up to full strength the 206 and 305 district companies and increased the number of guerrillas. The favorable Pre-Tet force ratio enjoyed by GVN of 12 to 1 has been reduced currently to 5 to 1.

c. Infrastructure:

VC have been able during this reporting period to reestablish infrastructure in those hamlets and village previously pacified in the outlying areas. ICEX Committee identification of VC organization structure continues.
1. ARVN: On 5 February 1968, the 4th Battalion, 12th Regiment moved into Go Cong City and was designated a mobile battalion. On 22 February the 1st. departed Province and returned 23 February.

2. EF:

The 112th and 121st EF companies are continuing their basic unit training at the Cao Lãnh National Training Center. Recent information received indicates that JCS is limiting Go Cong to only 14 companies rather than the 15 companies that were programmed for 1968.

As a result of the Tet holidays and the VC Tet offensive, the EF housing construction has come to a complete standstill. If the local situation continues to improve, construction should continue during the next 30 days.

Also as a result of the Tet offensive, the RD mission of the 599th RF company has changed. It is currently located in the Go Cong City as a portion of the city defense.

3. FF:

The FF local training center has ceased all training functions and is closed. All FF units previously engaged in support of the RD program currently converted to Hamlot and Village security. They will revert to the RD support role when the RD program is started again.

Go Cong recruited up to the 80 FF platoons authorized but a subsequent message from 4th CDR withdrew 3 of these platoons. The current FF platoon authorization is for 77 platoons.

4. US/FM/RF: No change

5. Economics:

a. General:

The countryside has been under control since the beginning of the VC offensive. Throughout the period the VC have collected rice and taxes at will. The effect of this VC control has been the cutting off of export and import of goods.
Go Cong Province prior to the VC Tet offensive depended on export of rice, fish and vegetables to Saigon as the primary source of income. Hard items such as tools and light machines were received from Saigon in return. Water transport was the major mode used with approximately one third being moved over route 24 to Ny Theo and then by route 4 to Saigon by track. Route 5, direct from Go Cong to Saigon was used by light trucks and tri-larrettes.

2. VC Plan:

During the VC Tet offensive the VC plan was to cut all water and land routes to isolate Go Cong. These routes have been successfully closed by then since 2 February 1968, except for route 24 which was opened on 15 February 1968 and has been opened periodically since that date.

3. Results of VC Action:

During the period LCC's were closed the price of food stuff in the province dropped. This was most noticeable in perishable items. No hard items were imported into the province causing the price of these items to raise but not to the point of being above reason. The most critical problem was the complete cut off of FCL into the Province.

6. Provincial Resources in Support of Pacification:

a. RD Cadre Teams:

During this month the RD program came to a complete halt. All RD teams were moved into the Province Capital with the exception of teams number 4 and 7 that are still in place. All teams are now serving as security forces, 9 teams in the Province Capital, team 4 in Hoa Lac and team 7 in Hoa Dong.

RD cadre morale has fallen considerably this month due to the fact that the teams are being used as security forces and are not performing RD mission and also due to effective VC propaganda.
On 5 February, Major Chau the RD Cadre Chief was killed in action against the VC. The loss of Major Chau was a serious blow to the program. Major Chau was a highly aggressive, efficient individual. He was replaced by Mr. Hoanh, the RD council Chief; this situation is not acceptable as Mr. Hoanh must divide his attentions between RD Cadre and the RD council and consequently cannot devote the necessary time to the RD Cadre program. We therefore need a full-time RD Cadre Chief appointed in Go Cong as soon as possible.

The U.S. team is initiating a plan that will call for rejuvenation of the RD program by 1 March. The implementation of this plan by the Vietnamese depends upon pressure being applied by higher GVN authority to force the VC to move out and on the assumption that VC threat to Go Cong City will be returned to pre-tet proportions.

b. Static Census Grievance:

The static census grievance program in Go Cong has been functioning as purely an intelligence collection agency during this crisis. In addition 20 CG Cadre have been armed and are currently being used as a city security force. The aspiration and grievances aspect of the SCG program has gone completely by the boards during this period.

c. Self-Defense Forces:

Hamlet self defense forces have been broken up by the VC offensive. Casualties and losses are unknown at this time.

d. Technical Cadre:

Elementary schools were opened on 19 February 1968 in province and district capitals.

e. Police:

(1) The Np did an acceptable job during the Tet offensive. They sustained only 2 KIA (slight during an attack by the VC on the Province prison on 4–5 February. The Chief of Police implemented the Advisor's suggestions for defense of the police station, and showed imagination and energy in making his own changes and refinements. He demonstrated good leadership and administrative ability. His staff was loyal and hard-working.
The police here have improved their image considerably.

