"The rule of revolutionary warfare is to progress from small units to large commands....... to destroy the enemy's forces..... finally to attack the cities.... and so we needed enough communication routes and motorized transport to bring sufficient food, ammunition and weapons to the front. A key problem was to develop a system of roads for good mobility."

"Our Great Spring Victory" 1977
P 13-14
INSURGENCY

- 1960-65 VC captured more weapons than they lost

- 1968 TET Offensive a VC disaster

- 1969-72 ?
Impact of Bombing

{ Intelligence Estimates
{ Systems Analyses

> LARGELY THEORETICAL

> IMPERVIOUS TO CONTRARY INDICATORS
ANALYSES
- VERY LARGE (& GROWING!)

- SMALL

- INDEFINITE LOW-LEVEL WAR

\[ 1 + 2 + 3 = \text{EFFECTIVENESS} \]

\[ \text{IMPOSSIBLE} \]
AIR INTERDICTION NVN
(CIA, OSD, DIA, IDA METHODOLOGY)

1. ROAD CAPACITY

2. LOGISTIC NEEDS

3. INTENT

SOURCE: IDA (JASON) STUDY DEC 67
OSD(SA) SEASIA ANALYSIS REPORT
JULY '68
JAN '69
LOGIC

- ENEMY HAS MORE CAPABILITY THAN HE NEEDS/USES

- AND HAS BUILT MORE UNECESSARY CAPACITY

- WHICH HE DOESN'T INTEND TO USE

SOURCE: NAVY COMMENTS ON JASON STUDY MAR 1968
- STAFF OFFICER CALCULATION
- OBSERVED LEVEL OF FIGHTING
- ASSUMED EXPENDITURE
- LEVEL INFILT TREND
- NO EVIDENCE DECISIVE BATTLE
- CAPACITY » NEEDS
1968 Update

1. Road Capacity
   - Reflects Expansion

2. Logistic Needs
   - Slight Change

3. Intent
   - Asserted

4. Other
   - Acknowledged Syllogism
   - Recognized Unanswered Question
     (Why not use all capacity?)
   - Admitted "Very slight probability"
     bombing limits supply flow
     "At some level many times greater
     than... 1967"
**Contrary Indicators**

1. **Road Capacity**
   - "Unneeded" Expansion
   - Theoretical 6-800 Tons/Day = 50 TPD + 15 TPD Actual

2. **Logistic Needs**
   - Troops March, Used to Ride
   - Trivial AAA in SVN, Laos, S. NVN
   - Activity During Bombing Halts
   - Trawler Resupply Attempts

3. **Intent**
   - 2 NVA Divisions to SVN '67
   - TET Offensive

Sources: CHQ SYS ANAL DIV STAFF STUDY OCT 66
CHQ SER 00420P96 MAR 68
Requirement Estimates

- US Analysis (1967-69):
  ~ 25,000 tons/year

- General Van Tien Dung:
  Hundreds of thousands of tons
FINAL DEMO-1975

GEN. VAN TIEN DUNG:

"8 METER ROAD... HEAVY VEHICLES... ALL FOUR
SEASONS... DAY AND NIGHT... HUNDREDS OF
THOUSANDS OF TONS"

"MORE THAN 10,000 TRANSPORT VEHICLES....
TROOPS USING MOTORIZED TRANSPORT...
KNOWING THEY HAD ENOUGH TO EAT...."

"FIRST TIME A WHOLE DIVISION.. TO THE FRONT
IN 500 TRUCKS.... BUMPER TO BUMPER..."

"1968 AND 1972... LOGISTIC SYSTEM NOT
YET ADEQUATE...."

"HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF VEHICLES
RAN BUMPER TO BUMPER "DAY & NIGHT"

"...THOUSANDS OF ARTILLERY PIECES.... TENS OF THOUSANDS
OF ANTIAIRCRAFT WEAPONS.... HUNDREDS OF TANKS....
TENS OF THOUSANDS OF TONS OF ARTILLERY AND MORTAR
ROUNDS....."

SOURCE: "OUR GREAT SPRING VICTORY"
MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS 1977
RECAP

VIETNAM

- BIG
- INSURGENCY
  - SELF-DESTRUCTED
  - GOT LOST
  - ?
- AIRPOWER
  - UNDERESTIMATED

GENERALLY

- RELEVANT?
- INSURGENTS CAN'T:
  - BE EASILY DESTROYED
  - WIN ALONE
- BEWARE
  - THEORETICIANS
Oh by the way....

Problems of Remoteness

- Unknown Ignorance

- Wrong Mental Images

- Conventional Ones
PANEL DISCUSSION

Allan Rehm was the moderator. The panel included George Allen, John Battilega, Leon Goure, George Haering, and Thomas Thayer. Members of the audience are cited here simply as COMMENT sometimes with a letter indicating the person for a group of questions.

REHM: I'd like to make one remark first on a difference between Vietnam and Afghanistan. I noticed today that only at one point in our discussion of Vietnam were religious factors mentioned. I bring it up because I think that it probably plays a much greater role in Afghanistan in the dedication of the rebel forces to continue in the face of heavily unfavorable odds. I think the only reference I can recall today was when John Battilega mentioned that there were two provinces which were not controlled by either side, and they were the ones in which religious belief was most fanatical. This is one example of the differences in the two wars.

I will now start by soliciting questions from analysts working on Afghanistan. What type of problems do you have? Do the panelists have any suggestions based on their experience?

COMMENT A: Afghanistan differs from Vietnam in that our data is a whole lot poorer in quality. Do you have any suggestions on how to deal with data that may be incomplete, that may involve multiple counts of the same event, or that is vague on matters like location and time -- too vague, perhaps, to be fit into a data base?

Number two, what level of analysis would you recommend? I don't know if there is a danger of not seeing the forest for the trees, of getting down into a data base on a day-by-day basis at the lowest tactical level, instead of, perhaps, looking at it month-by-month from the strategic level, but I would like some feedback as to what level of analysis you would suggest, and what to do with poor quality data.

GOURSE: The data on what? I am still not clear what kind of data you are discussing.

REHM: And have you tried building a data base?
PANEL DISCUSSION

GOURE: I don't mean the details. I mean what category of data are you discussing? Information reports, casualty reports, or what?

GOURE: What are you interested in finding out?

COMMENT A: We are thinking of setting up some kind of data base to try to identify patterns or basic trends. How would you work with it? Would you try to make subjective judgments when data is incomplete and incorporate that into your data base, or leave it out altogether?

REHM: Do you get information such as the location the event took place? Do you know who the reporting authority is? Over time you could make judgments on reliability of reporting.

COMMENT B. Let us start at ground zero. What data should we collect? Casualties? Geography? Order-of-battle? What other things are important?

GOURE: What I am trying to say is that different things are mentioned here. If the idea is just to characterize the war, what is happening, that is one kind of a set of data. A different issue is, for example, how do the Soviets assess or evaluate how the war is going? That is a different story. That is a different set of parameters that you will be looking for possibly than from general data. Otherwise general data is simply that there is a conflict between one element in Afghanistan and another. You want to describe and kept a record of it. Then you can have a set of data which may or may not be significant in terms of the second purpose.

COMMENT A: What interests us is doing all of the things you mentioned before. Describing the war, evaluating the
direction it is going, evaluating how the Soviets see it, how the guerrillas see it, all these things.

COMMENT B: You are probably on to it. I think you have started off at the right place, and you asked a good question. Our first basic problem is that we want to have a better way of describing what has happened. What is actually going on in the war? Is there more activity now than there was last month? How does this month compare to the same month last year? We want to be able to quantify that in a meaningful way. We all have our visceral feelings based on experience, on reading the information, on the levels of activity based on the amount of Easter eggs that drop in our inbaskets every week, but it is very difficult to quantify. What are appropriate measures? Battalion days in the field? Number of incidents? Who initiated the engagement? The amount of time in the field by small units or large units? There are a variety of things. What is a good way of putting your finger on the pulse of the activity so you can measure it?

I saw a statistic the other day that showed we assess that there is a higher level of intensity in the war this time of year than there was last year because there has been an increase in the number of large-scale military operations. What is a large scale military operation? What is the appropriate unit? Is it the battalion, or the company? Is it self-initiated operations, or is it all operations, where we include operations that are responding to activities by the guerrillas?

Is that a start for the panel? It has nothing to do with Soviet objectives. That is a second order of analysis. Are they winning the war? That is ultimately what you want to know I suppose.

COMMENT C: I think we have thrown enough on the floor that I’d like to hear our respondents grapple with it somehow.

COMMENT: Where do you start? [Chuckle]

ALLEN: I would go back to something very -- if George will excuse the expression -- theoretical, almost, doctrinal at least. I think that it is important what your understanding of the Soviet objective is, in terms of what kind of data you are going to want to accumulate, so that you can have some feel for judging how well they are working
toward what they are doing, and that your data enables you to
do that as you set up your data base.

By the same token, it is very important to have some
understanding of what the US policymaker thinks his objective
is, so that you have some feel for the kinds of things that
will enable you to measure the extent to which the situation
is good or bad. Not that you want to tell him only good
news, but you must let him know whether what he is doing or
what is happening is helpful to our interests as he perceives
them, or is detrimental to our interests.

Now that is not just theoretical. After you do that you
can start listing things. If our interests are served by
dragging the war out, and denying a Russian victory, then our
data collection ought to be structured in such a way that we
can demonstrate whether or not, or the extent to which, the
war is indeed a running sore costing the Soviets things that
they might prefer not to have to pay, or that it is costing
them things that we think are worth it to us.

And by the same token, I think operational activity is
important, the level of operational activity -- and you
have to define for that situation, given the type of data you
have, how you are going to break down the different kinds of
activity and then establish a base. I would say that if you
are going to have any contract support at all, it ought to
include the resources necessary to retroactively go back and
take the historical data and put it in the context of
whatever it is you have decided is important for you to try
to track, given the availability of data.

You might also want to take into account what additional
you would want. Maybe you are not getting the kind of data
you might want to know, but what would be the best way, and
is it feasible, to get the kind of data tha you would want?
Are we actively pursuing enough interrogation of Afghans
coming out? My feel for the situation is that there is a
cell of a lot of movement out. Do we have a systematic
approach to interrogating them of the sort that Leon
developed for Rand, that is, making sure they are all asked
the same kinds of questions so that you are getting a
consistency into the kind of data you are tracking with
respect to whatever they have observed. You have to define
the observables if you are going to ask them about Soviet
operations. If you are going to ask them about their own
activities, then you have to define what it is about their
activities that you would like to see.
While I have the floor, which I seem to have, I'll take another minute. I've mentioned this to a couple of people. It seems to me, from my reading of the situation, that the Soviets, with some deliberateness, are attempting to denude the countryside of population in order to eliminate a support base for the guerrillas. Some way of measuring that, in fact, several ways of measuring that, would, I think, be important in terms of the level of resources they are devoting to it in terms of sorties, frequency, and the areas they are attempting to do it in, if indeed, that is what they are attempting to do.

GOUR: You know that is quite interesting that you have a situation quite different than in Vietnam. Vietnam was really different in objectives as well. If you talk about actions here, first of all you have sort of maintaining "what is" from the Soviet or government point of view, where the garrisons, the roads, the access, et cetera and obviously holding off threats to them if you can, the sieges, the firing on Kabul airport, or whatever you like. There is another thing which is interesting. The system is not one of occupation, control of territory, or the like. You are doing sweeps essentially, or you run through an occupied, hostile area which somehow presents a threat, or over time has built up into a capability. You disrupt it all and then pull out. You let it come back if necessary, but you don't control it, except maybe with air flights. Otherwise you don't bother it. But what you are really trying to do is neutralize the opposition.

COMMENT: That is the feeling I have.

GOUR: Or getting the local chief to agree to inaction, but you will not sit on it in the sense of being there with a garrison.

ALLEN: My conclusion was they are not trying to pacify the country like we were in Vietnam. My thought about denuding the countryside of population is, in effect, the neutralizing of the situation, depriving the insurgents of a viable support base to sustain any sort of a credible painful guerrilla activity.

GOUR: Now if you take it that way, then look at where it might lead you in terms of measuring what is happening or looking at what is happening. There are actions initiated by the guerrillas. That is one kind of data. They usually accomplish a limited objective or defend something, or prevent penetration. But still that is distinguished from
disruption, convoy attack (whatever you like) which leads to action but which is not intended to do more than just damage, versus control of something to the extent that the guerrillas try control something.

On the other side, if you talk about what the Soviets are doing, there is the sweep, the big actions which are intended to neutralize something or push something back.

First of all, in the other cases you do not necessarily know who initiated the action. If you have a clash the idea would be to know who did what in any case. A guerrilla ambush of a convoy leads to airstrikes and all the rest of it. Or is it the opposite side, the Soviets attacking something, which probably occurs less often.

Maybe casualties occur more often from guerrilla ambushes than from Soviet hostile action. That makes a difference and to that extent that means a different objective.

If you are going to take measurements, if you take the Soviet intent to be a commitment to defending or holding certain things and then trying to neutralize rather than pacify, occupy and control the countryside, you have a different perception of what you will ask about the action that has occurred, what you want to know about the action, the character of the action, but also what is significant in relation to the objective.