Resources Control activity has tightened up. No unfavorable reports from the public (possibly because the police have become more efficient and fair, and because the public realized the seriousness of the situation). However, the actual implementation of the anti-corruption campaign per se, is at a standstill due to more pressing jobs.

No change in police assigned outside towns.

PSB has increased their personnel. Little intelligence activity is being conducted because sources are not as accessible as before due to restrictions of movement.

(2) The ICEx committee has returned to the identification phase in their targeting of infrastructure due to the new VC provincial organization. In addition the ICEx committee is trying to accumulate intelligence on the new infrastructure that has been formed during the Tet offensive. Operations targeted against the infrastructure has come to a halt this month, due to the emphasis on defense of Go Cong City and the necessity to combat major VC units in the area.

(3) PF. At the present time PF is not in support of the RD program. Company 406, its entirety, has been committed to static security missions within the city of Go Cong and are not working within the RAFF concept. The status of training at the present time is unsatisfactory, however Officer and NCO classes are presently being conducted to improve this situation. At the conclusion of this type of senior classes the officers and non-coms will conduct classes on squad, platoon and company level prior to the deployment of the company on any operations. Weekly sick calls have been instituted for the dependents of 406th company and negotiations are underway for land to build a permanent PF barracks. PF Advisor assigned 8 February, 1968.

7. Provincial Administrative Personnel and Organization:

a. The attitude of the Province Chief and other officials is improving. Outstanding examples of this are the rounding up of approximately 2000 military age men throughout the province to prevent those men from being forced into VC service. Quick organization of recovery committees at province and district levels; rapid expenditure of 224,215$Vn from emergency funds to assist the people who have had losses and damage due to VC attacks and the arrival and integration of 3600 civil servants into city defense. On the minus side is lack of offensive operations.
b. Village and hamlet officials continue to carry on their duties in those few locations where security exists. In those areas where security is limited or does not now exist, the officials have evacuated and refuse to reenter until security is reestablished. All village and hamlet officials have not been accounted for but it appears that losses will be light.

c. No change.
d. No change.
e. GVN has lost control of many of the outlying areas previously pacified.

9. Required Actions:

a. Opening of LOC's:

1) Opening of route 5 from Go Cong to Saigon. Route 5 from Go Cong to Vaw Go River is presently open and can be maintained trafficably with provincial resources. Support of III Corps and Long An Province is required to maintain open route 5 from Vaw Go river to Saigon. Upgrading of bridges in Long An province is also necessary to permit truck-use of this direct access to Saigon (requirement for upgrading bridges in Long An was stated as required action in Par 9b of January report).

2) Support of Dinh Tien Province is required to maintain route 24 in a trafficable status from Go Cong--y The. Go Cong can maintain its portion open and trafficable. Virtually all of normal Go Cong military logistical support and recently commercial traffic from Saigon and y The to Go Cong utilizes this Route to resupply Go Cong. Commodity export from Go Cong, too, is predominately through this route due to load limitation on Route 5 to Saigon.
b. The VC launched a concentrated recruiting drive in this province with the opening of their current offensive. To counter this the province chief appealed to all military age personnel to report to the province and district capitals to avoid the VC draft. The VC promised food, shelter, and protection. To date approximately 2000 men of military age have reported or were picked up by local security forces. The number of these refugees from communism far exceeded expectations and could not be supported with existing provincial resources. As an emergency measure US funds were made available for ration support until GVN releases of funds were secured. By msg number 134/TO/L dated 24 Feb 1968 to the Peoples Rescue Committee Saigon with information copy to GVN representative in Can Tho, Province Chief requested authorization to support these refugees with 40$AV per man/day from the three million dollar Refugee Relief Funds now in province. As an interim measure pending action on above cited message, the Province Chief agreed on 26 Feb to provide districts with 15$AV per man/day and bulgar wheat to support these personnel. Authority for this action is GVN Central Committee for Relief circular 0021 dated 20 Feb 1968. The projected disposition of these refugees is to recruit eligible into RF/FP and ARVN to deny VC the manpower and provide employment for the youth. Placing of the 2000 military age refugees in this province in RF/FP units will require major adjustment in our force structure. The SA IV CT., DEF/GOH, RF/FP Advisor and his counterpart visited this province on 25 February concerning this problem. Following were discussed:

(1) Obtain authority to activate 1-RF Co A/P (authorized previously for Ph I 68 FSI).