It is not always the same. Not all actions are initiated by the Russian or the Afghan Army. Not all actions from the Russian or Afghan Army are significant in terms of what they are trying to do because there may be two different objectives. To relieve a column that is being ambushed is simply to ensure it can continue to go wherever it is going. A sweep of a hostile valley may be intended to clear out guerrillas. They did that not long ago. I read about a big operation in the newspaper recently. Remember, the Soviet forces always pull out again after completing a sweep.

ALLEN: With respect to something Leon said about who initiated an action, and your question about "suppose the data are ambiguous," I think what you do in that sort of situation is as follows: where you know, you record it as having been initiated by one side or the other; where you don’t know, you say that it is unknown and then work with
essentially three levels, or you may have five levels with some being "probable."

GOURE: Except that you know this is a matter of a convoy under fire, you know who did it to whom.

ALLEN: Oh, yes.

REHM: What you are saying is, you need a data base.

ALLEN: You need the data, and you need to establish criteria that fit the degree of ambiguity you have. You may have a lot of "unknowns" or "unidentifieds" in every stream of the data that you have. That should not bother you.

THAYER: You shouldn't be afraid of that because it is a key to, "What is the overall intensity? What is going on out there? There are a lot of people being killed. We don't know who started all these things, but, my god, look what happened this month!" That is a very coarse sort of way. "A lot of things started and we don't know who started 50% of them. But we have got casualty reports, all of which are perhaps somewhat similar, which indicate maybe it is going up or down or sideways." That won't hurt you. I mean, you are now getting some slant on just the general intensity of the war or whatever you are looking for. You can tell your boss, "It is a little hotter out there than last month. We don't know why, because we are having data problems"

GOURE: But you will have it seasonally related too.

THAYER: Oh, yes. That is what I pointed out, if you can spot a season there, that may tell you quite a bit. Maybe the Russians will operate heavily because they have some of the same problems the US had. They are operating helicopters and aircraft. What kind of weather do they have out there? Do they have a time when the cloud cover is very low? If so, they are not going to operate very much.

COMMENT: See, that is the kind of thing we can pretty much do right now. You can pick out trends. We want to get to the place you were talking about where the data can lead to identifying new trends and patterns and turn it into something of strategic significance. We want to make it useful to policy makers.
THAYER: For that you need to know what they are up to. Is it significant to the Russians?

COMMENT: I have a question. Assuming we could get some of the basic data, indicators like how many casualties or days out in the field by the Soviets out of garrison — perhaps the rebels could estimate it — the question we would have then would be, "What is the significance?"

When you saw or thought you saw the North Vietnamese or the Vietcong taking more casualties for a period, did that mean they were doing worse or better? Were they being more aggressive, or were they screwing up in the field? If our guys were out there in the field, more casualties might have indicated they were doing a better job, or were they out there floundering? That is the kind of thing we can use some help with.

ALLEN: You want to be rigorous in the way you deal with it. As rigorous as you can. And as consistent in your rigor as you can be. Because as George was pointing out, if analysts are just putting things out for your ears you're not contributing to anyone's understanding of anything.

You can have a debate on any one of those points. George and I can argue or discuss for a long time. What was it that the other side was up to at the time of the Tet Offensive? And not just from a theoretical point of view, but from the point of view of what was it that drove them to do what they did?

There were those at the time who said — and who still believe it, including Walt Rostow, for example — that it was a desperate throw of the die, all or nothing at all. The attrition that we had inflicted on them in 1966 and 1967 had been so heavy that they decided to go all out to try to win the war in that single throw of the die, and that the US media, in effect, preserved them, enabled them to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat by undermining popular support for the war.

There are others who will argue that they wanted to change the nature of the war, but it was not through desperation per se. They had decided that they definitely did not want to continue the war of attrition. But they wanted to keep a level of combat of a different sort going that would keep us interested in negotiating our way out of the war. You can debate for hours, was that a result of
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desperation, that we had won the war of attrition, or was this a rational move on their part imposed on them by the results of our strategy, but not necessarily a life or death matter with them per se.

You have to do this with rigor. You have to make sure you understand what your assumptions are as you start to determine what the increase in the number of battalion days in the field of the Soviet forces this July is compared with the next July might mean. Does that mean that the Afghans created circumstances that required the Soviets to do this? Or does this just mean that with a new commander having arrived in that region, or overall, that he has decided to keep the troops in the field more this year. The payoff here, as far as his reputation is concerned, is based on how many battalion days he can get out of the troops available.

GOURE: It seems to me that in Afghanistan at least, it is a little difficult, in the context of the situation, to look at it solely from the Soviet battalion or action point of view. You will have to include the Afghan Army as well. First of all, the Soviets deplore the Afghan Army. Second, the Afghan Army is a proxy for Soviets if you like and so to characterize the war one cannot exclude them. It isn't just the Soviets versus Afghan rebels. There is a whole other element.

Afghan Army performance may be good, bad, or indifferent, but it is still there. A lot of what comes through in descriptions is Soviet partial support or presence in what is otherwise an Afghan operation. Then the Afghans get into trouble and that leads to larger support from the Russians. That is a different story from a Soviet battalion coming down the road.

ALLEN: Sure. In fact, an interesting question would be whether Afghanization is a part of the Soviets' strategy? Do they hope that they can pull back to the point that they are only reserves for use in emergencies and let the Afghans take over, and if that is the issue or the Soviet objective, or you want to assume that is what it is, then there is a whole different set of data you are going to have to focus on getting your hands on.

COMMENT B: Can any of you tell me whether the Afghan Government has any set of criteria by which they measure control of the countryside? I have seen some charts that have big globs of their provinces. Is there any systematic assessment? Do we have any feel for it? Do they publish any
kind of statistics on who controls what portion of the countryside over time? Or at least their perception of it, phony or propagandawise?

COMMENT A: Well, the short answer to that is, no. There is not and I think what there may be, somewhere in the government, is private type figures...

COMMENT C: Real numbers?

COMMENT A: ...on these things which would be an intelligence problem for us to get at them, but there are some indications, in their literature and the President's speeches and everything, of what they themselves see as an indicator. For example, every time Babrak Karmal talks, he talks about how many acres have been turned over to the peasants and how successful they are. The figures probably bear no relation to reality at all, but the fact that they are mentioned so often seems to me at least to indicate that the Regime calculates that land reform is important as an indicator and must be constantly pumped up in speeches.

COMMENT C: They certainly haven't set up any kind of their version of the HES that we are aware of, that they use publicly.

COMMENT A: But you must remember that they really do not have much of a presence outside the larger cities.

COMMENT: I am still puzzling what it is that I should try to take away from today's session as an analyst on Afghanistan. What are the key lessons I should have learned from listening to the gentlemen talk about Vietnam in terms of what data to collect and how to utilize the data that is collected.

REHM: It seems to me that when the quality of data is low, and you have less commonality in how you get it, one of the things you have to do is cut down the number of people who put it into the data base. When you have a large amount of data and when you have data that is fairly reliable, it doesn't matter as much who feeds it into the data base. When the data isn't very good to begin with, you must establish stricter rules as to how you are going to categorize it if you want to get anything out of it. Anything you do to it leads to more noise in the data. It seems to me you have to cut down the number of people who will make decisions on
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interpretation of vague data and will put it into the data base. Do you agree with that.

COMMENT C: In other words, just keeping it simple.

REHM: No. More the fact that you maintain quality control of data interpretation and entry. That you have somebody pay long term attention to it so that the definitions used to categorize data do not change over time. The worse the data is, the fewer people ought to be working with it.

COMMENT D: It seems to me that the first thing you have got to figure out is, what are the Soviets' intentions? What are their objectives? What constitutes significant progress towards their objectives? That will determine what your data base is. Now that in general terms can be argued day and night. And if your data base is going to be dependent on anything that is so subjective as a statement of intentions ...

ALLEN: Then make some assumptions, but know what the assumptions are. Make sure that everyone working with you and with the data base understands what the assumptions are, and that there are no changes of assumptions over time.

COMMENT C: Isn't there a role for, like you say, you could argue -- we do this every day -- argue over what Soviet intentions are. We could develop a data base to try to sustain some measure of progress against these objectives. They might be the wrong set of objectives. On the other hand, one could argue that analytically, just measuring what they are doing somehow sheds light on what their objectives are. It is the sort of chicken and egg question. Can you do both?

ALLEN: We didn't do it rationally in Vietnam. In Vietnam it grew. You took what you had and you worked with it.

THAYER: Right. You started cooking and then saw what happened.

ALLEN: You added new data streams as you went along, but what you tried to do was maintain continuity in whatever stream you did turn on. Maintain as much continuity in the
definitions that you’ve established, the criteria you’ve established, and so forth, so that you are not constantly skewing the thing one way or another.

COMMENT E: How do you accommodate changes then? If you have a study like yours which shows that assumptions have been proven false, that throws out your whole study.

ALLEN: It shouldn’t, because, as you say, my urging that you try to think through objectives is to try to give you some degree of rationality toward what you are doing, but I wouldn’t say tie everything to that so that in case you are wrong it is going to collapse. There are certain things you would do anyhow like measuring the intensity of combat over time, and the locale of combat, and who initiates.

COMMENT C: Independent of objectives. [SEVERAL SPEAKERS TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY]

ALLEN: Yes, independent of objectives.

THAYER: It’s going to happen, no matter who is trying to do what, and you had better be very alert for some of those things George was saying. Look out for your assumptions, if the data starts to do something you may end up asking, “What the hell is going on? Maybe we were wrong in our basic assumptions.”

There are certain types of data, like the tempo of combat, the various things we’ve been talking about, which ought to be relevant no matter what you think the objectives are, or what you think is going on. Now one of the things we did in the Pentagon when we were getting vast streams of data, computers, and all the rest of it, we were examining all of these things and we began to find relationships between numbers that were absolutely against everything the command was saying and everything we thought we were trying to do. We would come up with these findings and we would say, “What does this mean?” We didn’t know. We had to figure out why would these things be relating this way. These data that are being collected all this time, because we’ve got this vast stream, but they were on the intensity of combat and also classification and so forth.

This was just stuff that was coming in that was the take. We never required or were allowed to commission what kind of data we wanted. We didn’t have that kind of
authority. We just had authority to feed on what was coming in. It happened to be a lot coming in. But in a much more minor way you have a stream of data coming in now.

What I think we’re saying is that you have to agree on how you are going to structure the data without a lot of qualifications on this and that. You want to know there was a fight. You would like to know who started it. You would like to know where it was. You would like to know what the casualties were, if you could find out.

Now there is going to be a category where you may not know where it was. You don’t know the results. You certainly do not know who started it. But maybe you know a couple of them.

Maybe you know where it was. Collect in that category, because that will give you a gross measure of intensity. Hey, there’s a lot of action in that province over there. We don’t know quite what’s going on, but let’s look at some of the other stuff we’re getting like interrogations — if you are getting any — and maybe communications intelligence if there is any.

You start with the numbers, but then you had better branch out to whatever else you’ve got coming in, particularly when you want an interpretation. But these basic numbers at least tell you something is happening.

If we had known before the Tet Offensive, just in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, that Westmoreland thought there were 25,000 infiltrators a month coming down we would have flipped to McNamara or whoever was there at the time. We would have said, “There is something coming. We don’t know what it is or where or when, but we suggest that you want to ask the Command or the Joint Chiefs of Staff the following questions ...,” because we didn’t have those numbers.

We had all that could be confirmed and all that we were under the impression was that six thousand a month were coming down like they did every year. So when Westy, on the program which they had the lawsuit over, said 25,000, I just lit right up. I said, “I never saw that figure.” I never heard that figure before in my life and I can show you in documents that we didn’t have it. We would have reacted to that, not that we knew anything. We should have said, “Something has quadrupled here. We had better ask somebody
what is going on."

That is the sort of technique I would suggest if you have the data structured and suddenly something doubles. What does each collection system say? Are there any clues? There might not be. You might never find out. But at least you would have a question.

ALLEN: My focus initially on objectives is important, but as a case in point, whether the rural population is being eliminated or not has relevance only if you know what significance that might have with respect to the objectives of one side or another.

If the Soviet objective is to destroy the support base for the guerrillas, or at least so disrupt it that it is ineffective, then maybe trying to get a handle on the status of the rural population is important. If we believe that the continued viability of a support base is important to keep the level of guerrilla activity going that the US would like to see, then that is another reason for focusing on it if that is something you want to focus on.

The second question would be, how do you get data on that? I have read that there are 3,000,000 plus refugees in Pakistan, a million plus in Iran, and I do not know what the rate of flow is. I assume somebody is talking to some of these people from time to time. If someone hasn't done it I would urge that they get some sort of systematic questionnaire in the hands of the people who are talking to them, whoever they might be.

A thought occurs to me. I don't know a thing about which intelligence services in the world we feel might have the best handle for what is going on internally in Afghanistan. But I would sure see what I could do to get a systematic approach to what those people are in a position to provide us, given the means and the resources necessary to equip them to get information of that sort for us, questions that would be directed toward either the refugees or guerrillas themselves, if they are coming in for some R&R, or desertees from the Afghan Army or the occasional Soviet deserter and defector.