(2) Obtain authority to activate 4 additional RF companies.

(3) Obtain authority to restore authorization for 3-RF Platoon withdrawn from Ph II 68 program.

(4) Obtain authority to recruit 10 additional RF Platoons.
(5) The possibility of drafting a limited number of the military age into ARVN. The PC and US team do not concur in mass drafting into ARVN. Those who are proven draft dodgers and those who volunteer should be placed in ARVN; others should not. If a mass draft is implemented these men will defect to VC controlled area in mass. Based on observation and interviews, these refugees, majority of them, are uncommitted manpower that can be easily swayed to either side, VC or GVN.

Higher headquarters support is requested in obtaining early action to implement the above RF/PF requirements and authorization to use provincial refugee relief funds to support these personnel as requested in referenced message.

c. The main threat to Go Cong City and restoration of Pre-Tet level security is the VC build-up and base area of Binh Xuan (see para 4, security). ARVN or US unit support from outside the Sector resources of at least one maneuver battalion, preferably 2 battalions, are required to conduct a major operation for 2 to 3 days.

d. Recent encounters with VC units disclose inadequacy of RF/PF armament (see para 5, security). Early upgrading of armament of RF/PF armament is necessary to engage and defeat the VC.

e. The loss by enemy action on 5 February of the Sector Deputy for Security, Major Chau who also served as the RD Cadre Team Chief, seriously impairs the Province's capability to control and coordinate security and the RD Cadre Teams. Since both positions are full time jobs, early replacements are required for these two positions.
SUBJECT: Narrative Monthly Report, February 1968

TO: Province Senior Advisor
    Go Cong Province, IV CTZ
    Advisory Team 83, APO 96359

1. CIVIL: Pacification in Noi Binh came to almost a complete halt in February. All RD teams were withdrawn from the district. Some new construction has been done. One new three-classroom school was started in Binh Khuong hamlet and is 90% completed. Much work has been taking place in the refortification of outposts; construction of bunkers; laying of more barbed wire in critical areas; and the placing out of trip flares and tin cans for early warning of VC infiltration.

Some 419 individuals have been policed-up from VC controlled and contested areas. These persons were paid $0.80 per day for food by province from the AIK fund for a one week period. The reason for bringing these individuals in was to keep them out of the reach of the VC for recruitment and to be used as laborers. These people have been working throughout the district and received some minor training in self defense.

A total of 57,000$VN was spent for the month from the Imprest Fund for military support of pacification. Three new teachers latrines were constructed in three different schools and an office for the Educational Director for the District in the main school.

All schools have remained in full operation throughout this crucial month.

2. MILITARY: The VC activity for the month of February was slight. We had two confirmed VC killed. The VC seemed to move all around us, but never attempted to make a strike.

We received one (1) 4.2 mortar and two (2) 30 cal light machine guns. Classes and training were conducted on these new weapons and they are now incorporated into our defensive system.

In several villages civilian militias have been organized and have been receiving classes in self defense and how to use weapons.
3. CONCLUSION: The district Chief hopes to get back to a normal schedule this coming month. I do not feel any action is necessary by higher headquarters. The district chief is Phan Van Hau who was promoted to Major in February.

James D. Martin
Major Infantry
District Senior Advisor
SUBJECT: Narrative Monthly Report, February 1963

TO: Province Senior Advisor
Go Cong Province, IV CTZ
Advisory Team 83, A-10 96359

1. CIVIL: Little can be said for civic action work in the district during the month. The 1963 Pacification effort, which commenced on 5 January, was halted due to the VC Tet offensive. All RD Teams were withdrawn from the campaign area and returned to Go Cong. Likewise, work was discontinued on all civic action projects throughout the district.

2. MILITARY: There was a marked increase in VC activity during the month. The District Headquarters, District Village and Artillery Battalion Position were mortared twice. A ground attack was launched against the artillery position during the first mortar attack but was repulsed. Son Chi outpost was hit on two occasions with heavy rocket and mortar fire, followed by ground attacks. However, both attacks were repulsed. Friendly activities were increased during the month, particularly ambush patrols. The VC Province Chief of Go Cong and his deputy were killed by one such ambush patrol. Seventy-five young men were brought into District Headquarters to prevent capture by the VC. Excellent support was received from Navy Gunships and a nearby American Artillery Unit. Some 38 VC were killed in the Binh Xuan area as a result of Navy Gunship action. All toll during the month four PF were killed and nine wounded, while 41 VC were killed and an estimated 40 wounded.