Establish some kind of comprehensive — but not too complex — structured questionnaire that these people can be interrogated against so that you get some degree of
continuity over time and can begin to fill in bits and pieces all around the Afghan countryside.

GIESSLER: You know one of the things that the Air Force did in at least 1970 — they had figured this out — and that was, after they had collected data from each of the Wings, they turned around and sent this data back to the Wings in consolidated reports so that they would see how the higher headquarters had used their inputs. As a result two things used to happen.

Number one, the Wings used to say, "Oh, those idiots! They misinterpreted what we sent in to them and this is what it really meant."

And the other thing that happened was the commander would look at it and say, "We don't want to let that happen. We've got to change the data and send something else in."

But you do get feedback on the data that was collected and you often get gaps filled that you wouldn't otherwise.

I don't know the feasibility of taking the data base on a periodic basis out to Peshawar and sitting down in the market there and talking to some of the rebels and saying, "Look, here is what we think happened; is that what happened?"

ALLEN: I would think that the extent to which you can sanitize some major parts of it or at least the analysis of it and get that down, it would help you establish the kind of rigor that you would need in the data base, because if people see what their efforts are providing you and understand, then they would be smarter about shaping up to give you more useful stuff.

COMMENT C: That is the sort of reason I wasn't being facetious when I said you are really talking about keeping it simple. It seems to me when you are dealing with a fragmentary data base, one that is spotty, one that changes with movements, collection, periods and time of year, and so forth, there are a bunch of gaps in it. When you are going to decide on measures you ought not to start, at least initially, thinking of a complex model. You shouldn't necessarily be thinking of lots of data streams requiring large computer-driven operations.
But what you should really do gets to my second question, your experience with sampling techniques. I know you did some trial runs on a few small provinces when you first instituted HES in Vietnam. Would it seem appropriate to you, for example, to track either the Soviet Army or the Afghan Army for activity levels, selecting a few spotlight units where you know you have pretty good data? Get a historical line on that unit. See what kind of trend lines you come up with by a relatively simple way or small effort. And then decide whether you can -- on the basis of expanding that to a dozen or so key units around the country -- arrive at any universal judgments without necessarily having to analyze data on the whole Soviet Army in Afghanistan. This would require some careful monitoring by somebody who knows statistics.

GOURE: I don't know too much about it but my impression is that there are regions and periods, geographically for example, where there is relative quiescence from any major Soviet action. This may mean that you do not necessarily have regions which are sufficiently alike to infer about one from another. Therefore that kind of approach may not be useful. I mean you have to test it out.

You could take a given regiment or a part of a Kabul garrison force, as long as it is not in the north or northeast, that may not be significant from one year to the next because the next regiment is going to be in the South or somewhere else, or involved in some kind of operation, unless it is an assault regiment and it is used repeatedly no matter where.

COMMENT: We're trying something like that.

GOURE: Are there assault regiments that are used more often than others? Is something useful to look at.

-91. RESPONSES SIMULTANEOUSLY: There are but seem to be more active than others.

-911: That is a logical way to start. Pick a regiment through to test how extensive the data are...

COMMENT: How big the gaps are.
ALLEN: ... what the gaps are, what you do know, what you do not know, and then as a result of that you can say, "An ideal data base might involve all that but clearly all we are going to be able to get are these kinds of things and how can they help us?"

COMMENT C: And then validate methodologies by selective testing.

ALLEN: Don’t do it the way we did in that first order-of-battle for MACV in Saigon when a dozen of us were divided into two shifts to work sixteen hours a day, eight hours each, to plot on a map and collate in files every piece of information on every VC unit, that had been received from any source over the previous year all at once without asking ourselves what kind of information we really wanted, but just doing it and at the same time separately from the order-of-battle department, taking all of the activities that had occurred in the previous year, without having adequately defined our terms and collating all that. We might have saved ourselves a lot of effort if we had started with one unit.

COMMENT C: If you had picked either a single geographic area or some other test case.

ALLEN: Yes, tested it first to see what would be feasible and then applied the results of that test.

COMMENT G: But when you were doing some of these things, was there any time period you thought was a minimum and how many years back?

ALLEN: We only did one year back on the order-of-battle. We thought that would give us a cycle of the year, and that would be better than just taking an arbitrary three months which would only give you one season.

HAERING: I’d like to discuss both those questions. In the first place, if you are talking about sampling a unit and then saying that is a random statistical sample and we can apply that to everybody else. I’d say don’t do that.

We did unit rotation of air wings in the Navy during the war, so that there was always an institutional memory. They would be there six months and then they would come back six
months later, and you would expect that to homogenize units
to some extent. The lessons learned got dragged along. Not so fast! I could make statistical tests on the performance
of different air wings and demonstrate that — like Air Wing
16 is unusually loss prone, this year, this deployment, and
there is no obvious reason for it but it has a high
statistical confidence and I wouldn't take Air Wing 16 and
extrapolate it to the rest of the Navy.

QUESTION: Normally, how many air wings would you feel
confident would be enough?

HAERING: I'd track them all. You are not talking about
infinite numbers. When you're talking 300 battalions you
can't track them all but you can decide to what extent you
can track divisions and regiments.

On the other hand, if you are talking about taking a
unit and building a history of it or using it as a test to
see what you can derive and what information you can get from
it, maybe that is a useful exercise in itself. Having done
that you can see what's going on and you can say some things
are liable to be unique and some things are constant across
the board.

Typically logistics stuff and so on can be extrapolated
in various ways but combat activity, combat excellence, loss
rates and things like that you don't say because the 173rd
suffered so many losses on Hamburger Hill that that is what
is happening to the American Army throughout Vietnam. That
is just not so.

QUESTION: There is a point at which you can get large
enough without doing all of them. The fact of the matter is
that we just don't have the information.

HAERING: If you don't have the information nothing will
make up for it. But the second thing was the question of
time. How long would you do it? I would do it forever. Go
back as far back as you can. Go back to peacetime in the
case of the Afghan Army.

REHM: I would like to try a new subject for panel
comment. In a guerrilla war are losses a major measure or is
it sometimes things not directly related to combat? Is it
more like people being willing to pay taxes and being willing
to show their support for one side or the other? Can you
measure those things in some way that isn’t dependent on combat data that tells you whether the rebel side is doing well? Are there economic or political measures that tell you somehow the durability of one side or the support or something it has that are not necessarily combat measures?

RESPONSES: Yes.

ALLEN: Losses of any sort are relevant only in relation to what one expects to see happen in the situation.

If the Soviets have imposed some kind of a limit, for example, on the manpower they are willing to commit to Afghanistan and you are tracking losses and you see that losses are much higher than last year, you know that has some impact on the forces.

This was a problem the French had in their war. Their commander in the theater was told how many people were coming into the theater that year for replacements for people at the end of their 26-month tour, and anytime that combat losses exceeded the replacements that were scheduled to come he had to back off on operations until he could make sure enough would come.

Goure: I thought there is a relationship, or at least there seems to be one, for example, that new directive, or decree rather, on the draft, the tightening on the draft in August which apparently suggests there has been a good deal of increase in avoidance of the draft possibly because of service in Afghanistan.
When you start seeing increases in casualties you have got to have some other measure to bounce that against as to whether the Soviets are forcing the war or the casualties are simply a result of them laying back and taking hits which they either asked for or were too stupid to avoid. You cannot quite determine whether casualty rates are at all related to what the hell the Soviets are doing in Afghanistan.

ALLEN: And you always have that debate because you can never know. But the other side of your question, the willingness to pay taxes and so forth, is perhaps more meaningful. That may be the case if that is what the Afghan Government wants -- for all the peasants in Afghanistan to pay their taxes to the central government on schedule -- then measuring the extent to which they are or are not doing that might have a whole lot of relevance to the extent to which the Afghan Government will be satisfied that it is winning the war.

COMMENT C: These are all relevant questions. These are all things we would like to track in Afghanistan. It is not even like South Vietnam, where we would track a lot of these things.

GOURE: Is there any indication that the Soviets have to bring in more food? Because the cities are more isolated and less likely to get it from the countryside?

ALLEN: Let me really tell you how to suck eggs and suggest that the whole issue of costs and the extent to which you contract them in every regard -- in terms of ammunition expenditures, economic investment, whatever else, equipment losses, attrition on your equipment -- the whole bit, I would think, would be very useful.

The question of costs to the Soviets has to be one that
the US policymaker has right up front. Now the other side of that coin is don't carry it too far. Because you don't really know the level of costs they willing to pay, but at least you can calculate that and you can make informed judgments about what it is costing them. Whether it is increasing.

REHM: You might also want to keep track of what might be perceived by the Soviets as benefits. That is, the number of combat experienced officers and enlisted men who they would now have in a pool to draw upon. Maybe that doesn't seem large to us, but when you haven't fought a war in forty years, the experience gained by anybody having been in combat is, in my opinion, a benefit to them in some way.

Furthermore, how many combat systems have they learned about and developed tactics for that they would not, had they not had a war. I do not think enough is taken into account, from what I have seen, of what might be perceived as benefits to the Soviets in computing some credit for the costs expended. Their cost-to-benefit ratio is not infinite.

ALLEN: As in the Korean war. They took advantage of that to rotate fighter regiments into Manchuria to engage the US Air Force over the "Alley," without ever having really been taken to task in terms of having it brought to public
attention as to what was going on.

They rotated more than a dozen fighter regiments through Manchuria in the course of the Korean War to get combat experience.

COMMENT C: They are getting a number of lessons learned in the combat area and a lot of technical equipment experience.

GOURE: There is a whole area to that, no doubt, although I think that, unlike Vietnam, the Soviet officer does not believe he has to have his ticket punched in Afghanistan in order to get promoted, or to accelerate his promotion. In effect, the US Army had such a requirement.

GIESSLER: It would be interesting to look into that very point, Leon.

REHM: I would be surprised if it didn't do something for an officer if he had combat experience to his credit.

GOURE: Oh, it does. For example, certainly it does for the Cubans who have been in Angola. The veteran has all kinds of advantages for having volunteered to serve there, in addition to which he only serves two years instead of three.

ALLEN: It would not be nearly as widespread in the Soviet forces as it was for the US forces in Vietnam. It will be of some advantage. But, what is it? Only 1% or 1 1/2% of Soviet forces are engaged there? The Cubans have been doing it for ten years and it is only 10% to 15% of their people.

REHM: Do you have any way of tracking what happened to people who served there five years ago and have left? Do you have any indications?
REHM: Isn't there anything about early promotions, better assignments, moving to the head of a list, because one served in Afghanistan? Your next assignment is on the Black Sea perhaps?

ALLEN: I would expect to have cliques develop that will be viewed with favor and take care of the oldboy network.

REHM: The fact that the group is only a small percentage of the Soviet force may make it more elite or special.

COMMENT: It is not as if they are not interested in having good people there in Afghanistan. They have got the guy who used to run the GSGS down there running the show.

GIESSLER: You know you sit back here and listen. On the one hand you hear that you ought to keep the data base simple, and you ought to keep the number of people involved in it at a low level, and then on the other hand you hear you ought to have data on absolutely everything in the entire world for all periods of time. Maybe both of those things are true.

COMMENT: You have to decide which you want.

GIESSLER: Well, I don't know, maybe you don't know what you want until you get it.

COMMENT: It is like you were saying. You have two different questions to address. On the one hand you have to be descriptive, where you just say that incidents took place and that this was the result. On another level, a totally different level, you have the predictive, where you take something and try to forecast.

COMMENT: You have all the data you can get, spend two
years collecting data, and then sit back and see if you have anything.

[MULTIPLE COMMENTS] That is one approach. We can’t afford that.

GIESSLER: You know though, the one thing is that you do have computers today that allow you to do things that Tom Thayer and George Allen and other people were not able to do.

THAYER: We did it by hand.

ALLEN: My IBM PC could do for me today what I wanted to get the $400K for, but couldn’t, in Vietnam.

REHM: A spreadsheet program will do magical things relatively inexpensively compared to what you would have been able to do, and an existing graphics package will do all sorts of things that you might have had to pay $400K for then, but which go for under $300 now.

GIESSLER: You could probably put on a floppy disk the entire amount of OSD-only information that was available to Tom Thayer for some time period. You could probably put it on a floppy disk and give a copy to everyone in this room.

MULTIPLE COMMENTS: I believe it. Somebody’s got to put it on the disk. I am not at all worried about the technology. There is more than technology involved in the resources required however. Manhours is the question.

COMMENT: The problem that we have is that we are not a manpower-intensive organization.

COMMENT C: To summarize, if the unit is small, be selective. Verify a methodology with a small test set of data. Test some piece of the thing and see whether the data is worth setting it up.

COMMENT: That could take years.

ALLEN: That is the point. You don’t want to go too far because you may be crunching stuff that really — in the
final analysis -- isn't necessary to crunch. And there is no point in getting people to feed a lot of stuff into the database if it is not useful.

COMMENT: When you say that we are data limited, five years of data on the war in Afghanistan is a lot of stuff.