3. CONCLUSION: I am unable to predict when the 1963 Pacification effort will be continued. It appears that the present military situation will not permit resumption at this time. The District Chief is First lieutenant Dang Van Dat.

ISADORE A. POWELL
LTC Infantry
District Senior Advisor
TO: Province Senior Advisor  
Go Cong Province, IV CTZ  
Advisory Team 83, APO 95959  

SUBJECT: Narrative Monthly Report, February 1963  
29 February 1963  

1. CIVIL: The Viet Cong offensive activity during the early part of February caused a distinct set back to the 1963 Pacification Program. RD Team 84 in Lo Gach Hamlet assumed a defensive mission and virtually no progress was made toward pacification of the Hamlet. However the RD Team did participate in organizing 30 youth Defense within the Hamlet, and its present defensive positions have been considerably improved. Under guidance provided by sector, plans are presently being made to utilize the team to engage in re-pacification of Tang Hoi for approximately one month, to be followed by resumption of the pacification effort in Lo Gach.

The district chief has directed the organization of the Youth Defense in all the villages. A total of 925 men are being organized, including 408 from Go Cong City Sector, and it is planned to arm approximately 250 of the total to assist in defensive missions. Weapons have been requested from sector for this purpose.

Police operations to strengthen population control have also been directed by the district chief. The assignment during this month of a new police chief who apparently is well trained and aggressive should improve police operations considerably.

Construction of the RF housing for the 408 Company has been at a standstill since the Tet period, however RF housing at both An Hoi and Xom Joe has been completed and improved since the VC attacks on those areas this month. The District Chief continues to take great interest in the welfare, equipment and living conditions of both RF and PF soldiers in the District.

Two water wells have been dug in Tang Hoi and should be completed in March. If they prove satisfactory additional wells will be constructed in other villages of the district. The Boat Dock (vicinity X5675105) has been completed however development and use of this facility is contingent on the construction of a road to the boat dock. The District Chief has agreed to give this project priority utilizing the organized youth for construction.
TO: Province Senior Advisor  
Go Cong Province, IV CBI  
Advisory Team 83, APO 96359


1. CIVIL: Little can be said for civil activities during the month. The TET offensive has practically stopped all Revolutionary Development. Even though Hoa Dong saw very little action during the offensive the primary emphasis was improving defenses and making preparations for the attack that never came.

2. MILITARY: VC activity increased considerably during the month. The activity consisted of light harassment of our outposts and the District Town perimeter and blocking route 24. Friendly activities consisted of the clearing of route 24 and ambush patrols. The kill ratio for the month was four VC to one friendly. The most important activity during the month was the gathering in of approximately 668 people from the insecure areas to keep them out of the hands of the VC. These people were promised security in the District Town and a better life than the VC could offer. The response was even better than we expected. Of these people gathered in, we have enough young men for three MP platoons (35 men each) and one MP company (123 men). The basic training of these individuals has already begun at District level; however, due to a lack of facilities and equipment there is not much more that we at District level can do. So far the program has been so successful that we feel if an operation could be run deep into the VC territory about the same number of people could be brought in.

3. CONCLUSIONS: The reason the VC never launched an attack in Hoa Dong was the state of preparedness of the troops and the lack of intelligence available to the VC. I cannot predict, at this time, when the 1969 RD campaign will get started. The military situation Province wide, will not allow the release of the troops necessary to begin the campaign. The District Chief is Major Nguyen Van Tien.

Jackie V. Wright  
Major Infantry  
District Rep.

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2. MILITARY: During the month the VC initiated 4 major incidents causing loss of life, wounds, or property damage. These occurred at An Hao, Xon Soo and Tan Thanh outposts. In addition 22 incidents of a harassing nature took place and 37 roadblocks were constructed. The majority of harassing incidents and roadblocks construction continue to be in the Tan Thanh Village area.

   A total of seven operations were conducted in the district this month. Four sector operations and three sub-sector operations. Two of the subsector operations were conducted at night. Excellent support from Navy SAR, Swift Boats and Gunships was received throughout the month.

3. CONCLUSION: The VC Tet offensive caused a set back to the Pacification Program in the district, however this is considered only temporary. The morale of the District officials is high and they maintain a positive attitude. It is anticipated that RD projects will continue at a more rapid rate in the coming month provided supplies can be made available. The District Chief is Dai-ly Loo.

FRANCIS K. LEITCH
Major Infantry
District Senior Advisor

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