ALLEN: Our problem in Vietnam was that we argued this problem of resources too much. The resources that the we were able to invest or willing to invest kept coming out on the short end of the package there. Your problem is wholly different. You can defend the resources and constraints much better than could be done back then. That was our war and we wouldn't commit the resources. Here it is not our war. I know your resources are even more constrained, but at the same time if people are looking to you for information you have the justification.

GOURE: Maybe not. Then just sit down and manually test it and make graphics. See what begins to emerge from looking at it, for analytic purposes, of course. What is the material capable of delivering?

REHM: The patterns that Tom was talking about.

THAYER: Yes, do you get any patterns at all? It might not make any sense to you. You might get one and ask what is happening? Why are we getting a pattern like this? That is the way we went at it. The systems people came in; they wanted a lot of money and a big contract. They wanted to build a big system as I told you.

I said keep your systems analysts out. I want some journeyman programmers who can answer specific questions about the data that we know are in there. We don't know what significance they are at the moment, but let's pull them out and have a look at them, and then cut an analyst loose on it.
and see if he can come up with anything. Sometimes you could, sometimes you couldn't.

COMMENT: Let me turn the question around. I think that quantitative political science, quantitative economics, have been in trouble many times over many years for being overly inductive. You don't want to have a monstrous data set and then go through and run a zillion correlations, 4000 cross tabulations, and then weed out the patterns. What you need to do is clearly articulate the questions that you need to have addressed and want answered. Then let that guide the data collection effort. You don't do it the other way around.

THAYER: I gather that you have got a lot of data collected already.

COMMENT: The data may be collected but it may not be well arrayed or manipulated.

SEVERAL COMMENTS: Okay, my first step would be, what have we got and what can we do with it fairly quickly?

HAERING: I've got to tell you, I always crunched my own data and whenever I started out a study on one issue I always found something that I wasn't expecting in the data without exception.

COMMENT: You have to make a conscious choice, it seems to me, concerning if you can afford to get all of the data and crunch it. You may really find some amazing things you never even thought were issues.

COMMENT: There is always going to be serendipity in any data base, but it is always easy to get lost in the data.

COMMENT C: That's nice when it is your own war, and you are sitting in the Pentagon working for the Secretary of Defense. Now let's think of what we've got to do, which is trying to something a little less grandiose, and with a more limited data base.

REHM: But you also have tools and things that enable you to do stuff today that you simply could not do fifteen to twenty years ago.
COMMENT: That may be true too. Maybe I am ten years behind the times technically.

REHM: The graphics packages that George talked about costing $400,000 would, I imagine, sell today for maybe $4,000, even for $400, or it might even be available for $40 in a cartridge.

COMMENT: Not quite. I think $400 is the most reasonable estimate.

REHM: But more important perhaps, are the things you are able to do by displaying stuff graphically and doing it quickly with a simple data base. You would have just loved to have had that 15 years ago.

ALLEN: Absolutely! Absolutely!

REHM: I don't think it takes nearly as much effort as you are talking about. Today's data is more limited, as you say. I think you can still do more with what you've have.

COMMENT: When you say that you've got to be careful with questions -- and George has also raised this, as have others -- you have to be careful you don't overdo it. But the questions are still really very broad gauged questions. You can narrow them down, but they are still broad gauged. How are the Soviets -- how are the guerrillas -- doing in the war? There are an infinite number of ways to do it and how should we?

MULTIPLE COMMENTS, AT LEAST FIVE SIMULTANEOUSLY: Yes, all kinds of ways. We've got a lot of choices. Several ways, that is, several, not infinite. Oh, Yeah, I agree. Don't try to do everything. Cross checks are needed.

COMMENT: There are a number of key measurement questions. There are three types of validity. One is known as criteria validity. Let me backup, measurement is a very creative enterprise. If you think you have a couple of operational indicators, surrogate variables, that are tracking a concept or something you want to follow and you find high correlations between those two and that both lead to the same concept in your mind, that's a good criterion of validity. That is one way to actually be able to check the measurement that is behind your indicators.
But I've been building quantitative political models for a long time and I've seen an awful lot of garbage, an awful lot of garbage where a person -- an academic or an analyst or a think tank -- has reams of data available and just went ahead and crunched data. While a lot of interesting things will pop out, it is easy to get lost in the data.

COMMENT: Is that relevant experience? It seems to me that a military war is a little different from a political analysis, because there are a lot of quantifiable things that do measure our facts.

COMMENT: Sure, there are orders-of-battle, casualties statistics, and things like that. They are harder than most of the things we're dealing with.

One of the key things is we have to be able to descriptively analyze these things. I hope you will be able to create models that will have relevance for the people downtown. That is the goal -- to be able to form these functional relationships. A number of people here have suggested different types of criteria, different demands dealing with descriptive analysis, versus estimative or predictive. They are very real in statistics. I would suggest that you might want to start out with a strawman. You might only want to look at one unit. If you've got a hundred battalions and you have the manpower or resources to be able to gather together good data on 25 -- statistically 25 if it's randomly sampled from a hundred -- you can make inferences on that universe of a hundred. There are a lot of things open. I would start out simple and enlarge it.

COMMENT C: A few selected measures and if you can validate a methodology, then you can turn it over to enough people to get data on the whole universe into the whatever.

It is a question of getting the data from all of the pieces of paper we have into a machine usable form. That is the daunting problem now, not that the computer can handle it.

Can it be done and manipulated? Just the physical capability of going through the reams of stuff from five years of war. That is a lot of data. Some of it is pretty mushy. It takes an intelligent guy, like you were saying, somebody who knows what he is reading to do it properly.
COMMENT: You have a problem with that. You have five back years of data to work on. Sure I can hire someone to go back and give a very simple descriptive data base and say, "I want all the incidents recorded in this way, by type, by number killed," and have them go back. But if you say, "Now I want to do some modelling, you are talking about having them go back and through five and a half years of data and pull out different indices and enter the data all over again.

GIESSLER: But to some extent what you need is some expertise in creating the data base in the first place. Run back through the five and a half years. Certain people. George, for instance, would pick out different things than either of us would pick out. I think it takes a certain amount of expertise to know just intuitively what kinds of things ought to be picked out of there, and how you would judge things differently, reports that you think have veracity behind them versus those that you think don't; sources that are biased and those that aren't. That sort of thing.

GOURE: I have a question. The point was made before that in Vietnam, for example, in terms of levels of action you had essentially a limited number of provinces which accounted for the largest portion of casualties. I would expect the same kind of thing in Afghanistan.

COMMENT: We've already looked at that and that is the case. The problem is we still have to array a lot of data to get to the point to make that case. We don't have a file by province or districts yet.

COMMENT C: Really, what you are saying is, intuitively, we agree?

COMMENT: Well, more than intuitively, but still -- to establish it in a well documented, long term time-frame.

COMMENT C: Put out in a way that a picture is worth a thousand words.

THAYER: Well, simple questions like you mentioned that
you had something by date or by province. You had this in this file and that in that file. It would seem to me that one of the first things you might want to do is get the time and place in the same file from now on. If you want a third dimension, units.

COMMENT: The advantage that we have now that you didn't is we have modern data base management systems that allow you to do that kind of thing. We are not just dealing with a series of unrelated fact files. We have a data base management system that can put it together.

THAYER: At the risk of insulting someone, my instinct at the moment is -- a layman which I am, I am not a modeler or a statistician -- is that I have heard a lot about how we are going to model a war today, and my instinct is, as with systems analysts, "Hey baby, you are not going to model anything right now. I don't know what this time series is telling me." Like time and place and level of intensity. I don't know that; maybe you do know that, but my instinct would be when is this happening on a seasonal pattern, that is a date; where, that is a location; intensity, however you measure that.

COMMENT: That is my bias also but I am not a modeler. I would assume a modeler would have a rational response. Is there a modeler here? Is there a modeler in the house?

THAYER: I'm talking about when you have just started out. We built some pretty sophisticated models before we were done because we had done some digging and ploughing and just very crudely found a slight pattern. Then you take the next step, whatever that would be.

COMMENT: But that's a description of the war.

BATTILEGA: Can I just make a comment related to something I wanted to say anyway? When you start modeling, there are a couple of different approaches you can take. One is, you can try and deduce from the data the properties of the model which represents that data. I think that is generally the approach taken more in political modeling.

The other approach is to have some independent and external basis for thinking a model of a certain form happens to apply to a specific situation and then use the data to develop the parameters you model. That is what you get in
the physical sciences, where you have objective mathematical equations which are models that apply to certain situations, and you use actual data of the situations to set the parameters.

Now in traditional military modeling, in many areas where there is a lot of data, the second case actually applies. All right, this particular situation meets the properties of Lanchester equations, or something like that. One of the things that I talked about this morning convinced me at the time — and I haven't seen any reason to change my mind — is that when you are talking about guerrilla warfare, the modeling is kind of half-way between the two. It is halfway between military modeling, where traditional standard structure models that apply to military engagements apply, and political modeling, where you have to establish the relationships.

Think about regional forces plus popular forces divided by population. That is not a political model. That is a not a traditional military model. It happens to make imminent sense if the purpose of military forces is to maintain control in a certain sense of an area, and if many of the guerrillas themselves come from within the population you are eventually trying to control. So you start to see things like that which apply to that middle ground.

Now eventually one of those forms was a traditional military measurement of effectiveness, which is a force ratio. In other cases it wasn't. So in this area you are sort of operating in the middle ground.

This would lead me to believe that maybe you ought to try both, in other words, try and learn from the data, but also try some sort of basic things that sound like they might apply and try and develop a fit for a prespecified model and see if it makes any sense.

You have to go through one of those two steps in a modeling process in the first place. In any case, whether trying to learn from the data or trying to use the data to fit something else, you have to have the data arrayed in a way to manipulate it and deal with it.

THAYER: You all have an enormous advantage. When we had absorbed the MACV data the Joint Staff had or whatever system we were using, we were batch processing everything. Today if you get the data in the machine you can do all that
because you've got the keyboard there and you go at it. If you know what data are in there and you know what streams you've got, you can throw it together all kind of ways, even at the same time.

You're just looking at the time series to, say, let me describe for the director today what has happened in the last five years. That will be impressive right away. What's been happening in the various provinces and when is there a cyclical pattern? That's very interesting. I don't know whether it would be relevant to anything, but in Vietnam it was darn relevant.

If we had picked that up earlier, because we could have planned against it, and you could have alerted all your commanders and new officers and your presidents, who wouldn't then get hysterical in April, because we had one sequence of that when the Spring offensive started and the President wanted to know, "What's going on? How bad is it?" He was calling Melvin Laird asking him what was going on.

Well we ran it and within a week we cold tell him it is the annual Spring offensive, right on schedule. It is less than it was last year, and it is much less than it was two years ago, so on this dimension the war is still winding down. It is not anything new, big, or hysterical, or an escalation.

And the Secretary said, "Okay, I want three memos a week I can hand to the President, just to give him an idea of where we are. We don't know what it means, but it is not escalation, it is not this, it is not that."

That is what I mean by a simple time series analysis, because we knew the seasonal patterns by then, and we knew what the levels were, and we could say within a week, click, click, when things would happen.

GOURE: The basic data, if you had a chance to examine it by province, by area, by unit, or whatever it is, should tell you what is happening, more by unit than anything else, I think. It should tell you, particularly when it comes to Soviet actions, or at least to begin to reflect in documents, Soviet Government objectives, because you can deduce certain things from a pattern. Let's say you had two-or-three-years of data in which you see the forces going again and again to the same valley, spend some time there, and leave again.
You can interpret that objective and if you found that the same thing happened four or six times in another area you would see therefore if you now have a change. If you find they are now trying to build forts and stay there you will see that the objective has changed.

You can say that something new has been added, that a different perception of where the Soviets want to go has occurred. Unfortunately, that requires some historical view of what has happened before.

COMMENT: That is the sort of thing we can do by the seat of our pants. We have a certain amount of people with experience who can say that without going through a lot of data crunching.

REHM: Have we reached the point of diminishing returns? Are there any other questions?

GOURE: Yes, it seems to me one thing that I would want to mention, the point was made by you, is taking advantage of the Afghans who are getting out. I understood there is at least an attempt to get the wounded out to Pakistan. Consequently you have some combat personnel there and not just families and refugees.

Ideally a source on events, even if it is post facto, ought to provide — if not a continuous basis check — then a periodic check by talking with those people about what happened.

One doesn’t have to take for credit necessarily all that is said about the great and glorious success that every shot destroyed a tank, but one can have an idea more or less, who initiated the action, what was involved, and how large it became, and what the guerrillas thought was the outcome. That would be one check on events that you don’t have otherwise, either through radio traffic or whatever else.

If you can get it, I don’t know if the Pakistanis cooperate, but you sure as hell ought to. News men seem to be trucking around and doing these things.

COMMENT: I would sure have a team up there doing it.
COMMENT: Are you volunteering?

REHM: I would like to thank the speakers for their presentations under rather short notice. I would particularly like to thank Fred Giessler who made a lot of the arrangements and tracked down a variety of people to participate. I hope this has given you some ideas. Thank you all.

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